

**Sam Houston State University
Department of Political Science**

POLS 3380: Introduction to International Relations (Fall 2017)

Instructor: Prof. Jonathan Brown

Office: CHSS 487

Office Hours: TU/TH 3:30 – 4:30 PM or by appointment.

Course Time & Location: TU/TH 12:30 – 1:50 PM in CHSS 232.

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Credit Hours: 3

“Is it a recommendation to have no theory? Can that man be a systematic or able statesman who has none? I believe not.”

– Alexander Hamilton, 1801¹

“When a layperson asks scholars and theorists of international relations ‘What do you do?’ the answer is more likely to puzzle than to enlighten. The idea that there are big pictures to describe, generalizations to establish, and essential characteristics to discover, explain, and debate eludes those who are more likely to see the field as one involving expertise on the latest world crisis.”

– K. J. Holsti²

“It is sheer craziness to dare to understand world affairs....Happily, there are at least two handy mechanisms available for easing the task. One involves a sense of humility. If we can remain in awe of the complexities and changes at work in the world, ever ready to concede confusion and always reminding ourselves that our conclusions must perforce be tentative, then it should be possible to avoid excessive simplicity and intellectual paralysis. Second, and much more important, we can self-consciously rely on the core practices of theory to assist us in bringing a measure of order out of the seeming chaos that confronts us. For it is through theorizing that we can hope to tease meaningful patterns out of the endless details and inordinate complexities that sustain world politics.”

– James Rosenau and Mary Durfee³

Course Description and Objectives

This course offers an introduction to the practice of world politics and the conceptual analysis of international relations. Its primary objective is to examine how political scientists approach the study of world politics. The course is divided loosely into three sections. The first section provides an introduction to the history of international relations, covering such topics as sovereignty, imperialism and decolonization, the Cold War, and the War on Terror. The second section provides an introduction to the main theoretical approaches to international relations, including realism, liberalism, normative approaches, and constructivism. It also delves more deeply into some recurring theoretical debates concerning the balance of power, the democratic peace, the effectiveness of international institutions, and the likelihood of a future U.S.-China war. The third section surveys major topics in world politics, such as foreign policy behavior, war, and international political economy.

¹ Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), pp. 192-193.

² Kalevi J. Holsti, *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. xi.

³ James N. Rosenau and Mary Durfee, *Thinking Theory Thoroughly: Coherent Approaches to an Incoherent World* (2nd Ed., Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 1-2.

General Learning Objectives

This course has the following two general learning objectives:

1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classification, methods, and trends) about historical and contemporary world politics.
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories that help to explain rather than simply describe international relations.

Course Readings

There are two required books for this course. They are:

1. Karen A. Mingst and Ivan M. Arreguín-Toft, *Essential of International Relations* (7th Ed., New York: Norton, 2017).
2. Daniel W. Drezner, *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* (Revived Ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

Any additional outside readings listed on the syllabus are available through this course's Blackboard page in the section titled Course Materials.

It is important to note that course readings should be done *before* the class they are listed for in the schedule below as we will discuss them in class that day. The average required reading load per class meeting across the entire semester is only 22 pages. Some class meetings require more than this average load, some less, and some none at all (i.e., days when we are viewing a film or reviewing for an exam). Students who keep up with the reading in a timely manner will get more out of each class meeting and do better in the overall course than students who do not.

Course Requirements & Grading

Your final course grade will be based solely on the following four components:

- 10% of your overall grade is based on attendance and participation.
- 30% of your overall grade is based on the first exam (Thurs., 10/5).
- 30% of your overall grade is based on the second exam (Tues., 10/31).
- 30% of your overall grade is based on the third exam (Thurs., 11/30).

The grading scale that will be used in this course is as follows:

- 90-100 = A
- 80-89 = B
- 70-79 = C
- 60-69 = D
- 0-59 = F

As a general rule, I do not round up grades (i.e., an 89.9 is a B, not an A).

