

Introduction to International Politics

[Semester]

[Room Number]

[Date and Time]

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Course Description

Why are there wars? How does international politics shape trade and investment? Why is policy coordination among multiple governments so difficult, even though problems such as financial crises and international terrorism are global? This course offers an introduction to international politics. In this process, we will critically examine prominent answers that existing scholarship has produced in response to these questions.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The course objective is to enable students to evaluate the validity of competing arguments. After all, for any given topic, several legitimate positions can typically be adopted – even though they might contradict each other. Which of these positions is the ‘best’ position often depends on the criteria used to evaluate the problem: Is the objective to reduce costs or to uphold ethical standards? Is it about benefiting consumers or favoring producers? In other words, there might not be a ‘correct’ answer, but there might be a ‘best’ answer given certain criteria by which to judge a situation. To achieve this, the course offers students the opportunity to sharpen their analytical skills. Specifically, students will learn a) how to evaluate the theoretical merit of competing arguments, and b) how to obtain and understand empirical evidence to adjudicate between competing arguments.

By the end of this course, students should have a solid understanding of theories and topics related to international politics. Specifically, their conceptual learning will include the causes and consequences of war; the interrelationship between international politics and economic issues such as trade, debt, and finance; and the international dimension of non-material issues such as democracy, human rights, and global terrorism. In addition, they will learn more about the puzzle pieces (actors and institutions) and process (levels of analysis, examining the direction of causality) of analyzing international politics. More generally, students should be able to make sense of messy real-world situations by examining competing arguments in a theoretically-informed and evidence-based way. Students will know how to identify competing answers; they will have learned how to determine appropriate criteria for judging their respective merit; and students will be able to evaluate rival hypotheses.

Teaching Method

Issues in international politics often offer no ‘correct’ answer but only a ‘best’ answer that are most appropriate given some criteria by which to evaluate the possible answers. Consequently, this course offers an opportunity to prepare for a career in settings where there are no clear-cut answers either, such as consulting, finance and law.

I will use teaching methods that will require you to develop skills required to succeed in these settings. For this reason, each class will be divided into two parts. The first part of class will be devoted to a seminar-style discussion of the readings. While I will provide guidance to ensure we get to the main take-away points of this week's readings, this is a space to explore the arguments presented in the readings. The second part of class will involve case studies using real world data and situations. Students will be divided into small teams at the beginning of the semester. In class, each team will develop answers to the problems posed in the case study using the theories discussed in today's class. We subsequently will compare and contrast the different solutions of all teams.

Assignments and Academic Calendar

Unit A: Foundations

1. Introduction: Why should we care about international politics?

- Key Questions
 - How does International Politics affect your finances?
 - How does International Politics affect your physical security?
 - How does International Politics affect your social life?
- Literature
 - None

2. The Historical Context

- Key Questions
 - How did international politics evolve over the past centuries? (Mercantilism, Pax Britannica, WWI - WWII, The Cold War, After the Cold War.)
 - Introduction of several empirical puzzles for which we will come up with explanations throughout the semester
- Literature
 - Frieden, Jeffrey A. *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Norton, 2006. [Chs. 1, 8]

3. Actors, Interests, and Institutions

- Key Questions
 - Interests: What Do Actors Want from Politics?
 - Institutions: Why Can't an Actor Always Get What It Wants?
 - How to connect these concepts to Theories of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism?
- Literature
 - Milner, Helen V. *Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997 [Ch. 2]
 - Lake, David A., and Robert Powell. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999. [Ch. 2]

4. The process of analyzing international politics

- Key Questions
 - Is the international system an expression of domestic structures?
 - Alternatively, is the international system a cause of domestic politics?
 - Analyzing different levels: The system, the state, the groups, the individual.
- Literature
 - Gourevitch, Peter. "The second image reversed: the international sources of domestic politics." *International organization* 32.4 (1978): 881-912.
 - Putnam, Robert (1988). "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games". *International Organization*. 42: 427–460

Unit B: Politics of Peace and War

5. Why Are There Wars?

- Key Questions
 - Given the human and material costs of military conflict, why do countries sometimes wage war rather than resolving their disputes through negotiations?
 - Incomplete information: Do Wars Happen by Mistake?
 - Commitment Problems: Can an Adversary Be Trusted to Honor a Deal?
- Literature
 - Fearon, James. "Rationalist Explanations of War." *International Organization* 49 (1995): 379–414.
 - Reiter, Dan. "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War." *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (2003): 27–43.

6. Domestic Politics and War

- Key Questions
 - Why Don't Democracies Fight One Another?
 - Do Politicians Spark Wars Abroad in Order to Hold On to Power at Home?
 - Do Countries Fight Wars to Satisfy the Military or Special Interest Groups?
- Literature
 - Russett, Bruce, and James Oneal. *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. New York: Norton, 2001. [Ch.1]
 - De Mesquita, B. B., Morrow, J. D., Siverson, R. M., Smith, A. (1999). An institutional explanation of the democratic peace. *American Political Science Review*, 93(4), 791-807.

