

PLS 160 Introduction to International Relations

Instructor: Daniel Hansen

Overview

Why do nations go to war? Is there any meaningful possibility to reduce the propensity for armed conflict, or is the world forever destined to be a place where the threat of force is omnipresent? Additionally, there has been a recent wave of anti-globalization sentiment in the US and some Western governments. Why is the world more “globalized”, and is it a good thing?

These are some of the key questions which animate global politics and which this course is designed to introduce. It is a fairly broad course which touches on many of these different issues, but also emphasizing the manner in which these issues are studied scientifically. The objective is to clearly convey these subjects, why they are important and how they influence us. The course starts with a focus on the history and evolution of foreign affairs into the present day. This will give us clear context around which to situate the theories of international relations, why war has occurred and how national leaders have attempted to manage their foreign relations. In this sense, we also will begin with a traditional discussion of the International Security specialization of International Relations. In the second half of the course, we will then pivot to discuss how nations interact economically and the impacts of these interactions. We will touch upon, for instance, the flows of money and theories explaining why the 2008 financial crisis occurred and whether the international system can be designed to safeguard against the possibility of another crisis. In the end, students should have a good understanding of these important issues which routinely present themselves in daily media and as salient issues in presidential campaigns.

Textbook and other course resources

- Main Textbook: Frieden, Jeffrey A., David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. 2009. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. New York: W.W. Norton. 2nd edition
- Henry Kissinger. 1994. *Diplomacy*. Simon and Schuster.

I will also provide readings from *Foreign Affairs*, an excellent periodical, and a professional blog *Project Syndicate (PS)*. I will also make available additional readings from:

- Russett, Starr and Kinsella. 2010. *World Politics*.
- Martin Wolf. 2004. *Why Globalization Works*
- Dani Rodrik. 2011. *The Globalization Paradox*
- Frederic Mishkin. 2015. *The Economics of Money, Banking & Financial Markets*

Grading

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final, weighted equally and worth 30% each (for a total of 60% of the overall class grade). These will be mostly multiple choice but will also have a short answer component.

In addition, for the duration of the semester students will be arranged into groups and will then be expected to give presentations. Each week, one group will give a presentation based on articles selected from the Wall Street Journal which are relevant to important course themes. Groups will give a brief overview of the article and discuss the relevance to material covered in the assigned texts. Further, if the WSJ article discusses a group, person or event that is important to the article's purpose, then the group will need to give relevant background. For instance, if the article is discussing Greece's bailout negotiations with the IMF, then it would be useful to briefly discuss the IMF and why this entity features prominently in the story (such as, the role it plays in world affairs). ALL members of the group must participate in the presentation. These will be worth 15% of your overall grade.

I also require that all students purchase an iclicker, which will be used to keep attendance in addition to giving regular quizzes. Quizzes will occur sometimes several times in a class period. I do this as a means of getting real-time feedback from the class regarding content comprehension. Randomly, I will decide 4 quizzes during the semester which will be extra credit quizzes, thus giving students the opportunity to make up some ground that may have been lost due to uncharacteristically poor weeks. I will also drop outright the 2 lowest scores from the semester. As a result of this built-in flexibility, however, there will not be any excuses for having missed a class period (and thus missing the iclicker quizzes). The iclicker quizzes will comprise 10% of your overall grade.

There will also be a short essay assignment which will comprise 10% of the final grade. This essay will ask you to critically evaluate the Iran Nuclear Deal negotiated by the Obama Administration. Here, you will draft this essay as though you are the President's National Security Advisor, and you will render an opinion to the president with a recommendation regarding whether the deal satisfactorily addresses key national security concerns. Rather than emphasizing an overall "opinion", however, the main point of the assignment is for you to take the key issues discussed in class which can either prevent or promote the potential for nations to cooperate on international issues. You will discuss cooperation with the powers party to the negotiations (for instance, on issues which require multi-lateral coordination to punish Iran if required), as well as issues of cooperation with Iran itself. This will be a 2 to 3 page assignment. We will discuss the Iran deal in class, but it will also require you to do additional background reading. You will need to cite your sources at the end of the paper, or the president won't take you seriously.

Finally, attendance and participation will be the final 5% of the grade.

- Group assignments and the order of presentations will be determined in the first week of class.
- **Consolidate your work and bring just a single Powerpoint file for the presentation on a USB. There will not be multiple presentations – the group must present from a collective file.**

- After class, send your presentation to me to be posted on the class website. Failure to do so will result in a 3% loss to your grade.

iv. There is no curve grading in this class. I will post the correspondence between class performance and grades.

