



PS-106: INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Also listed as: PS-106H

Effective Term

Fall 2026

BOT Approval Date

12/11/2025

Discipline

PS - Political Science

Course Number

106

Course Title

Introduction to International Relations

Short Title

International Relations

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units

Lecture Units

3.00

Total Units

3.00

Hours

Lecture Contact Hours

48-54

Out of Class Hours Lecture

96-108

Total Contact Hours

48 - 54

Total Out of Class Hours

96 - 108

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

Yes

Distance Education

Distance Education Type

Both Fully Online and Hybrid Online

Does the DE also apply to the Honors section?

Yes



Honors component will meet synchronously (face-to-face or moderated through online technology such as Zoom)

Fully Online Delivery Requirements:

- a. Students must be notified via the college schedule of classes and the syllabus for the class if proctored tests are required for this course
- b. Any planned face-to-face meetings, such as an orientation or study session, must be optional
- c. The MSJC curriculum committee requires the use of accessible, asynchronous discussion as a component of every fully online course

Are you using publisher content?

No

Regular Substantive Interaction

Instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure regular substantive interaction (RSI) is maintained not only weekly but also for the duration of the course. Instructor interactions should be equivalent in time, quality and consistency to the engagement students would receive in a face-to-face course—for example, through announcements, discussion participation, personalized feedback, video messages, or other instructional communications. Instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. RSI will be maintained through a variety of methods:

- Orientation - Students must be oriented to the online and face-to-face portions at the start of the course.
- Announcements - Announcements using the course management system must be posted at least weekly to keep students current on course events, due dates, materials, etc.
- Discussion Forums - Content-related discussion forums within the designated CMS will include appropriate instructor participation and will be initiated and maintained, with timely feedback provided. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction. Open-ended discussion boards may be used to further learning and interaction.
- MSJC Communication – Instructor will use MSJC-administered communication tools (such as email or the designated CMS communication tools) to regularly communicate with and provide ease of access to students.
- Timely Feedback - Timely feedback on student work will be provided by the instructor, which may include comments and/or rubrics, within the Grades area of the designated CMS.
- Scheduled Meetings – Hybrid and synchronous courses will meet at regularly scheduled times. ADA Compliance - All course interactions and content must be designed with accessibility in mind and meet ADA requirements.

Honors / Non-honors

PS-106H

C-ID (Admin Only)

C-ID POLS 140

CB 00

CCC000534215

Course Title

Honors Introduction to International Relations

Approved Cal-GETC Area

AREA-4

Approved Second Cal-GETC Area

Approved Third Cal-GETC Area

C-ID (Admin Only)

C-ID POLS 140

Catalog Description

This course introduces students to the major theoretical explanations of conflict, cooperation, economic growth and re-distribution in international affairs, and explores important historical and contemporary debates in international politics.



Requisites

Prerequisite(s)

Prerequisite(s) (must be taken before)

POLS-C1000 (with a grade of C or better).

Codes

TOP Code (CB 03)

2207.00 - Political Science

CIP Code

45.0901 - International Relations and Affairs.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Political Science (Masters Required)	End

GE Information

Check GE Types Requested

AA/AS B2 - Social & Behavioral Sciences

Cal-GETC Areas

Approved Cal-GETC Area

AREA-4

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective
1. Analyze the various theories of international relations.
2. Evaluate and analyze the causes of international conflict.
3. Evaluate and analyze the causes of international cooperation.
4. Apply the theories of international relations to contemporary issues, events and problems in global politics.
5. Identify the major international organizations and evaluate their role in international relations.
6. Examine and evaluate the role that international law plays in international relations.
7. Examine and evaluate the role that national, transnational, and sub-national actors play in international relations.
8. Examine and evaluate the process of nation-state foreign policy decision-making.
9. Examine and analyze the relationship of international economics to international relations.
10. Examine their own personal beliefs, attitudes, and biases about historically marginalized people and cultures across the world.
11. Analyze the various institutions and structures that create and maintain social, economic, and political inequality across the world; and, identify those that offer redress for these issues.
12. Evaluate the history of issues related to diversity, social and economic inequities, and political power across the world.

