
Introduction to International Politics

Summer 2021



Instructor: Adam Charles Lenton
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Virtual Office Hours: by appointment on Zoom

Course Description

International politics directly impacts our lives, connecting us in important ways with people, places, and political phenomena across the world. Despite the scope and the complexity of these interactions, the core concern of international politics as a field of study revolves around a relatively simple – yet persistent – question: how can states guarantee their security and be made to keep promises in the absence of an overarching authority? Whether regarding questions of war and peace, of economic development, of tackling the spread of infectious diseases or in solving climate change, the answers to this question are of importance to us all.

This course provides an introduction to international politics, which can be primarily understood as the relationships between states, as well as their connections to other international actors, social structures, and processes. The course is divided into two halves. The first half of the course aims to provide students with a solid understanding of the major approaches to international relations theory. The second half of the course transitions from theory to practice, examining several key issues in international politics, from nuclear arms control and civil conflict to globalization, energy security, international development, and climate change. This is of course just a taster of the breadth of international politics, but will give you a good sense of the sorts of upper-level courses you may wish to take later on and provide a solid grounding in some of the core theoretical approaches and empirical phenomena studied in the discipline.

*Instructor bio: Adam Lenton is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at GWU. His research examines nation-building, political integration, and security in the former Soviet Union and the EU. Prior to joining GWU, he graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) and Sciences Po Paris, and has had research published in *Problems of Post-Communism* and *Russian Politics* (forthcoming).*

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Explain how politics in the international system differs from within the state
- Understand the key philosophical, historical, and normative foundations of international relations theories
- Comfortably apply different theoretical lenses to the analysis of policy issues
- Systematically explain challenges to international cooperation across issues of contemporary political significance
- Intelligently unpack and critique others' arguments
- Read and comprehend works of social science more effectively
- Become a better analyst of foreign affairs

Textbooks & Materials

No textbooks are required for this course. All readings will be uploaded to the course's Blackboard page.

A note about Covid-19 and online instruction:

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in unprecedented ways, with higher education no exception. Unlike at the beginning of the pandemic, however, there is now an emerging body of social science research that examines the effects of online instruction on student learning outcomes, with empirical evidence of the following:

- Students (and instructors!) find long periods of synchronous instruction to be [draining](#);
- One [study](#) of over 10,000 participants examining the causes of Zoom fatigue found that nonverbal online mechanisms accounted for around one third of reported fatigue, with the effects disproportionately impacting women;
- Online instruction [disrupted](#) perceived peer-to-instructor and peer-to-peer connections;
- Overall, student learning outcomes were [lower](#) compared to in-person instruction.

These findings are unlikely to be surprising. But they also provide evidence of best practices that can help us as educators:

- Much of the negative impact of the shift to online instruction can be [mitigated](#) by a) the instructor having previous online experience; and b) increased peer interaction in the classroom;
- Zoom fatigue can be mitigated by [avoiding](#) multitasking, [reducing](#) nonverbal fatigue by hiding the self-window or limiting gallery view, as well as limiting the time in synchronous calls.

I have strived to design the course to be both **minimally fatiguing** whilst **maximally interactive**. Because we will meet for shorter, more interactive sessions (see below), I want this time to be useful for you and engaging.

Methods of Instruction

There will be a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

Lectures will be mostly asynchronous and posted to Blackboard by Monday morning of each week. These will be split into manageable chunks of around 10-15 minutes each so you can watch them at your convenience. The lectures are required viewing.

Discussion seminars will take place on Zoom twice a week on **Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:00pm Eastern time, and will last for 1 hour and 20 minutes each, consisting of two 30-minute halves, a 10-minute break, and 10 minutes for a quiz at the end of class.** The first half will be more like a traditional discussion seminar: we will go over some questions from the reading (I will provide some, but students should also feel free to direct the conversation) and relate the topic to real-world events. The second half will usually be more practical, involving activities or small-group discussions.

Reading: before we meet you need to watch the lecture, read the assigned texts, and be ready to discuss them. Because this course is compressed into a six-week period, the reading load is heavy: upwards of 100-150 pages per week. Precise page numbers are provided in parentheses for each reading and each session to help you plan.

