

Political Science 102
Introduction to International Politics
Fall 2009

Instructor: Tasha Lavey
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Description, Goals, and Objectives:

This course examines major issues in contemporary world politics. No pre-requisites are required other than an interest in the topic and willingness to read, think, and critically discuss your ideas and impressions. We will examine the tools political scientists use to explain matters of international conflict and cooperation. Emphasis is placed on discovering the important actors in international politics, the contexts in which these actors make strategic decisions, and the major theories used in explaining international events.

The course can be divided into three broad sections. First we address the core elements of the discipline of international relations, with particular attention on the theoretical traditions: realism, liberalism, and alternative approaches. We then shift to an examination of issues of war and peace. How can we explain the dismal recurrence of state-organized violence in international life? What do we know about the causes of war? Have we developed tools to avoid it? How has the nature of war changed over time? The final section examines issues of cooperation in the international political life. What legal instruments and organizational mechanisms do states use to facilitate cooperation? How does power interact with economics in the international system? What are the rules built into issues of international monetary and trade relations? How should the international community address the staggering problems of global poverty and under-development?

Political science is not like mathematics; there are no definitive "right" answers to the problems we engage. Rather, different analysts adopt wildly divergent and often competing perspectives to explain world events. My goal is to organize the material in such a way that you are able to evaluate and make sense of the complicated issues facing foreign policy-makers. The course is also designed to acquaint students with the basic concepts and principles necessary for more advanced study of international politics.

Required Text:

- 1) Goldstein, Joshua and Jon Pevehouse (2009) *International Relations*, 8th Edition
- 2) As the exams and quizzes will contain questions on world current events, you should read a reputable newspaper daily.
- 3) Any additional readings will be posted on UB Learns

Course Requirements:

- 1) A mid-term exam: **October 19th**
- 2) A final exam: **TBA**
- 3) Issue Paper (5 pages): **Due December 7th**
- 4) 10 quizzes: No make-ups will be given unless you provide advance written notice that you cannot attend class on a certain day or if you produce a written medical excuse.

Grading Criteria:

Mid-Term Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Issue Paper	30%
10 Quizzes	20%

Course Outline and Readings Schedule:

Week 1 (8/31): Introduction to the Study of International Politics

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 1

Week 2 (9/7): No Class (Labor Day)

No Readings

Week 3 (9/14): Realism

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 2
Quiz #1

Week 4 (9/21): Liberalism & Other Approaches

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 3
Quiz #2

Week 5 (9/28): Foreign Policy

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 4
Quiz #3

Week 6 (10/5): International Conflict

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 5
Quiz #4

Week 7 (10/12): Military Force & Terrorism

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 6
Quiz #5

Week 8 (10/19): Mid-term Exam

No Readings

Week 9 (10/26): International Organization, Law, and Human Rights

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 7
Quiz #6

Week 10 (11/2): International Trade & Monetary Systems

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 8
Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 9
Quiz #7

Week 11 (11/9): International Integration

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 10
Quiz #8

Week 12 (11/16): The Environment and Population

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 11
Quiz #9

Week 13 (11/23): North-South Gap

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 12
Quiz #10

Week 14 (11/30): International Development

Goldstein & Pevehouse, ch. 13

Week 15 (12/7): Catch-up & Review

No Readings