Honors Objectives

1. Synthesize primary and secondary sources to construct original, evidence-based arguments in advanced research projects, demonstrating mastery of academic writing conventions in political science.
2. Evaluate complex global political issues and trends, formulating nuanced, critical perspectives through independent analysis and comparative frameworks.
3. Critically assess, curate, and apply academic and empirical sources—including internet, MSJC library print collections, and online databases—to conduct rigorous data interpretation and conceptual analysis.
4. Analyze the operation of political systems, conflict resolution mechanisms, and processes of political change, and construct comparative critiques that demonstrate deep understanding of the dynamics of governance and power across international contexts.

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome
1. Students will apply international relations theory to past and present events.
2. Students will evaluate the role that international institutions, nation-states, sub-national groups and transnational play in global politics.
3. Students will analyze contemporary issues in global politics.

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. Components of International Relations Theory
 - a. Central concerns of international relations
2. Include the role of identity, race, class, and gender in shaping global power dynamics
 - a. The sources of global conflict
3. Address ethnic, religious, gender-based, and post-colonial sources of conflict
 - a. The sources of global cooperation
4. Consider cooperation through human rights treaties, refugee protections, and inclusive global governance
 - a. Analytical paradigms used to study international relations
5. Realism and neorealism
6. Liberalism and neoliberalism
7. Idealism
8. Marxism
 - a. Evaluate global inequality, dependency, and post-colonial critiques
9. Constructivism
 - a. Analyze how social identities (race, gender, nationality) shape international norms and values
10. Postmodernism
 - a. Deconstruct dominant Western narratives and center marginalized worldviews
11. Peace studies
 - a. Examine intercultural peacebuilding, restorative justice, and nonviolent resistance
12. Feminism
 - a. Explore how gendered power structures affect conflict, diplomacy, and global security policy
13. International Solutions
 - a. Explore inclusive and justice-oriented responses to global challenges
 - b. Evaluate strategies to address refugee protection, gender equality, environmental justice, and access to education and healthcare
 - c. Assess the role of international cooperation in promoting human rights and global equity
14. Economic Development and Consequences
 - a. Natural resource depletion and deforestation
 - b. Overpopulation, famine, and civil conflict
 - c. Unequal development and growth: causes and theoretical explanations
 - d. Incorporate feminist economics, post-development theory, and perspectives from the Global South Critically assess structural barriers to equitable and sustainable development
15. Economic Integration

- a. Theories of integration and supranationalism
 - b. The European Union
 - c. Commodity cartels
 - d. The North American Free Trade Zone
 - e. Discuss the effects of regional integration on Indigenous communities, labor rights, and national sovereignty
16. International Political Economy
- a. Multinational trade
 - b. Markets
 - c. Strategies
 - d. Regimes and cooperation
 - e. Collective goods and free riders
 - f. Multinational corporations
 - g. The international monetary system
 - h. Currency and exchange rates
 - i. The World Bank
 - j. Analyze how global capitalism perpetuates inequality, exploitation, and debt dependency Examine the socio-economic impact of trade and monetary systems on marginalized populations
17. International Organizations and Law
- a. International law: sources, principles, and enforcement
 - b. The World Court at The Hague
 - c. History, structure, and effectiveness of the United Nations
 - d. Multinational and multilateral organizations
 - e. Evaluate global efforts to address genocide, statelessness, racial persecution, and climate injustice Analyze power imbalances in international representation, particularly of the Global South
18. International Conflict and War
- a. Definitions of conflict, war, and peace
 - b. Theories on the causes of war
 - c. Types of war
 - d. Types of military configurations
 - e. Conventional and nuclear weapon types, strategy, and control
 - f. Explore how warfare disproportionately impacts women, children, and displaced communities Examine violations of international humanitarian law and pathways to peacebuilding
19. United States Foreign Policy Decision-Making
- a. Organizational processes and inter-agency bargaining
 - b. Psychology of decision-makers
 - c. Key actors and influences
 - d. Key doctrines and approaches
 - e. Assess foreign policy through the lenses of race, gender, ideology, and human rights Critique exclusionary practices such as restrictive asylum, drone warfare, and economic sanctions
20. Conflict, Cooperation, and Bargaining
- a. Rationality
 - b. Game theory
 - c. Collective goods and free riders
 - d. Power distribution
 - e. Alliances
 - f. The balance of power
 - g. The security dilemma
 - h. Analyze refugee crises, climate migration, and identity-based conflict using DEI frameworks
21. International Security
- a. Security and power: dominant approaches
22. Realist theories Liberal theories Social theories
- a. Integrate concepts of human security, gender-based violence, and the effects of militarization on marginalized populations

Honors Content

The Honors section of Political Science 106 is designed to deepen students' understanding of international relations theory and its application to contemporary global issues. In addition to covering all topics included in the regular PS 106 course, the Honors section

requires students to either explore additional subjects in international and global relations not addressed in the standard curriculum or to conduct expanded research on core topics from the regular section by incorporating advanced or alternative perspectives. Some examples include:

1. The role of the International Criminal Court in prevention of human rights violations.
2. The global economic impact of trade disputes and conflicting tariffs.
3. The effect of terrorism on global conflict.
4. The current status of nuclear proliferation and its effect on global conflict.