Course policy

- No makeup exams. Exceptions: sickness/medical emergency with written and verifiable documentation from appropriate medical personnel; other extenuating circumstances to be discussed with the professor. All justifications must be presented to me *prior to class*.
- Academic Honesty. All students in this course are expected to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct, especially the provisions pertaining to academic honesty. No student in this course may claim ignorance of these regulations. Accordingly, violations of academic honesty - even allegedly "borderline," "minor," or "ambiguous" transgressions - will NOT be tolerated. This is an extremely serious issue and, if an infraction occurs, has the potential to follow you for years to come.
- Common-Sense Civility. Please do not be late for class. Cell phones must be on silent. Be respectful of other students' opinions and questions. **Please do not use laptops to search facebook or browse social media. This is very distracting to others. I will not regularly police this, but think of others and be respectful.**
- Be engaged. Signal to the professor or the teaching assistant as early as possible potential problems, as well as concepts or theories that you do not fully grasp. Chances are that others have similar issues.
- Read – The expectation is that you have read the material assigned for class, prior to coming to class.

Schedule of Readings

War and the History of International Politics

Day 1 – Introduction and course overview. Brief introduction to fundamental themes.

Historical introduction

Day 2 – Frieden at al book: Introduction Chapter “xix” & Chapter 1 “What shaped our world?” - - - Russett et al book Ch 1 – pages 13 – 19; Ch 2 pages 27 – 31.

Historical international relations theories

Day 3 – Kissinger – CH’s 1 “The New World Order” and Ch. 2 “Theo Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson”

Analytical Framework

Day 4 – Frieden et al – CH2 until page 62 – “Understanding Interests, Interactions and Institutions”

Day 5 – Frieden et al – Finish Ch 2 & Richard Haas in *Foreign Affairs*:
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1995-01-01/paradigm-lost>

Day 6 – Frieden et al – CH3 until page 104 – “Why are there Wars?” & Charles Glaser
Foreign Affairs: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2011-03-01/will-chinas-rise-lead-war>

Day 7 – Frieden et al – Finish CH 3

An evolving system?

Day 8 – Kissinger CH 4 “The Concert of Europe” & Minxin Pei *Foreign Affairs*:
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/how-china-and-america-see-each-other>

Day 9 – Kissinger CH 6 “Realpolitik Turns on Itself”

Day 10 - Kissinger CH 7 “European Diplomacy before the First World War”

Day 11 – Kissinger CH 31 – “The New World Order Reconsidered” & John Mearseimer in
Foreign Affairs: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault>

Domestic politics and international institutions

Day 12 – Frieden et al CH 4 – “Domestic Politics and War”

Day 13 – Frieden et al CH 5 “International Institutions and War”

Day 14 – Frieden CH 6 “Terrorism”

Day 15 – Midterm Review

Day 16 – ***Midterm Exam***

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

Trade

Day 17 – Frieden et al CH 7 “International Trade” ; Wolf CH 1 “New Millenium...”

Day 18 – Wolf CH 4 “The ‘Magic’ of the Market”; Rodrik CH 3 “Why doesn’t everyone get the case for free trade?”; Heather Hurlburt in *Foreign Affairs*:

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2016-09-27/security-case-trade>

International Finance & Monetary Relations

Day 19 – Frieden et al CH 8 “Int’l Financial Relations”; Rodrik CH 5 “Financial Globalization Follies”

Day 20 – Mishkin CH’s 12 & 13 “Financial Crises in Advanced and Emerging Countries”

***For fun, good health and the overzealous, see fm. Fed Chairman Bernanke’s lectures: <https://www.federalreserve.gov/aboutthefed/educational-tools/chairmans-lecture-series-about.htm>

Day 21 – Frieden et al CH 9 “Int’l Monetary Relations”

Development

Day 22 – Frieden et al CH 10 “Development”; Rodrik CH 7 “Poor Countries in a Rich World”

Day 23 – *Foreign Affairs* articles: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-08-11/portfolio-model-foreign-assistance> ;

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2013-10-13/charity-begins-home> ;

PS Ben Steil - <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/the-marshall-plan-and-america-first-by-benn-steil-2017-08> ;

PS Jeff Sachs - https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/aid-works?a_la=english&a_d=536608be1a91c10c78c0479c&a_m=&a_a=click&a_s=&a_p=%2Farchive&a_li=aid-works&a_pa=&a_ps=

Day 24 – Frieden et al CH 11 “Int’l Law and Norms”

Day 25 – Frieden et al CH 12 “Human Rights”

Day 26 – Frieden et al CH 13 “The Global Environment”

Day 27 – Final Exam Review

Day 28 – Final Exam