7. Alliances and International Institutions

- Key Questions
 - Alliances: Why Promise to Fight Someone Else’s War?
 - International Institutions: Why is it so hard for the international community to prevent and punish acts of aggression among and within states?
 - The role of the United Nations in preventing war
- Literature
 - Leeds, Brett Ashley. “Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties.” *International Organization* 57 (2003): 801–27.
 - Voeten, Erik. “The Political Origins of the UN Security Council’s Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force.” *International Organization* 59 (Summer 2005): 527–57

Unit C: Politics of Material International Relations

8. The Politics of International Trade

- Key Questions
 - Why are trade barriers so common despite the universal advice of economists?
 - Why Do Some Countries Have Higher Trade Barriers Than Others? Why Have National Trade Policies Varied over Time? Why, within a Country, Are Some Industries Protected, and Some Not?
 - International Institutions in International Trade: The WTO
- Literature
 - Rogowski, Ronald. *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. [Ch.1]
 - Hiscox, Michael. *International Trade and Political Conflict: Commerce, Coalitions, and Mobility*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. [Ch. 2]

9. The Politics of International Investment

- Key Questions
 - Why Do Corporations Go Multinational?
 - Why Do Countries Let Foreign Multinationals In?
 - How are conflicts between Host-Country and MNCs resolved?
- Literature
 - Jensen, Nathan. *Nation-States and the Multinational Corporation: A Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. [Ch.2]
 - Pinto, Pablo. *Partisan investment in the global economy: Why the left loves foreign direct investment and FDI loves the left*. Cambridge University Press. 2013. [Ch.1]

10. The Politics of Financial Diplomacy

- Key Questions
 - Foreign aid: Donors purchasing influence?
 - Bilateral loans: Does the rise of China offer alternatives to neoliberal policy prescriptions?
 - Exchange rates: Promoting domestic business by devaluation or predictability?
- Literature
 - Kuziemko, I., Werker, E. How much is a seat on the Security Council worth? Foreign aid and bribery at the United Nations. *Journal of political economy*, 114(5), 905-930, 2006.
 - Bunte, Jonas. *Raising the Debt: How Developing countries Choose their Creditors*. Oxford University Press. 2019. [Ch.1]

11. The Politics of Financial Crises

- Key Questions
 - Debt crisis: Why do they occur, and what does the IMF have to do with it?
 - Currency crises: Why do speculative attacks happen, and will the Euro collapse?
- Literature
 - Michael Tomz and Mark L. J. Wright. Empirical Research on Sovereign Debt and Default. *Annual Review of Economics*, 5(1):247–272. 2012
 - J.A. Frieden. Invested Interests: The Politics of National Economic Policies in a World of Global Finance. *International Organization*, 45(4):425–451, 199

Unit D: Politics of Immaterial International Relations

12. The Spread of Democracy (and its reversal?)

- Key Questions
 - Is there an international process of diffusion underlying the spread of democracy?
 - What are the international factors explaining the populist backlash against Globalization (Brexit, AfD, Trump, etc.)
- Literature
 - Huntington, Samuel. Democracy's third wave. *Journal of democracy*, 2(2), 12-34. 1991
 - Autor, D., Dorn, D., Hanson, G., Majlesi, K. Importing Political Polarization? The Electoral Consequences of Rising Trade Exposure. NBER working paper. 2016

13. Human Rights

- Key Questions
 - Why do states sometimes violate Human Rights, but other times sign human rights agreements?
 - Will Protection of Human Rights Improve in the Future?
- Literature

- Sikking, Kathryn. “Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America.” *International Organization* 47, no. 3 (1993): 411–441
- Risse, Thomas, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikking, eds. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press 1999. [Ch.1]

14. Global Terrorism

- Key Questions
 - Why Do Terrorists Use Violence?
 - How do terrorists learn from each other?
 - Can Terrorism Be Prevented?
- Literature
 - Kydd, Andrew, and Barbara Walter. “The Strategies of Terrorism.” *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49–8
 - Pape, Robert. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*. New York: Random House, 2005. [Ch.2]

15. Conclusion

- Key Questions
 - What have we learned?
 - Future developments in the study of international politics
- Literature
 - none

Structure of Class

Each class has several components:

1. Each week, prior to class, you will need to submit two “why” questions about the readings. These questions should be pretty specific, and they should focus on the theory proposed (not the personal background of the author, etc.). For example, “I don’t understand why the author argues that A follows B – could we clarify this issue?”, “Why does the author think that X is going to happen, because from my understanding Y is much more likely?”, or “Why does B follow from A for author X while author Y apparently has a very different take on this?”. You don’t need to know the answers, but you should expect that I will ask you to clarify your questions. The deadline for the two questions is 11:59pm the day prior to class.
2. Your questions will be used to create an agenda for a discussion of the readings assigned for that week. We will use the first part of the class time for this discussion. Here we will explore the strengths and weaknesses of each reading.
3. After a short break we will change gears in the second part of class: We will think about how the insights from our discussion can be applied to the ‘real’ world. I will provide you with case studies that allow you to apply the theories and concepts discussed earlier to empirical realities.