Methods of Instruction

Method

Field Trips

Integration

Students will participate in field trips—either in-person or virtual—to institutions and organizations relevant to international relations. These may include visits to foreign consulates, international law courts, global policy think tanks, or non-governmental organizations engaged in international development or diplomacy. The purpose of these field trips is to deepen students' understanding of global political systems, international institutions, and real-world applications of the theories and concepts studied in class. Field experiences will help students connect theoretical frameworks—such as realism, liberalism, and feminism—to practical contexts involving diplomacy, human rights, international law, and global economic policy.

DE Adaptations for MOI

In online or hybrid settings, field trips will be replaced with virtual tours, interactive media, or recorded guest-led walkthroughs of international institutions. These virtual experiences will be accessible through the course management system and will include closed captioning, and other accessibility supports as needed. Reflection assignments and guided discussion prompts will accompany each virtual trip to encourage critical thinking and analysis.

Method

Reading

Integration

Students will read a variety of academic texts, case studies, and primary source documents that address international relations theory, global events, and key political institutions. Readings will include authors and perspectives from diverse global regions and cultures to ensure a broad understanding of international systems. Students will receive instruction on how to critically engage with reading through strategies such as annotation, outlining, and notetaking. Reading assignments will serve as the foundation for in-class discussions, written analyses, and group work.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Readings will be uploaded to the course management system in formats compatible with screen readers and other accessibility tools. Instructional videos and reading guides will be available to support comprehension. Discussion boards and quizzes will help assess understanding and create opportunities for reflective engagement.

Method

Film/video Viewing and Discussion

Integration

Films and videos will be used to deepen students' understanding of global political issues, international institutions, and cultural perspectives within the context of international relations. Visual media will explore topics such as conflict and peacebuilding, diplomacy, globalization, refugee experiences, environmental crises, and international development. These materials will be critically analyzed in connection with theoretical frameworks covered in the course, including realism, liberalism, Marxism, feminism, and postcolonialism. Class discussions and written reflections will guide students in comparing the portrayal of global issues in media with academic theories and historical case studies, promoting critical thinking and engagement with diverse perspectives.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Films and videos will be made available through the course management system and will include closed captioning and other accessibility features. Discussions and analysis will be conducted through asynchronous discussion forums or synchronous video meetings, allowing students to engage with each other and the content in multiple formats. Reflective writing assignments will further support student comprehension and interaction with course materials.

Method

Lecture

Integration

Lectures will provide students with essential background on international relations theories, historical developments, and current global political issues. The content will include major theoretical frameworks such as realism, liberalism, feminism, and constructivism, as well as their application to global institutions, diplomacy, war, international law, and political economy. Lectures will be supplemented with visual aids, case examples, and brief video clips to support various learning styles. This method will help students connect abstract theories to real-world scenarios and prepare them for more interactive learning activities such as discussions, debates, and written analysis.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Lecture content will be delivered synchronously via accessible video conferencing or asynchronously through recorded accessible videos. All materials, including slides and transcripts, will be posted in accessible formats through the course management system. Students will engage with lecture material through quizzes, discussion prompts, and short response assignments.

Method

Visiting Lecturers

Integration

Guest speakers from international organizations, foreign service, academia, non-governmental organizations, or global policy institutions will be invited to speak with students about real-world applications of international relations theory. These lectures may address topics such as diplomacy, international law, economic development, human rights, environmental cooperation, or global conflict resolution. Guest speakers will offer diverse cultural, regional, and professional perspectives that complement the course's theoretical content, helping students understand how concepts like power, cooperation, identity, and global governance play out in practice. These interactions will also expose students to potential career paths and civic engagement opportunities within the field of international affairs.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Guest lectures will be delivered synchronously via accessible video conferencing platforms or asynchronously through recorded interviews or presentations. All recordings will include closed captioning and meet accessibility standards. Students will engage with guest content through reflection prompts, Q&A sessions (live or written), and discussion forums within the course management system.