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class meeting. As a general rule, there are no excused absences from this class, except for those related to religious holidays (see statement below) and required university-sponsored events. Thus, you do not have to e-mail or otherwise contact me every time you miss class. Of course, I understand that students get sick and occasionally miss class for other important reasons. As such, up to three absences will not be penalized. Additional absences will result in a proportional lowering of your grade in this area.

Students who participate in class actively can expect to score higher on this component of their grade than students who merely sit in their chairs passively. Active participation can include such things as asking questions about the readings, asking questions about the lecture, making connections between different readings in the course, making connections between the course material and current events, answering questions posed by the professor, answering questions posed by another student, etc.

Exams, Exam Dates, and Make-Up Exams

There are three noncumulative exams in this course, each of which will cover the course readings and in-class lectures and discussions for the relevant portion of the course. Some of my lectures might follow the readings closely. Others will have a more indirect connection to the readings. Students are responsible for all material covered in the course whether it comes from the readings or from our classroom sessions.

While we may occasionally diverge from some of the lecture and class discussion topics listed on the syllabus, the exam dates listed below are *permanently fixed and will not be changed*. Please do not ask me to reschedule any of the exams.

Make-up exams will *only* be given to students with a valid excuse who give me prior notification that they will not be at the regularly-scheduled exam. Unless you are literally on your death bed, you can send me an e-mail ahead of time.

Classroom Expectations

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. As such, I expect all students who attend class to arrive and be ready to start on time. During class, please refrain from all disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) reading newspapers, sleeping, talking during lecture, using your cell phone, checking your email, surfing the internet, and insulting fellow classmates or the instructor. Any of this or similar behavior will result in a lowering of your participation grade. Of course, I understand that you have lives and issues that may require immediate attention. Accordingly, if something important arises and you need to send or receive a phone call, text message, etc., please simply remove yourself from the class momentarily and take care of the issue.

If you miss a class meeting, you are still responsible for the information covered. I will not provide you with my notes, nor will the Graduate Teaching Assistant. Instead, you are encouraged to discuss the missed material with one or more of your fellow students or with me during my office hours.

University Policies

Sam Houston State University's policies on academic dishonesty, religious holidays, students with disabilities, and visitors in the classroom are available at: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>. For policies pertaining to Services for Students with Disabilities, please see: www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/.

Student Counseling Services

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the semester are encouraged to contact the SHSU Counseling Center for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential. The center is located in the new Student Health & Counseling Center. Ph. (936)-294-1720.

Student Veterans

The Veterans Resource Center serves SHSU students who have served the country and assist them with their transition into university life at SHSU. First Floor of Academic Building III; (936)-294-1046.

Class Schedule & Readings

Please note that the following is a tentative schedule of class meetings, lecture topics, and required readings. It is subject to change as needed.

TH (8/24) – Introduction to the Course

Required Reading:

None.

TU (9/5) – General Introduction to International Relations.....and to Zombies

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 1 (pp. 3-13, 16-18), chapter 3 (pp. 71-76, 97, 100-101, 104), and chapter 5 (pp. 133-138).
Drezner, pp.1-35, 131-136.

SECTION I: THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TH (9/7) – International Relations from the Pre-Westphalian Era to 1945

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 2 (pp. 21-44).

Optional Reading:

Mark W. Zacher, "The Territorial Integrity Norm: International Boundaries and the Use of Force," *International Security*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 215-221.

TU (9/12), TH (9/14), & TU (9/19) – International Relations after 1945, Part I: Elements of Stability during the Cold War

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 2 (pp. 44-56).

Optional Reading:

John Lewis Gaddis, "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System," *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Spring 1986), pp. 99-142.

Film: A glimpse into the Cold War through the film *The Good Shepherd*.

