

# GOV 312L - Issues and Policies in American Government: International Security (37845)

**Instructor:** Josh Landry

**Location:** PAR 203

**Meeting Time:** T-TH 8:00-9:30am

**Office Hours:** W 8am-11am, or by appointment

**Office:** MEZ 2.232

**Email:** jdlandry@utexas.edu

## Course Description and Objectives:

War and other international security issues often dominate news headlines, but what do we know about the individuals and groups involved in these events? Why do they undertake these actions? In this course, we will examine the causes and consequences of war and other international security events as political acts. This course will introduce you to major concepts, theories, and arguments related to the study of international security. No course can cover every important topic related to international security, but this course will give you the theoretical foundation to analyze, understand, and explain wars and other forms of conflict between states.

Here are some of the important questions we will address in this course:

- What causes conflict between states?
- Why do states go to war with each other?
- What forms does conflict take between states?
- How has the United States approached international security in its past?
- What are major challenges to security in the 20th and 21st centuries?

The course is divided into three parts: In the first section of the course, we will explore the basics on international relations, examine the major theories of international security, and analyze how each relates to other theories. In the second section, we will cover the causes and consequences of war, both interstate and intrastate. In the third and final section, we will consider prominent security issues of the 20th and 21st centuries. These issues will be evaluated using the theories of international security and war learned in the first two sections of the course. Throughout, we will use the United States as a case-study, and evaluate US behavior in the international system through the main theories of international security.

## Required Course Materials:

McDonald, Patrick J, Terrence L Chapman, and Robert G Moser. 2021. *An Introduction to International Relations: Opening the Global System*. Pearson.

*All other readings will be provided by the instructor on Canvas.*

## **Grade Distribution and Policy:**

Grade distribution:

93 - 100 = A

90 - 92 = A-

87 - 89 = B+

83 - 86 = B

80 - 82 = B-

77 - 79 = C+

73 - 76 = C

70 - 72 = C-

67 - 69 = D+

63 - 66 = D

60 - 62 = D-

0 - 59 = F

At the conclusion of the semester, I will round up all grades of 0.5 and above, but will not round up any grades below 0.5 (e.g. 86.5 will become 87, but 86.49 will not). I will not round up individual assignments or exams.

If a student wishes to contest a grade, they must submit this request in writing or in person within one week of receiving the grade.

Late assignments will not receive a full grade, with the exception of an illness, a university approved function, or emergency that clearly interferes with your ability to finish the assignment on time. Documentation is required for each of the above and you are required to inform the instructor before the deadline. Failure to notify the instructor will result in a zero for the assignment. Students who miss a deadline for any other reason will not be allowed to make up the assignment they may have missed. While attendance itself does not count in the final grade, students are expected to attend and participate in order to understand the material and receive top grades on assignments.

## **Course Structure**

The following components make up the course grade:

- Exam 1 - 25%
- Exam 2 - 25%
- In-Module Writing Assignments - 10%
- In-Module Quizzes - 10%
- Final Exam - 30%

**In-Module Writing Assignments:** Following certain subsections of each module, you will be provided with a prompt question. To receive credit you must write at least 120 characters in response demonstrating clearly that you have read the subsection. I do not expect perfect answers

in these responses, only a genuine attempt to answer the prompt question using the information provided by the text.

**In-Module Quizzes:** Each module contains a quiz consisting of ten questions. You have one attempt to answer each question correctly. The quizzes are intended to help you retain the course material covered in each module, rather than to serve as mini-exams. To that end, the quizzes are not timed, and I've heard modern internet browsers allow the user to keep multiple internet pages open at once, pages that could potentially contain information relevant to a quiz.

**Exams:** Each exam will include 40 multiple choice questions, each worth 2.5 points, for a total of 100 points. These exams are not open book nor open-note. Students will have 75 minutes to complete each exam. Following the return of a graded exam, students can submit corrected exams to receive half-credit on all missed questions. For example, if a student received an 80% on an exam, and correctly resubmitted all the questions missed on that exam, the student's final grade for that exam would improve to 90%. To do so, each question must include (a) the correct answer, and (b) the reasoning behind this answer. Students must return a corrected exam within one week of receiving the graded exam from the instructor.