Method

Role Playing/Simulation

Integration

Role-playing activities will simulate real-world international scenarios such as United Nations negotiations, peace treaty bargaining, or international climate summits. Students will be assigned roles representing states, international organizations, or interest groups and must advocate for their position using relevant theoretical frameworks and research. These simulations will deepen students' understanding of diplomacy, global cooperation, and conflict resolution while encouraging active learning, empathy, and strategic thinking.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Role-playing exercises will be adapted for online delivery using discussion boards, breakout rooms in synchronous video sessions, and collaborative documents. Instructions, role descriptions, and supporting materials will be posted in the course management system in accessible formats. Students may submit reflective analysis after simulations to reinforce learning outcomes.

Method

Group Projects

Integration

Students will work collaboratively in small groups to research and present on international topics such as global governance, regional conflicts, trade agreements, or human rights frameworks. Each group will be responsible for applying international relations theories to their assigned issue, analyzing policy responses, and proposing informed solutions or critiques. Group projects promote peer learning, communication, critical thinking, and cross-cultural awareness by requiring students to negotiate ideas, divide responsibilities, and synthesize diverse viewpoints into a cohesive final product.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Group collaboration will occur via online discussion forums, shared documents, and scheduled virtual meetings using the course management system. Students will present findings through recorded or live presentations, discussion posts, or written reports. All group tools will meet accessibility standards and allow equitable participation.

Additional Methods of Instruction for Honors

Method: Group Discussions

Integration: Small group discussions will give honors students and the instructor an opportunity to share ideas and further analyze the theories and concepts presented in class lectures and readings. In addition, group discussions will be used to discuss the concepts and theories presented in the additional honors readings. The group setting can also be used to discuss progress on the honors assignments. The instructor and honors students will meet at least three times per semester and are encouraged to meet monthly when possible.

Method: Oral Presentations

Integration: Oral presentations will provide honors students the opportunity of presenting their research projects to their honors colleagues or the regular class to facilitate the development of their presentation and communication skills.

Method: Service Learning

Integration: Service learning will allow students to gain practical experience, and apply key course concepts to real political experiences, through participation in a political organization, or a public or community-based organization.

Method: Field Trips

Integration: Field trips to off campus political events will be used to encourage student participation in community and political organizations and to increase their knowledge of the impact of current political trends and issues.

Methods of Evaluation

Method

Class Participation

Integration

In-class discussions will be used to assess students' understanding of course readings, their ability to distinguish information, and to demonstrate synthesis and application of international relations theories. Students will be evaluated using participation rubric measuring frequency, relevance, and accuracy of their contributions. Class participation activities will include theory-based discussions, current event applications, and structured debates related to international conflict, cooperation, and diplomacy.

DE Adaptations for MOE

In online settings, participation will be assessed through structured discussion forums and open-ended prompts that evaluate students' ability to analyze and critique international relations theories and global political issues. Posts will be graded using participation rubric for accuracy, insight, and application of theory. Feedback will be provided weekly through the grading tools in the course management system.

Method

Exams/Tests

Integration

Essay type exams evaluated based on content will be used to determine student understanding of the various theories of international relations and their ability to apply them to contemporary issues, events and problems in global affairs.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Essay exams will be administered using the course management system. Essay type exams evaluated based on content will be used to determine student understanding of the various theories of international relations and their ability to apply them to contemporary issues, events and problems in global affairs. Multiple choice style tests will be used to assure student understanding of general concepts in international relations. Feedback will be provided in a timely manner via the District CMS.

Method

Papers

Integration

Students will complete writing assignments of varying lengths and formats, including policy analyses, response papers, and theory-application essays. These assignments will be used to evaluate students' ability to synthesize course material and apply it to global political dynamics, such as international law, economic development, or security dilemmas.

DE Adaptations for MOE

All paper assignments will be posted and submitted through the CMS. Files will be accessible and compatible with screen readers. Feedback will be provided within one week via the CMS grading tools.

Method

Research Projects

Integration

Students will conduct research on an international issue of their choice, applying course theories and methodologies to analyze real-world political problems. The research project will assess students' ability to interpret data, evaluate sources, and construct analytical arguments tied to international relations content.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Research projects will be submitted through the CMS and evaluated for completeness, analytical depth, and theoretical application. All submissions will comply with accessibility standards, and feedback will be returned within two weeks via the CMS.