4. I will conclude the class by reviewing the key ‘take-away’ points from this class and provide some guidance regarding the readings for the following week.

Note: Please consider the course policies on late work, missed exams, and grade disputes at the end of this document.

Expectations

What I expect of my students

- Willingness to work: As a general rule, one credit represents three hours of academic work per week (including lectures, laboratories, recitations, discussion groups, field work, study, and so on), averaged over the semester. In other words, you will need to invest time into this course, otherwise the benefits and your grades might not correspond to your expectations.
- Classroom etiquette: You are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to the class session for which they are scheduled. Lectures and discussions will not duplicate, but instead will build on, and hence will assume prior familiarity with, assigned readings. Your active, informed and civil participation in discussion and class activities is expected. You are responsible for remaining attentive in class, arriving prepared to discuss course materials, and respecting other members of the class as you and they participate.

What you can expect from the instructor

- I offer a learning environment that challenges you in order to provide opportunities for growth. I will be prepared to the best of my abilities.
- I encourage you to explore your own ideas in response to the assigned tasks. I will be open-minded in responding to your ideas and suggestions. I will offer constructive feedback.
- I am open to constructive feedback from you on my performance. If you have ideas or suggestions, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me. I am committed to make this the best possible classroom experience.

Course Policies

Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to do their own assigned work. If it is determined that a student has engaged in any form of Academic Dishonesty, he or she may be given an *F* or an *N* for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of *F* or *N* for the entire course.

Sexual Harassment

University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the University Policy Statement (<http://www.utdallas.edu/legal/title9/contactharass.html> and <http://www.utdallas.edu/hrm/er/complaints/harassment.php5>). This is a serious offense, and I feel

strongly about addressing it. Complaints about sexual harassment should be reported to the Dean of Students, Office of Student Life, Student Union Room 1, phone 972-883-6391 or email gene.fitch@utdallas.edu. However, I also want you to know that you can also talk to me as well about any issues that come up.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Participants with special needs are strongly encouraged to talk to me as soon as possible to gain maximum access to course information. It is important to me that everyone who wants to take this class is not prevented from doing so due to special needs. University policy is to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility and their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. The Office of Student AccessAbility is located in SSB 3.200. Staff can be reached at studentaccess@utdallas.edu or by calling 972-883-2098. For more information see <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess/>

Please note, however, that if you have any concerns regarding how special needs might affect the assessment of your performance, you have to talk to me *prior* to the date of the assessment. I cannot make grade adjustments after the fact.

Statement regarding diversity

I strongly believe that diversity is an asset rather than a liability. For one, in a globalized world you will be exposed to people who are different from you. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize that people who are different in almost all cases bring something valuable to the table: Experiences that you can learn from, insights that were not apparent to you, skills that you do not have, or knowledge that you can benefit from. It is my intention to create a learning environment in this class that allows everyone to share their unique strengths. This is not only my personal belief. After all, research shows that the best work is usually produced by groups that combine the different comparative advantages of their group members.

I therefore emphasize that I will welcome anyone to my class, regardless of your sexual orientation, religious observances, political orientation, physical characteristics, cultural background, nationality, or any other characteristic. I recognize that I myself am not perfect, but I promise you to make every effort. If you have any concerns with respect to your acceptance in the classroom I strongly encourage you to talk with me.

Technology in the classroom

Laptops are allowed and even encouraged in the classroom. Bring yours to classes, as we will frequently use it for group activities and short in-class writing assignments. However, I do expect you to use the laptop for activities related to the class only. That is, no gaming, no facebook, no emails, no chatting. I reserve the right to administer sanctions if your behavior does not align with these expectations.

However, any other technological items such as cell phones, Ipods, MP3 players, pagers, and PDAs need to be turned OFF during class. That's right: turn it off, rather than just setting it to vibrate. The purpose for this policy is that I want to minimize distractions during class. I do want you to be focused on the learning activities that will be going on. If I notice that you are not paying attention but instead are focused on your cell phone I reserve the right to do something about it.

Further, you are not allowed to make video- or audio-recordings of the classes without my prior permission. I reserve the right to legal action in case I observe you doing so. The reason why the dialogue

between professors and students should stay within the closed community of the classroom is simple. After all, academic freedom and completely honest communication in the classroom requires a certain degree of privacy for all the people in the classroom. Students and teachers alike need to be able to be frank, and they need to express their emotions honestly. A video- or audio recording will seriously impede the willingness of students to come forward and engage in an open and honest discussion.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.