The readings are challenging, consisting of a mixture of scholarly articles or book excerpts and magazine pieces. You must be willing to read extensively to succeed in this course. This means: a) taking careful notes; b) distilling the key argument(s) made by the authors; c) being able to *explain* their arguments and consider their implications.

Guest speakers: in the second half of the semester we will be joined by some guest speakers who work professionally in international relations. The conversations will be a chance to meet and hear about their career paths, learn more about how governments and international organizations work, and to ask them questions in an off-the-record, informal setting.

Zoom policy: the quality of our discussions is a collaborative effort: as an instructor, I am responsible for helping to guide and facilitate learning, but I cannot do so without student input (see above). I strongly encourage you to enable video during our seminars: it is difficult for everyone to engage with blank screens.

Technology prerequisites:

As an online student, it is necessary to possess baseline technology skills to participate fully in the course. Please consult the GW Online website for further information about recommended configurations and support. If you have questions or problems with technology for this course, please consult the Technology Help link in the left navigation menu in our course in Blackboard. You should be able to:

- Use a personal computer and its peripherals.
- Use word processing and other productivity software.
- Use the webcam and microphone on your device.
- Seek technology help by contacting GW Information Technology (202-994-4948).

Learning Assessment

I will evaluate your success in these goals in the following ways:

■ Quizzes (45%)

In every seminar we will have a short quiz at the end of class to cover the material assigned for that day (lecture + readings). I will send you a link to the quiz during class and will leave 10 minutes at the end of class to complete the quiz. You should complete the quiz before leaving class: quizzes submitted after class will not be counted towards your grade. From those 11 quizzes I will drop your 2 lowest scores and average the result.

Why quizzes? There are several reasons. First, frequent in-class quizzes have been found to increase student performance.¹ Quizzes can also help students who are struggling: one study found that quizzes

¹ Thomas, Ayanna K., et al. "Should you use frequent quizzing in your college course? Giving up 20 minutes of lecture time may pay off." *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 9.1 (2020): 83-95; Gokcora, Deniz, and Daniel DePaulo. "Frequent quizzes and student improvement of reading: a pilot study in a community college setting." *SAGE Open* 8.2 (2018): 2158244018782580. Batsell Jr, W. Robert, et al. "Ecological validity of the testing effect: The use of daily quizzes in introductory psychology." *Teaching of Psychology* 44.1 (2017): 18-23.

drastically reduced the rate of students receiving grades D or lower in an introductory microeconomics course.² This is corroborated by findings showing that quiz assessment can help to narrow the achievement gap between socioeconomic classes, and that the positive effects on student performance hold in subsequent semesters, suggesting that quizzes help to develop effective study skills that have long-term payoffs.³ They also help me as an instructor to identify areas to focus on in subsequent classes.

Because I will distribute the quiz during class, you must attend all seminars to be eligible to participate in the quizzes. There will be no make-up quizzes unless you will be absent for observing religious holidays or for medical/family emergencies. Since I drop your 2 lowest scores, this means that you have up to 2 “get out of jail free” absences that you can use.

■ Midterm (25%)

On Wednesday, July 7 I will distribute a short midterm essay (around 1500 words) that will be due the following Friday, July 16, on Blackboard at 11:59PM Eastern It will be cumulative, covering the main theoretical paradigms in IR.

■ Current affairs presentation (5%)

In the second half of the course we will be switching from theory to contemporary issues in international politics. Each student will sign up to give a short 5-minute presentation in class or send the group a 500-word memo in advance on a real-world issue that relates to that day’s topic. Detailed instructions and a sign-up sheet will be distributed no later than in the third week of class.

■ Final exam (25%)

A take-home final exam will be available on Blackboard after class on Wednesday, August 4 (our last day of class). It will be due on Thursday, August 5, on Blackboard at 11:59PM Eastern. It will be open-book and consist of a mixture of multiple-choice questions and short responses covering the entire course. You should aim to spend around 90 minutes on it. If you do not think you will be able to carve out a 90-minute slot during this period, please reach out **before** August 4.