Method

Self-Evaluation

Integration

Students will complete self-reflection assignments to assess how their political beliefs and perspectives have evolved through engagement with course content. Reflections may include exam reviews, simulation debriefs, or journal entries, and will be evaluated for depth, personal insight, and connection to international relations theories.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Self-evaluations will be submitted through the CMS assignments section. Prompts and feedback will be provided in accessible formats. Responses will be evaluated for thoughtful engagement with course material and personal growth, with feedback delivered within one week.

Evaluation of Honors assignments

Honors students must successfully complete the requirements for the regular portion of the course and the honors assignments to receive honors credit.

Assignment A: Research Paper

The research paper will be evaluated based on the depth and originality of the student's research, the development of a clear and well-supported thesis, and adherence to academic standards. Students will also be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate a deep understanding of their selected topic, conduct extensive outside research, critically analyze and synthesize information from scholarly literature, draw thoughtful conclusions, and interpret and apply political theories and concepts. Work must meet college-

level standards in formatting, grammar, and spelling. Students will also be evaluated on their oral presentation and visual aids. The research paper will be evaluated on the originality of the argument and/or thesis in addition to the originality of the research.

Assignment B: Political Analysis Paper

The political analysis paper will be evaluated based on the student's ability to clearly explain the background, economic, cultural, and societal impacts of the selected political topic. Evaluation will also focus on how effectively the student links their analysis to course concepts and theories. Additional emphasis will be placed on the ability to conduct original analysis, synthesize information across multiple sources, compare competing viewpoints, and apply theories critically. High-quality writing and academic presentation are required. The political analysis paper will be evaluated on the originality of the argument and/or thesis in addition to the originality of the research.

Assignment C: Administrative Case Study

The administrative case study will be evaluated on the thoroughness of the student's analysis of a federal or state agency's activities and their impact on American citizens. The paper should demonstrate the student's understanding of administrative agencies and their role in American government. Students will also be expected to demonstrate critical analysis using both primary and secondary sources, draw conclusions about the effectiveness or shortcomings of administrative practices, and connect their evaluation to broader governmental theories and frameworks. College-level writing standards apply.

Assignment D: Film Analysis

The film analysis will be evaluated on the student's ability to connect the selected film(s) to course theories and concepts, demonstrating critical thinking and a strong grasp of the material. Students will also be assessed on their capacity to incorporate outside sources, draw comparative conclusions between theory and media representation, and analyze complex themes using political science frameworks. Work must be clearly written, well-organized, and presented at the college level.

Optional Assignment: Service-Learning Assignment

The service-learning assignment will be evaluated based on the student's ability to reflect on their 10 hours of field participation in relation to course content. Evaluation will also include the ability to critically analyze and synthesize their experience with academic literature and political science theory, interpret the broader social and political significance of their service, and submit a thoughtful, well-organized reflection that meets high academic standards.

Assignments

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Simulation of an International Crisis. You will be broken up into groups and assigned roles representing various countries, international organizations (e.g., United Nations, NATO), and non-state actors in a Model UN-style simulation focused on resolving a global conflict or humanitarian crisis (e.g., climate migration, territorial disputes, global pandemic response). Each group will research their position, prepare diplomatic statements, and work collaboratively to draft resolutions. In-class, your groups will engage in moderated debates, form alliances, negotiate positions, and vote on proposed solutions. After the simulation, you will individually submit a one-page reflection describing the role your group played, key challenges faced, and insights into the complexity of international negotiations. You will be evaluated on participation, research, teamwork, and the ability to apply course theories.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

In the online format, the international simulation will unfold over multiple weeks via discussion boards, collaborative documents, and synchronous sessions. Role materials and instructions will be posted in accessible formats. Assignments will be provided and submitted via the district CMS. Feedback will be provided within one week through the course management system.

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Analysis of an International Treaty or Agreement. Choose a significant international treaty or agreement (e.g., the Paris Climate Agreement, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons, or the Geneva Conventions). Research the historical context in which the treaty was negotiated, the key stakeholders involved, and the global political theories or ideologies that influenced its development. Examine the challenges the treaty aimed to address, its implementation mechanisms, and any ongoing debates or controversies surrounding it. Present your findings in a two-page analysis, written in APA formatting and supported by 2 to 3 scholarly sources. Your analysis will be evaluated based on the depth of your research, historical context, theoretical connections, and critical engagement with the treaty's global impact.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