## University and Campus Policies

**Academic Freedom:** I encourage and value student participation. You will no doubt encounter point of views that differ from your own. Students in this class come from a variety of personal and academic backgrounds and these backgrounds may lead to a variety of perspectives on the social world. I believe that having a variety of viewpoints will make our discussions more interesting and will allow us to learn from each other. We will maintain a respectful dialogue even when we disagree and no student's grade will be affected by his or her personal views.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your note to me EARLY in the semester so we can work out arrangements.

**Accommodations for Religious Holidays:** By university policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Emergency Evacuation Policy:** Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Information regarding emergency procedures can be found [here](#).

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** Using someone else's work in your own writing without giving proper credit is considered plagiarism, a serious form of academic dishonesty that can result in severe penalties. Copying someone else's work, buying a paper and submitting it as your own, copying and pasting text (even with changes), or borrowing images from an online source, are some examples of plagiarism. Even if you plagiarize accidentally, you can be held responsible and penalized.

Learning to cite sources appropriately is an important part of becoming a professional. When you are unsure about citation, you are encouraged to **ask your instructor** what is appropriate in the context of your assignment. Consultants at The University Writing Center can also help you determine whether you are citing sources correctly —and they have helpful guides online for using direct quotations and paraphrasing, found [here](#).

Reviewing those skills will help you feel confident that you are handling sources professionally in your writing. You can read the University's definition of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty in Sec. 11–402 of the Student Conduct Code. For more information, visit the Dean of Student's site.

**Changes to the Syllabus:** The readings and schedule of the syllabus are subject to change, but any such changes will be noted with an announcement either in class and/or via email, as well as an updated copy of the syllabus posted online at the course website and/or Canvas.

## Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's relevant policies.

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. We are Responsible Employees and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with us, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email [advocate@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:advocate@austin.utexas.edu). For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <https://titleix.utexas.edu/> or contact the Title IX Office at [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu).

# **Course Outline and Schedule**

## **Section 1: Major Theories**

**01/18** - Introduction (Virtual)

**01/20** - Module 1: Studying International Relations (Virtual)

**01/25** - Module 2: The International System (Virtual)

**01/27** - Module 3: Thinking Theoretically about International Relations (Virtual)

**02/01** - Module 4: Rationalist Approaches in International Relations

**02/03** - Module 5: Social and Psychological Approaches to International Relations

**02/08** - Module 6: Critical Approaches in International Relations

**02/10** - Exam 1

## **Section 2: Causes and Consequences of War**

**02/15** - Module 7: War

**02/17** - Module 8: The Origins of War, Part I

**02/22** - Module 9: The Origins of War, Part II: Commitment Problems, World War I, and World War II

**02/24** - Module 10: War, War Termination, and the Global Political Order

**03/01** - Module 11: Military Power and Security Politics

**03/03** - Module 12: Civil War and International Relations

**03/08** - Peacekeeping

**03/10** - Module 16: Organized Coercion, War, and Political Order

**03/22** - Module 17: States, Sovereignty, and Failed States

**03/24** - Exam 2

## **Section 3: Contemporary Issues in International Security**

**03/29** - Module 13: Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear Deterrence

**03/31** - No Class

**04/05** - Module 14: Threats to Nuclear Deterrence: Credibility, Missile Defense, and Nuclear Proliferation

**04/07** - Module 15: Terrorism and Counterterrorism

**04/12** - Module 18: Domestic Politics and International Relations

**04/14** - Module 19: Democracy in International Relations

**04/19** - Module 20: Great Power Politics

**04/21** - Module 33: Environmental Politics

**04/26** - Climate and International Security

**04/28** - Module 35: Stability and Change in the International System

**05/03** - Flex Date

**05/05** - Flex Date

**A Note on Flex Dates:** The final two class days of the semester are left open to accommodate unexpected events and adverse circumstances that may prevent us from meeting as a class, or prevent students from completing coursework. If we are able to complete the course as shown above, the final two classes will be used to discuss more contemporary issues in international security.