
POLS 427: International Relations
California State University, Los Angeles

Winter 2008
Lecture: Mon, Wed, 11:40am-1:20pm
Office Hours: Wed immediately after class
and by appointment

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This course is an introduction to international relations. It explores theories and approaches to explaining international politics and the behavior of states and non-state actors. Another goal of the course is to assist students in developing analytical and critical thinking skills to help better understand the world around them. Finally, we will discuss some important historical and contemporary events in international relations as both a way of helping us learn how they can be explained and understood using international relations theories and providing students with knowledge of some critical historical episodes and current events.

Required Texts:

Wayne C. McWilliams and Harry Piotrowski, *The World Since 1945: A History Of International Relations*
Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, 2nd edition.

There will be no required IR “textbook” for purchase. Instead I will choose selected core readings from a variety of sources and make them available to you electronically at (<http://www.jeffreyfields.net/427>). The required books above are more issue specific. The first book is a good overall history of major events since the end of World War II. Students generally have limited knowledge of some key historical events that still have resonance and importance today. Therefore, as we progress through our study of international relations as a subfield of political science, we will also read some history to maintain an adequate foundation and to help us put theoretical ideas in context. The second required text is an extended debate about nuclear weapons and their affect on states and the international environment.

Nota Bene: As this is a 400-level course, my expectations are commensurate with that. This will mainly manifest itself in the amount of reading and expectations on your written work. We will read the Sagan-Waltz book in its entirety and a good bit of the book *Just and Unjust Wars* in a short time span. I will also from time to time ask you to read additional articles (mainly newspaper items) that are not listed here on the syllabus. *If you are not up to the amount of reading overall required, you should rethink taking this course.*

Assignments and grading

4 reaction essays (10 points each)	40 points
Long essay	20
Final exam or second long essay	20
Quizzes and misc. assignments	10
Participation	10

Specific course information

The reaction essays are essay in which you will summarize a week's readings and give a critical assessment of them. You will be provided with specific guidelines on how to write these. These will be lightly graded, though as the quarter progresses, I will expect to see more sophistication in your analysis. You may choose any week to write them, but one must be completed in the first half of the quarter. **The essays are due to me by email before noon on the Thursday of the week you choose to write about.** No late submissions will be accepted. If you miss the deadline, you must choose another week to write about. *You may not write about a week's readings if you were absent for either of those days of class.*

The long essay will a critical review of the Sagan & Waltz book. This essay is due on February 8.

You have a choice of either taking a comprehensive take home final exam or writing a second essay on selections from the book *Just and Unjust Wars*, or one of the "critical readings" in week 9. If you choose to write the essay, it is do to me by email the Monday of final exam week. Though the final exam will be take home, there will be time restrictions on it. If you are having any issues that might preclude you from taking the exam, you should write the paper.

Students are expected to keep abreast of current international happenings. You should read the international section of a major paper (New York Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Financial Times, etc.) on an almost daily basis. If you need background on a particular subject ask me in class or via email. The BBC and the Council on Foreign Relations both have excellent websites with background information on many of the topics you will read about in the paper. (www.cfr.org and news.bbc.co.uk). Not sure what the Darfur crisis is all about? Check out this backgrounder from the BBC (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3496731.stm>). You are encouraged to integrate contemporary events into your reaction papers. By the third paper, I will expect to see it.

Quizzes and participation

You participation is an essential part of this course. Let us take advantage of the relatively small class size to have some substantive discussions. I will lecture for part of the class, but please come prepared to share your thoughts and insights on the readings and the topics of the day. Perfect attendance will not net you any participation points if you never say anything in class. Often students do not internalize this requirement. Think of it this way, whatever grade you expect to receive, lower it by one letter grade if you don't plan on participating. Unannounced quizzes will only be given if it appears you all need "encouragement" to complete the readings before coming to class. Throughout the quarter I may also give some other small assignments such as mini-presentations or debates.