This assignment will be available in the course management system and submitted through the assignment tab as a text entry or file upload. All materials will meet accessibility standards. Feedback will be provided within one week.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Read and take notes on the provided excerpts from Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War, Hans Morgenthau's Politics Among Nations, and a chapter from Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line edited by Alexander Anievas, Nivi Manchanda, and Robbie Shilliam. After completing the readings, write a two-page analysis addressing the following questions: How does the chapter on race and racism challenge or expand upon the traditional power structures discussed by Thucydides and Morgenthau? How do these texts reflect differing views of power, identity, and inequality in international relations? Based on these readings, what insights can be drawn about how global governance and international institutions can better address inequality in the international system? Your paper should be formatted in APA style and does not require sources beyond the assigned readings. Your analysis will be evaluated for comprehension, synthesis, and critical engagement with the ideas presented.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

Readings will be attached to the assignment and available in learning modules on the course management system. The reading analysis will be submitted through the course management system assignment tab. All readings and assignment instructions will meet accessibility standards. Feedback will be provided within one week.

Honors Assignments**Assignment**

Honors students are required to complete all the regularly assigned work for PS 106. In addition, students in the honors section are required to complete either Assignment A or B, as well as either Assignment C or D, for a total of two Honors Assignments.

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Academic Rigor and Research

Positive Transgressive Behavior (as evidenced by creativity, innovation, risk taking, challenging norms and standard narratives)

Justify how the assignment reflects the Academic Rigor and Research Core Value

Students are required to complete all the assignments in the regular course PS 106 and additional honors assignments and research. This is a vital part of the rigor and research core value, because it gives students the opportunity to challenge their understanding beyond the basics of the course.

Assignment**Assignment A: Research Paper**

Students are required to complete a research project that takes an in-depth look at an international political topic of their choice. They will also be required to present original research and an original thesis. The project should demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of international relations theory and apply relevant scholarly sources, including both primary and secondary materials. Students are expected to critically analyze their topic, synthesize information from diverse perspectives, and clearly articulate their findings in a well-organized, academically rigorous paper. In addition to the written component, students will be asked to share their research findings through either a formal presentation, discussion, or visual display (student choice). All work should reflect honors-level standards in research, writing, and critical thinking.

Students will present their research project in one of the following options:

1. A 10-minute prerecorded video uploaded to the course management system. You should be visually present in the video and the presentation should include a visual aide, such as slides, posters, or other acceptable alternatives.
2. A 10-minute in class presentation. The in-class presentation should include a visual aide, such as slides, posters, or other acceptable alternatives.

Examples of topics: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Global Security or The European Union's Response to the Russia-Ukraine War: Unity or Fragmentation?

Your research project will conform to the following guidelines: Papers should be 12- 15 pages typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, standard one-inch margins. A minimum of eight academic/peer reviewed sources are required. Course textbook and assigned course readings cannot account for more than 2 of the 8 required sources. Papers should follow standard APA citation and formatting guidelines.

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Academic Rigor and Research

Justify how the assignment reflects the Academic Rigor and Research Core Value

The research paper assignment aligns with the core value of academic rigor and research because it requires a 12–15-page paper that demands in-depth analysis, the development of an original thesis, and the use of at least eight peer-reviewed sources, challenging students to engage with a broad range of political science literature. The strict APA formatting and citation guidelines reinforce academic integrity, structure, and attention to detail, ensuring that students maintain high standards throughout their work. Limiting course readings to only two sources out of eight pushes students to rely on academic databases and peer-reviewed materials, ensuring the work is well-supported and researched.

Assignment

Assignment B: Case Study: Students will write an international case study that critically examines the activities of a specific country or international organization and evaluates its impact on global politics. The paper must include a clear and original thesis statement that offers a critical interpretation or creative argument rather than simply describing events. Students should select a significant foreign policy decision, intervention, or global role—for example, China's Belt and Road Initiative, NATO's influence in Eastern Europe, or the UN's response to refugee crises. The thesis should address a central question or issue and reflect the student's unique interpretation of the topic.

In addition to the written component of the project, students will present their research project in one of the following options:

1. A 10-minute prerecorded video uploaded to the course management system. You should be visually present in the video and the presentation should include a visual aide, such as slides, posters, or other acceptable alternatives.
2. A 10-minute in class presentation. The in-class presentation should include a visual aide, such as slides, posters, or other acceptable alternatives.

Your case study will be 10-12 pages typed, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, standard one-inch margins. A minimum of three academic/peer reviewed sources are required. Course textbook cannot be used as a source. Papers should follow standard APA citation and formatting guidelines.