Grading scale:

This course uses a percentage-based grading schema, as shown below.

<i>Assignment Type</i>	<i>Percentage Value Per Assignment</i>	<i>Number of Assignments</i>	<i>Total [Percent] of Final Grade</i>
Quiz scores	5	9	45%
Midterm paper	25	1	25%
Current affairs presentation	5	1	5%
Final take-home exam	25	1	25%

² Tallarico, Carol Diane, and Mary Ann Wisniewski. "A Better Way to Teach Principles of Microeconomics? Evidence from the Classroom." *Journal of the Academy of Business Education* 16 (2015).

³ Pennebaker, James W., Samuel D. Gosling, and Jason D. Ferrell. "Daily online testing in large classes: Boosting college performance while reducing achievement gaps." *PloS one* 8.11 (2013): e79774.

The grading scale below determines your final letter grade. [Note: the scale below is based on 100 percent and is the default grading schema in Blackboard's Grade Center.]

96 – 94: A	93 – 90: A-	89 – 87: B+
86 – 84: B	83 – 80: B-	79 – 77: C+
76 – 74: C	73 – 70: C-	69 – 67: D+
66 – 64: D	63 – 60: D-	<60: F

Diversity & Inclusion

It is my aim to help facilitate and foster an inclusive, collegial environment, and I strongly believe that diversity in students' individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences is a strength in this endeavor. This is especially important given that we are discussing questions that are both serious and around which there is intense disagreement both among scholarly, policy, and political circles.

We will likely disagree on big questions: this is a politics class, after all! But whilst we may diverge in our interpretations, each of us must show respect for every other member of the class.

There are also well documented gender and racial biases in scholarship which reflect broader institutional and structural barriers and inequities. Political science is no exception, and scholars are increasingly trying to address this by including more gender and racial diversity in their syllabi.

Of the 35 required readings, 15 (43%) are authored or co-authored by a female scholar.

Credit Hour Policy

Summer courses are more than twice as intensive as those held during the academic year. Over 6 weeks, students will spend 4.67 hours per week engaging in direct instruction (recorded course videos, synchronous sessions and discussion exercises) and 14.1 hours per week doing independent learning, including, but not limited to, readings, assignments and course exams. This amounts to 28 hours of direct-instruction and 84.6 hours independent coursework to total 112.5 semester hours of instruction.

Other Class Policies

Email Response Time

I will respond to emails within 24 hours during weekdays. To normalize digital detoxing, I will not respond to emails over the weekend unless of an urgent nature.

I will return assignments and other written work within one week. I will not chase up students regarding assignments.

Policies on Late Assignments

Sometimes we need help and/or an extension. This happens to all of us, and it is important to treat assignments as part of working in a professional environment. If a line manager/colleague/editor has asked you to submit work by a certain date, it is professional courtesy to inform them *in advance* if this might not be possible. Oftentimes this is not a problem. But it may come across as disrespectful if a deadline passes and no advance notice has been given: the person may have set aside time in their day or weekend to go through the submitted work, or they may have a deadline for their own manager, etc.

Accordingly, I will accept late assignments (this applies exclusively to the midterm and final exams) for no penalty and for any reason if: a) this is communicated to the instructor via email **at least 24 hours before** the deadline; and b) you reach out to me to strategize when it will be submitted. Please note that the final decision regarding an extension rests with me, and I will confirm this via email as soon as possible.

Otherwise, standard late policies will apply without exception: 1/3 of a letter grade will be applied at the passing of the deadline, and each 24-hour period afterwards.

Incomplete grades

Incomplete grades may be given to undergraduate students only if for reasons beyond the student's control (such as medical or family emergency) s/he is unable to complete the final work of the course. Faculty should not assign an Incomplete grade if not asked by the student.

[A contract](#) must be signed by the instructor and the student and filed in the department office. A copy should be submitted to the Academic Advising office in Phillips 107. A student has up to a calendar year to finish the coursework for the class, and when completed a grade change form must be submitted to the Academic Advising office to update the grade.