TH (9/21), TU (9/26), & TH (9/28) – International Relations after 1945, Part II: Elements of Instability after Decolonization and 9/11

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 2 (pp. 56-57, 60-63, 66-68), chapter 5 (pp. 169-177), and chapter 8 (pp. 284-291).

Thomas Friedman, "World War III," *New York Times*, 9/13/2011, p. A27.

Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Continuity of International Politics," in *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 246-250.

John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "How Safe Are We? Asking the Right Questions about Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs Snapshot*, 15 August 2016. Available:

<http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/how-safe-are-we-asking-right-questions-about-terrorism>

Optional Reading:

Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 49-80.

Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 42-78.

Daniel Byman, "Understanding the Islamic State," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Spring 2016), pp. 127-165.

Film: A look at the Global War on Terrorism through the film *Body of Lies*.

TU (10/3) – Flex Day/Study Day

**In-class review session.

TH (10/5) – First Exam

SECTION II: MAJOR THEORETICAL APPROACHES & DEBATES

TU (1010) – Realist Approaches to International Relations

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 3 (pp. 76-83) and chapter 4 (pp. 107-116).
Drezner, pp. 37-50.

TH (10/12) – No class....Prof. Brown is attending a conference in Washington, D.C.

TU (10/17) – Liberal Approaches to International Relations

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 3 (pp. 83-89), chapter 4 (pp. 116-118), and chapter 5 (pp. 161-162).
Drezner, pp. 51-64.

Optional Reading:

Andrew Moravcsik, "The New Liberalism," in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 234-251.

TH (10/19) – Normative Approaches to International Relations

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 4 (p. 128), chapter 7 (pp. 240-245), chapter 8 (pp. 291-297), and chapter 10 (pp. 361-372, 377-382).
Barry Buzan, "The English School: An Underexploited Resource in IR," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2001), pp. 471-481.
Robert Jackson, "Plural Responsibilities of Independent Statecraft," in *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 169-175.

TU (10/24) – Constructivist Approaches to International Relations

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 3 (pp. 92-95) and chapter 4 (pp. 123-124).
Dale C. Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay," *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Autumn 2000), pp. 187-196.
Drezner, pp. 65-74.

TH (10/26) – Debating the Likelihood of a U.S.-China War & Exam Review

Required Reading:

Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?" *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 7-45.

Barry Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible?" *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2010), pp. 5-36.

TU (10/31) – Second Exam

SECTION III: FOREIGN POLICY, WAR, & ECONOMY

TH (11/2) & TU (11/7) – Models of Foreign Policy Decision Making

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 5 (pp. 162-167).
Drezner, pp. 95-119.

Optional Reading:

Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 1969), pp. 689-718.

Film: "The Missiles of October"

TH (11/9) – Individuals and International Relations

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 6 (pp. 181-197).
Drezner, pp. 121-130.
Keren Yarhi-Milo, "In the Eye of the Beholder: How Leaders and Intelligence Communities Assess the Intentions of Adversaries," *International Security*, Vol. 38, no. 1 (Summer 2013), pp. 7-51.

TU (11/14) – Trends in War

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 1 (14-15) and chapter 8 (pp. 261-270, 277-284).
Joshua S. Goldstein and Steven Pinker. "War Really Is Going Out of Style," *New York Times*, 17 December 2011.
Bear F. Braumoeller, "Is War Disappearing?" Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1 September 2013, Chicago.

Optional Reading:

Marie Allansson, Erik Melander, and Lotta Themnér, "Organized Violence, 1989-2016," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (July 2017), pp. 574-587.
Therése Pettersson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (July 2015), pp. 536-550.

TH (11/16) – IPE and Globalization

Required Reading:

Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, chapter 3 (pp. 89-92) and chapter 9 (pp. 317-358).

TU (11/21) & TH (11/23): No class....Happy Thanksgiving!

TU (11/28) – World Politics/U.S. Foreign Policy in the Trump Era & Exam Review

Required Reading:

TBD

TH (11/30) – Third Exam