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Academic Rigor and Research
Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Academic Rigor and Research Core Value

This case study assignment aligns with the core value of rigor and research by requiring honors students to deeply analyze the activities of an international organization or country and their impact on global politics. Students must engage in comprehensive research, using primary and secondary sources to gather information on the organization policies, operations, and outcomes. The assignment challenges students to critically evaluate the effectiveness and broader societal implications of government action, requiring the synthesis of complex information and well-supported, evidence-based conclusions.

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

The assignment aligns with the core value of engagement by requiring students to connect academic research with real-world governance, exploring how international organizations directly affect citizens' lives. It encourages students to engage with contemporary policy issues and develop an understanding of governmental structures and functions, fostering a connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Assignment

Assignment C: Political Analysis Paper: Write a political analysis paper that analyzes a current international political topic. Your paper should address the background of the topic, and its economic, cultural and societal impact. Some examples would be white privilege, religious liberty or police relations with minority communities.

Your political analysis paper will be 3-4 pages typed, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, standard one-inch margins. A minimum of three academic/peer reviewed sources are required. Course textbook cannot be used as a source. Papers should follow standard APA citation and formatting guidelines.

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Academic Rigor and Research
Inclusivity

Justify how the assignment reflects the Academic Rigor and Research Core Value

This political analysis paper aligns with the core value of rigor and research by requiring students to conduct in-depth analysis of a current political topic, involving a detailed examination of its background and impacts. Students must use credible sources and data to support their arguments, integrating economic, cultural, and societal dimensions into their analysis. The paper emphasizes critical thinking and academic rigor as students are expected to synthesize various perspectives and draw connections to broader political theories.

Justify how the assignment reflects the Inclusivity Core Value

The political analysis paper aligns with the core value of inclusivity by encouraging students to explore topics that directly affect marginalized or underrepresented communities, such as white privilege or police relations with minority communities. By examining how political topics impact different groups, students gain a deeper understanding of societal inequalities and the experiences of diverse populations.

Assignment

Assignment D: Film Analysis: As an honors student, you will be required to write an analysis of selected films as they relate to the course theories and concepts. You will be asked to explain how film and theory connect. Films can be watched as a group or

individually. You will focus your analysis on one or more films. A list of potential films will be developed in consultation with the instructor.

Your film analysis will be 3-4 pages typed, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, standard one-inch margins. A minimum of 1 film and three academic/peer-reviewed sources are required. The course textbook cannot be used as a source. Papers should follow standard APA citation and formatting guidelines.

Examples of films: (1) The Kite Runner- Migration, Identity, and Borders; (2) Blood Diamond- Post-Colonialism; (3) Hotel Rwanda- Human Rights; (4) Dr. Strangelove- War

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Academic Rigor and Research
Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Academic Rigor and Research Core Value

The film analysis assignment aligns with the core value of research and academic rigor because students must locate and integrate at least three peer-reviewed academic sources into their film analysis. By requiring sources beyond the course textbook, the assignment emphasizes the importance of independent research and scholarly engagement.

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

The film analysis assignment aligns with the core value of engagement by allowing students to select films that resonate with their interests and connect them to course theories and concepts. Watching films either as a group or individually offers flexibility and ensures that students can immerse themselves in the material and encourages active engagement with both the visual medium and academic theory.

Assignment

Optional Assignment: Field Option/Service-Learning Project: Students get credit for hours spent volunteering on a campaign, community, government, or non-profit organization. Students are required to volunteer for 10 hours during the semester. The purpose of this project is to present students with the opportunity to see the application of course theories in real- life situations and become active participants in their community through civic engagement. Students are responsible for securing their own volunteer placement. Assignment requirements include a Service Learning Contract (located in canvas); Service Learning Timesheet (signed off by organization); Reflection Journal, the purpose of the journal is to record thoughts, observations, feelings, activities and questions throughout the project and to relate the experience to materials covered in class. The journal should include a minimum of 10 pages and cover each session the student participates in the field.

Required or Optional

Optional

Honors Core Values

Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

Student will be engaged in the community.

Course Materials

Textbooks

An Introduction to International Relations. 4th ed. Edited by Richard Devetak, Daniel R. McCarthy. Cambridge University Press. 2024.
Introduction to International Relations and Global Politics. Ninth Edition. Georg Sørensen and Jørgen Møller. Oxford University Press. 2025.

Open Educational Resources

Stephen McGlinchey. International Relations. Bloomsbury Academic. 2022. ISBN-13: 978-1350932586.