For further policy and contract information for undergraduate students, please consult with your advisor and also visit the website for [Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Academic Advising](#).

Academic Integrity and Honesty

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are

available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Additional information is available at <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

Please speak with me in the first week of class to discuss what kinds of accommodations can be made for you.

Mental Health Services 202-994-5300

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations, confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For additional information see: <https://healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>

University Policy on Religious Holidays

Students should notify me during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.

Schedule & Weekly Learning Goals

Note that the schedule is subject to change. The numbers in parentheses refer to the number of pages reading for that session.

Unit one: foundations: the state and anarchy in international politics [107]

June 28 (Monday)

1. Introduction: the state and classical realism [59]

Hobbes. *Leviathan*, Chs. 13, 14, 18 [47].

Morgenthau, Hans. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 4-15. [12]

Recommended:

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, excerpts.

June 30 (Wednesday)

2. Neo-realism: offensive, defensive, motivational [45]

Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics* (Addison-Wesley, 1979), Chp. Six + preface to 2001 edition. [31]

Glaser, Charles L. "Realism," in Alan Collins, ed., *Contemporary Security Studies*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 2013). [14]

Recommended:

Allison, Graham. "Thucydides Trap," *The Atlantic*, September 24, 2015.

Unit two: the liberal critique of realism [52]

July 5 (Monday): NO CLASS: INDEPENDENCE DAY OBSERVED

July 7 (Wednesday)

3. Liberalism, neoliberal institutionalism [52]

Mathews, Jessica T. "Power Shift," *Foreign Affairs*, 6 May 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1997-01-01/power-shift>. [22]

Morgan, Patrick. "Liberalism," in Alan Collins, ed., *Contemporary Security Studies*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 2013) [14]

Doyle, Michael W. 'Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace'. *The American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (2005): 463–66 [4]

Gowa, Joanne S. *Ballots and Bullets the Elusive Democratic Peace* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999), introduction & conclusion. [12]

Recommended:

Kant, "Perpetual Peace." [24]

Copeland, Dale C. 'Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations'. *International Security* 20, no. 4 (1996): 5–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539041>. [37]

Midterm exam distributed

Unit three: social and critical theories [145]

July 12 (Monday)

4. Constructivism [104]

Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425. [35]

Larson, Deborah Welch, and Alexi Shevchenko. "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 63-95. [33]

Tannenwald, Nina. "The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use." *International Organization* 53, no. 3 (1999): 433–68. [36]

Recommended:

Klotz, Audie. "Norms Reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanctions Against South Africa." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 451–78.

July 14 (Wednesday)

5. Critical theories: Marxism, post-colonialism, and feminism [43]

Adem, Gurminder K. Bhambra, Yolande Bouka, Randolph B. Persaud, Olivia U. Rutazibwa, Vineet Thakur, Duncan Bell, Karen Smith, Toni Haastrup, Seifudein. "Why Is Mainstream International Relations Blind to Racism?" *Foreign Policy*, July 3, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/03/why-is-mainstream-international-relations-ir-blind-to-racism-colonialism/>. [16]

Walt, Stephen M. "Back to the Future: World Politics Edition", *Foreign Policy*, July 8, 2015. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/08/back-to-the-future-world-politics-edition-russia-isis-europe-china/>. [5]

True, Jacqui. "Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory," In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, by Jacqui True (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.46>. [22]

Midterm exam due Friday, July 16 on Blackboard (11: 59PM Eastern)

Unit four: coercion, security, and nuclear weapons [100]

July 19 (Monday)

6. Coercion, deterrence, nuclear weapons, cybersecurity [41]

Dan Reiter, “Exploring the Bargaining Model of War,” *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 1 (March 2003): 27-30 and 33-34 [6]

Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), 3-16. [14]

Daniel W. Drezner, “Sanctions Sometimes Smart: Targeted Sanctions in Theory and Practice”, *International Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2011): 96–108. [13]

Glaser, Charles L. “Deterrence of Cyber Attacks and U.S. National Security,” CSPRI Report (June 2011). [8]

Talmadge, Caitlin. “Beijing’s Nuclear Option”, *Foreign Affairs*, 16 April 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-15/beijings-nuclear-option> [15]

