

## **POLI 2057: Introduction to International Politics**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:50am Fall 2017

214 Coates

### **Instructor**

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

**Course Description:** This course is an introductory lecture in international relations, a subfield of political science. No previous coursework or background in international relations or political science is required. The general purpose of the course is twofold: the first is to provide students with the current theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches utilized in the study of international relations, including the approaches used in more specific areas such as conflict and international political economy. The second goal of the course is to expand students' knowledge of international affairs and institutions, including historical and contemporary issues of significance. These two purposes are not mutually exclusive, and as such there will be a large degree of interplay between them, including the use of the theoretical frameworks presented to contextualize and interpret current events. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to apply the theories and models utilized in the study of international relations to contemporary current events for the purposes of increasing the student's understanding of the relevant actors, their goals and actions, and the factors which inhibit or facilitate cooperation or conflict.

**General Education:** This course counts as part of the General Education curriculum at LSU, the purpose of which is described as follows on the Faculty Senate website (<http://www.cae.lsu.edu/genedhome/>):

The general education of LSU students spans the four years of undergraduate study. In courses designated as general education, students begin a process of developing competencies or essential learning outcomes which continues through their study in upper-level elective courses and courses in the major field of study. LSU's General Education Component represents a conviction on the part of the faculty that LSU graduates will be able to communicate effectively through multiple media; will have a basic appreciation of historical, cultural and philosophical complexity; will be aware of the economic, political, cultural, and linguistic factors which inform global interdependence; will be able to identify and solve important problems through research-based inquiry which employs scientific and mathematical methods, and appropriate technology; and will have the requisite abilities and motivation to participate effectively in the civic life of communities.

**Social Sciences Competency Statement:** LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic differences

**Required Text:** Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse, *International Relations*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (Full)

This course will also require students to enroll with the course page on the Top Hat interactive teaching platform (<https://tophat.com>). The course join code is 363342.

In addition to the selections from the textbook above, additional supplementary readings will be made available on *Moodle* or in Middleton library. As this course is also focused on current events in international politics, students are expected to remain abreast of the state of current international affairs through the utilization of newspapers, periodicals, and other sources of international news. This information may be utilized in class and subject to unannounced quizzes. A list of suggested sources is provided on the course *Moodle* page.

**Course Requirements:** The structure of the class will be a mix of lecture as well as group discussion. To help facilitate the class discussion, it is imperative that students come prepared to each class having read that week's material and having familiarized themselves with current events. In addition to two exams and an unspecified number of quizzes, each individual will participate in a group project on global affairs. The details of this project are provided below.

A few notes on participation:

1. All students are expected to participate in class discussions. Students uncomfortable speaking in front of the class are encouraged to come to office hours to discuss the material. Participation in office hours as well as the Course Forum (on Moodle) will count towards the class participation grade.
2. Many of the issues and approaches utilized in international relations are subject to debate. Students are therefore encouraged to question the material in a thoughtful and respectful manner. No student will be penalized for presenting an argument which questions the material presented; all perspectives are welcome, although they are also fair game for class discussion and debate.
3. In order to facilitate class discussion and preserve an environment in which all students are encouraged to participate, please keep your class contributions directed at the material and arguments presented and not at fellow class members. Comments of a personal nature directed against fellow students will not be tolerated.

**Electronic Devices:** Electronic devices such as laptops and cell phones may not be used in class outside of participation in Top Hat attendance and quizzes. This policy is enacted in response to the growing literature suggesting that laptop use in the classroom is detrimental to learning not only for the user but potentially those around them (see for example Sana, Faria, Tina Weston, and Nicholas J. Cepeda. 2013. Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education* 62: 24-31.)

**Grading Policy:** The grading breakdown is as follows:

Graded Elements

Attendance: 20%

Quizzes: 15%

Reaction Papers 5%

Group Project on Global Affairs: 10%

Mid-term Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Letter Grades and Percentages

A+: 97-100    B+ 87-89    C+: 77-79    D+: 67-69    F: 59 or below

A: 93-96    B: 83-86    C: 73-76    D: 63-66

A-: 90-92    B-: 80-82    C-: 70-72    D-: 60-62

Additional Notes on Grading:

- Students are allowed 3 absences without penalty and the attendance grade will be calculated as  $[(\text{Number of classes attended})/(\text{Number of classes in which attendance was taken}-3)]*100$ . Absences after the third may be forgiven with written evidence that the absence complies with LSU Policy Statement 22: <https://goo.gl/ttg4zT>. Written documentation for the first three absences is not necessary as they are automatically forgiven.
- Reaction papers of 2 to 3 pages (double spaced) will be assigned throughout the course asking the student to respond to a reading or concept discussed in class.
- Missed quizzes may not be made-up; however, the two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.
- Missed exams may not be made up without appropriate documentation of a valid excuse for absence as defined by LSU Policy Statement 22
- Thirty-five percent of the quiz, reaction papers, group project, midterm and final exam grades will be earned by completing the assignment, with the remaining sixty-five percent assigned based on evaluation of the assignment's content.
- The calculated final percentage will be rounded up to the nearest integer for assignment of the course letter grade.
- If you feel that an error has been made in the grading of your assignment, a written submission specifying the contested question(s) and/or issue(s) as well as the detailed reason why you feel an error has been made, including supporting documentation, should be given to the course instructor prior to scheduling a meeting to discuss the issue. Only grading issues pertaining to the substance or format of an argument or factual error on the part of the instructor will be considered eligible for review.

**General Statement on Academic Integrity:**

Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa). It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

**Plagiarism and Citation Method:**

As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation method for all coursework. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate, please consult with the library's tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and proper citation formats (links are provided on the course *Moodle* page).

**Group work and unauthorized assistance:**

All work must be completed without assistance unless explicit permission for group or partner work is given by the faculty member. This is critical so that the professor can assess your performance on each assignment. If a group/partner project is assigned, the student may still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully. You might have a project with group work and a follow up report that is independently written. When in doubt, e-mail the faculty member or ask during a class session. Seeking clarification is your responsibility as a student. Assuming group/partner work is okay without permission constitutes a violation of the LSU Code of Student Conduct.

**Students requiring special accommodation:** Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225) 578-5919.

**Course Outline & Reading Schedule****Week 1: August 22 & 24**

Course Introduction

The Evolution of the International System: IR, Chapter 1, pages 26-38**Week 2: August 29 – No Class 8/31**The Elements of International Relations: IR, Chapter 1, pages 3-23**Week 3: September 5 & 7**Rationality & Game Theoretic Approaches: IR, Chapter 2, pages 75-79Power Politics: IR, Chapter 2, pages 43-75**Week 4: September 12 & 14**Power Politics: (continued)Supplementary Reading: Rice, Condoleeza. 2008. "Rethinking the National Interest". *Foreign Affairs* 87(4): 2-26.Alternatives to Power Politics: IR, Chapter 3, pages 85-110**Week 5: September 19 & 21**Alternatives to Power Politics: (continued)Supplementary Reading: Biden, Joseph R. Jr. 2016. "Building on Success". *Foreign Affairs* 95(5): 46-57.Foreign Policy and Domestic Decision Making: IR, Chapter 4**Week 6: September 26 & 28**International Conflict: IR, Chapter 5**Week 7: October 3 & 5**

Film, "Cold War 2.0"

Supplementary Reading: Voeten, Erik. "Putin and Obama clash over international relations theory." *The Washington Post*, September 29, 2015.Military Force and Terrorism: IR, Chapter 6**Week 8: October 10 & 12**

October 10: Midterm Exam Review

October 12: Midterm Exam

**Week 9: October 17 – No Class 10/19, Fall Holiday**Military Force and Terrorism (continued)**Week 10: October 24 & 26**International Organization: IR, Chapter 7The North-South Gap: IR, Chapter 12International Development: IR, Chapter 13

**Week 11: October 31 & November 2**

International Trade: *IR*, Chapter 8

**Week 12: November 7 & 9**

Global Finance and Business: *IR*, Chapter 9

**Week 13: November 14 & 16**

November 14: International Integration: *IR*, Chapter 10

November 16: Group Presentations

**Week 14: November 21 – No Class 11/23, Thanksgiving**

November 21: Video, “Life & Debt”

**Week 15: November 28 & 30**

April 20: Group Presentations

**Week 16: Final Exam Week, No Class**

Final exam will be administered based on the schedule set forth by the registrar

Friday, December 8 beginning at 3:00pm

### **Guidelines for Group Project on Global Affairs**

Working in a groups of 3-5 students, each class member will participate in a group project relating to current events in a specific geographic region (detailed below). The project should focus on a topical international issue involving at least two countries, with one or more of the countries being located in the group's specified region. The regions are as follows:

#### **Global Regions**

Africa

Central America

Central Asia

Eastern Europe

Japan/Pacific

Middle East

Russia & China

South America

South-East Asia

Western Europe

Think of the project as a briefing to policy makers who must make a decision regarding potential courses of action; provide all the information that you think would be necessary to make an informed decision, and also keep a focus on the theoretical and policy materials discussed in class. An in-class discussion of the issue will follow the presentation. Questions which would be useful to consider would include:

- What is the issue of contention/interest and who are the actors involved?
- What is the history of the issue/actors?
- What are the suggested potential resolutions or outcomes for the issue?
- Does the United States have a position relating to the issue? If so, what is that position?
- How does this issue relate to the materials we have studied in class? (i.e. theories, problems, etc)

All groups are encouraged to discuss the topic they are considering addressing with the course instructor prior to beginning work.

As a collaborative endeavor, the joint effort of the group is what will be evaluated and each participating student (as determined by the students who are named as contributors on the final submission) will receive the grade assigned to that group for all graded elements. Group membership and the assigned region will be determined after the add/drop period has passed in a manner which will be outlined in class. Each group will also have their choice of which type of material they would like to produce; available choices are a group paper and accompanying in-class presentation, or a multimedia project. Each option is discussed in more detail below.

**Option A: Group Paper and Accompanying In-Class Presentation**

If this option is chosen, the group must submit a type-written 10-12 page paper (double spaced with 1" margins) that discusses the material presented to the class by the class session in which they are scheduled to present. These papers will be uploaded to the course website on *Courseweb*, and the materials from the presentations and papers may be used on the Final Exam

The presentations should be approximately 8 minutes in length and utilize any necessary visual aids (including Powerpoint). Presentations which exceed 8 minutes will be stopped at the 9 minute mark and a half-letter grade will be deducted from the final presentation grade.

The presentations and papers will jointly constitute 10% of each student's final course grade (5% for the paper, and 5% for the presentation). The presentation grade will evaluate issues such as preparation, clarity, and thoroughness, while the paper will assess the substance of the argument, use of primary and secondary sources, and the technical execution of the paper. All cited material must be properly attributed to the original source; a half-letter grade deduction may be taken for each instance of an unattributed quotation or use of original material. Papers which engage in plagiarism will be given an "F" and students reported to the university.

All presentations utilizing Powerpoint or other computer related files must be submitted via the appropriate Moodle link by 10pm on the day preceding the presentation. All papers must be also be submitted via Moodle in .pdf format for posting to the course website and for possible utilization of plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin.



**Option B: Multimedia Project**

If this option is chosen, the group must submit a multimedia based project of no longer than 8 minutes for presentation in class. Each minute in excess of 8 will result in a half-letter grade deduction from the final project grade. The projects must be uploaded to Moodle by 10pm on the night preceding the in-class screening.

The project must focus on the key issues and questions detailed above, as with option A. The group has a wide variety of options to choose from when it comes to the type of media they choose to utilize, but it must cover the necessary material and require no input or action on behalf of the audience. Narrated PowerPoint presentations are not a permissible submission type. The project submission must also be entirely self-contained, meaning that it includes all necessary elements such as narration and visuals. The overall concept is that the audience participation will be limited to beginning the presentation, and a student accessing the presentation file from home will have the same experience as those students viewing it when it was screened in class. For example, a video which is done in the manner of a "60 Minutes" style segment on the group's chosen issue would be appropriate, but a website which is created by the group is not. All projects will be posted online for other students to reference, in addition to being shown in class. Projects will be assessed on the accuracy of the information, creativity of concept, and technical execution in accordance with a rubric which will be distributed in class. All cited material must be properly attributed to the original source; a half-letter grade deduction may be taken for each instance of an unattributed quotation or use of original material. Projects which engage in plagiarism will be given an "F" and students reported to the university.

If you have a question about the appropriateness of a particular project I encourage you to clear it with me prior to beginning. The project will constitute 10% of each group member's final course grade. There are a number of resources online regarding what materials, software and equipment are available to students at LSU as well as technical guides on how to use them. Two such resources I would suggest groups considering this option consult are:

Lynda.com: <http://grok.lsu.edu/categories.aspx?parentcategoryid=1604>

Gear 2 Geaux: LSU Overview:  
<http://grok.lsu.edu/categories.aspx?parentcategoryid=2558>