Stephen McGlinchey. International Relations Theory. Bloomsbury Academic. 2017. 978-1910814192.

Class Size Information

Class Size

40

Class Size Category

A - Lecture/discussion 40

Diversity and Inclusion

Course Design and Materials: Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

Accessible Instruction: Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

Equitable Teaching Practices: Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement: Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the study of international relations and are intentionally woven throughout the course content, discussions, and assignments. Students engage with global political theories and case studies that reflect diverse cultural, racial, gender, and ideological perspectives. The course includes theoretical frameworks such as feminism, postmodernism, and constructivism, which critically examine the role of identity, power, and representation in international politics. Topics such as colonialism, global inequality, refugee crises, human rights, and cultural conflict allow students to analyze how race, gender, sexuality, and socio-economic status shape global experiences and international outcomes. Classroom discussions and activities are designed to foster respectful dialogue, challenge ethnocentric assumptions, and promote understanding of multiple worldviews, creating an inclusive learning environment that values diverse experiences and perspectives.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

This course is designed to promote equity by contextualizing assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions to support diverse learners. Course materials reflect a wide range of global perspectives, including voices from historically marginalized regions and communities, and incorporate theoretical frameworks such as feminism, Marxism, and postcolonialism to examine international relations through lenses of race, gender, class, and identity. Instructional methods are inclusive and scaffolded to support different learning styles, with content presented through lectures, discussions, multimedia, and experiential activities. Assignments offer multiple modes of expression—such as essays, presentations, simulations, and reflective writing—to accommodate varied student strengths and experiences. Clear instructions, rubrics, and opportunities for feedback and revision ensure all students can meet course objectives with transparency and support. Evaluation focuses on critical thinking, application of theory, and engagement with diverse viewpoints, rather than prior knowledge or stylistic conformity. Interactions are grounded in inclusive dialogue, fostering respect for cultural, linguistic, and ideological diversity within a safe and collaborative learning environment. The course encourages active participation while affirming the value of each student's identity and experience. Efforts are made to reduce barriers to learning through culturally responsive teaching practices and accessible course design. Students are challenged to reflect on their own assumptions while gaining insight into global perspectives. Ultimately, the course seeks to create a learning environment where all students feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed.

Interactions

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.

Student-to-student interaction will be conducted through structured in-class and/or online discussions, collaborative group activities, and interactive learning exercises. Students will engage in debates, case study analyses, and simulations (such as diplomatic negotiations or international crisis scenarios) that require them to apply theoretical frameworks and respond to global political challenges collaboratively. Group work and peer-to-peer feedback will encourage active listening, critical engagement with diverse viewpoints, and the development of effective communication and argumentation skills. These activities promote a deeper understanding of course content while building civic awareness and fostering respectful dialogue on complex international issues.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

Instructor-to-student interaction will occur through lectures, guided discussions, timely feedback on assignments, and individual or group consultations. The instructor will facilitate student understanding by clarifying theoretical concepts, posing critical questions, moderating debates, and connecting course content and theory such as liberalism or constructivism to current international events. Interaction will also include regular check-ins, both in-person and/or online, to support student progress, provide academic guidance, and promote critical engagement with course materials. Feedback on written work and participation will be detailed and constructive, encouraging deeper analysis and improvement. The instructor will foster an inclusive, respectful environment where students feel supported in expressing and developing their political thinking.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

Students will engage directly with course content through assigned readings, lectures, accessible multimedia resources, research projects, and written analyses. They will interact with foundational theories of international relations such as realism, Marxism and others and apply them to real-world case studies involving global conflict, cooperation, diplomacy, and economic development. Students will critically evaluate primary and secondary sources, participate in content-based simulations or role-playing exercises, and demonstrate understanding through analytical essays, policy briefs, and assessments. These activities ensure that students do more than absorb information—they analyze, interpret, and apply content to deepen comprehension and connect theoretical concepts to current international affairs.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

The course promotes student-to-self interaction by encouraging metacognitive reflection on political beliefs, cultural assumptions, and personal values in relation to global issues. Students will be asked to consider how their perspectives influence their interpretation of international events and theoretical approaches. Reflective writing assignments, discussion prompts, and self-assessments will guide students in evaluating their learning progress, identifying areas for growth, and refining their analytical thinking. By connecting course content to their own civic identities and ethical frameworks, students develop a deeper awareness of their role in the global community and their capacity for informed, responsible political engagement.

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