Recommended

Sherman, Wendy. “How We Got the Iran Deal”, *Foreign Affairs*, 14 January 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-08-13/how-we-got-iran-deal> [18]

July 21 (Wednesday)

7. Political violence, civil wars, terrorism [59]

Kalyvas, Stathis, and Laia Balcells, “International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict”, *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 3 (August 2010): 415–29, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000286>. [15]

Walter, Barbara. “Why Moderates Support Extremist Groups,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 18 2018. [8]

Pape, Robert A. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (August 2003): 343-61. [19]

Fujii, Lee Ann. “The Puzzle of Extra-Lethal Violence”, *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (2013): 410–26. [17]

Unit five: economics and international politics [87]

July 26 (Monday)

8. The political economy of globalization: trade, migration, and populism [47]

Rodrik, Dani. "Populism and the Economics of Globalization". *Journal of International Business Policy* 1, no. 1–2 (June 2018): 12–33. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-018-0001-4>. [20]

Farrell, Henry, and Abraham L. Newman, "Chained to Globalization", *Foreign Affairs*, 30 November 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2019-12-10/chained-globalization>. [15]

Khalili, Laleh. "Analysis | Big Ships Were Created to Avoid Relying on the Suez Canal. Ironically, a Big Ship Is Now Blocking It", *Washington Post*, March 26, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/03/26/big-ships-were-created-avoid-relying-suez-canal-ironically-big-ship-is-now-blocking-it/>. [4]

Urbinati, Nadia. "The Pandemic Hasn't Killed Populism." *Foreign Affairs*, August 6, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-08-06/pandemic-hasnt-killed-populism>. [8]

Recommended:

Gilpin, Robert. *The Political Economy of International Relations*. Princeton University Press, 2016, chapter 2. [40]

July 28 (Wednesday)

9. Energy security and conflict [40]

Ross, Michael L. "Blood barrels: Why oil wealth fuels conflict." *Foreign Affairs* (2008): 2-8. [7]

Gholz, Eugene, and Daryl G. Press, "Protecting 'The Prize': Oil and the U.S. National Interest," *Security Studies* 19, no. 3 (2010): 453-485. [33]

Recommended:

Caitlin Talmadge, "Closing Time: Assessing the Iranian Threat to the Strait of Hormuz," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (Summer 2008): 82-117. [36]

Scott Borgerson, "The National Interest and the Law of the Sea", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2009, pp.3-40. <https://www.cfr.org/report/national-interest-and-law-sea>. [37]

Unit six: Ethics and the environment [95]

August 2 (Monday)

10. Human rights, justice, and interventions [53]

Tadjbakhsh, Shahrbanou. "Human Security," in Cathal J. Nolan, ed., *Ethics and Statecraft: The Moral Dimension of International Affairs* (ABC-CLIO, 2015). [13]

Autesserre, Séverine. 'The Crisis of Peacekeeping', *Foreign Affairs*, 29 January 2019.
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-11/crisis-peacekeeping>. [18]

Kuper, Andrew, and Peter Singer, "Debate: Global Poverty Relief." [22]

August 4 (Wednesday)

11. Climate change [45]

Horton, Joshua B., and Jesse L. Reynolds. 'The International Politics of Climate Engineering: A Review and Prospectus for International Relations'. *International Studies Review* 18, no. 3 (1 September 2016): 438–61. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viv013>. [24]

Slaughter, Anne-Marie, and Gordon LaForge. 'Opening Up the Order', *Foreign Affairs*, 29 April 2021.
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2021-02-16/opening-order>. [13]

Mearsheimer, John. J. (2021). Liberalism and Nationalism in Contemporary America. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 54, no. 1 (2021): 1-8. [8]

Recommended:

Ostrom, Elinor. (2009). A polycentric approach for coping with climate change. The World Bank. [56]

Bostrom, Nick. "The vulnerable world hypothesis." *Global Policy* 10.4 (2019): 455-476. [22]

Final exam distributed- to cover all material. Due Thursday, August 5 (11: 59PM) on Blackboard