Conduct and behavior

- Come to class ready to give your full attention. If you'd rather be some place else, don't come to class. **PUT YOUR CELL PHONE AWAY.** Away means away. Not your lap, not on your desk. If you can't abide by this rule, you should not take this class.
- Laptops are permissible until they become a problem. You know what I mean. Don't ruin it for everyone else. I will ban them if they are not being used properly.

- If you miss class, it's YOUR responsibility to find out what you missed from a classmate. Emails to me along the lines of "I missed classed Wednesday; can you tell me what happened?" will be ignored. Make a friend early to keep you informed if you miss class.
- Come to class on time. I am sympathetic if you arrive a few minutes late, once or twice. (If you arrive after the attendance sheet has been collected, you will not be allowed to sign it) Excessive and frequent tardiness will affect your participation grade.

Schedule and readings

Jan. 2 - Organizational meeting.

- Introduction to international relations.
- What is IR? How we study IR.
- Overview of approaches. The world today.

Jan. 7 - Worldviews and paradigms. Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism

Stephen Walt, "One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1998.

Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*. Introduction

Jan. 9 – Levels of Analysis: System level, neorealism and anarchy

Rourke, "Levels of Analysis in IR," pp. 18-33.

Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, Jan/Feb 2003.
The World Since 1945, pp. 543-555

Jan. 14 – Film: *Thirteen Days*

Jan. 16 – Inside the State

Graham Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, (Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), chapters 1-2

Jan. 21 – **No class.** Martin Luther King holiday.

Jan. 23 – Individual level: Approaches

James David Barber, *The Presidential Character*, pp. 1-11,

Case: Macgregor Duncan, "Munich: Reassessing the Diplomatic Value of Appeasement."

Jan. 28 – International security, war, and causes of war

Joshua Goldstein, "Conflict and War," in Goldstein, *Introduction to International Relations*

Security worksheet

Jan. 30 – Nuclear Proliferation, the NPT, nuclear weapons

Joseph Cirincione, *Deadly Arsenals*, chapter 1.

Preview Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*

Case: Iran's nuclear program

**** You must submit at least one critical response essay by Friday, February 1.**

Feb. 4 – Role of Nuclear weapons

Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*

Feb. 6 – Non-state actors: Transnational terrorism, nuclear terrorism

Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, chapters 1, 3.

Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism*

Sagan/Waltz Essay due, Friday February 8 by noon.

Feb. 11 – Sovereignty, ethnic conflict, peacekeeping

Kenneth Roth, "Setting the Standard: Justifying Humanitarian Intervention," *Harvard International Review* (Spring 2004)

Alan J. Kuperman, "Humanitarian Hazard: Revising Doctrines of Intervention," *Harvard International Review* (Spring 2004)

Yahya Sadowski, "Ethnic Conflict," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1998.

Feb. 13 – Peacekeeping

Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide"

Case: The Balkans and NATO

Feb. 18 – Globalization and global governance

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)" *Foreign Policy* 118 (Spring 2000)

Kenneth Waltz, "Globalization and Governance," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 32 (December 1999)

Feb 20 – Globalization

Feb 25 – Ethics and international Relations

Gordon Graham, "War," in *Ethics and International Relations.*"

Exercise: Would you have dropped the bomb?

Feb 27 – Ethics continued

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*
Preview critical readings for next week

Mar. 3 – Institutions and IOs

Karen A. Mingst, “Intergovernmental Organizations, Nongovernmental Organizations, and International Law.”

Mar. 5 – Critical readings in IR

Some of the most though provoking ideas on international relations since the end of the Cold War. You will not be required to read all of these. I will give further instructions in class.

Samuel Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations”

Robert Wright, “An American Foreign Policy that both Realists and Idealists Should Fall in Love with,” *New York Times Magazine*, July 16, 2006.

Joseph Nye, “The Decline of America’s Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004.

Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment” *Foreign Affairs*.

Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review*, June 2002.

March 10 - Critical readings continued. Future of IR. Course wrap up.

Final Exam: Details TBD.