

Spring 2024
GOV 366C, #37535
classroom: MEZ 2.118
Tues., Thurs. 8:00am-9:15am

Professor Jason Brownlee
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office hours: Mon, Wed. 10:00am-11:30am [signup sheet](#)
in Batts 3.146 or <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/4599341933>

“We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring.
Will be to arrive where we started. And know the place for the first time.” – T.S. Eliot

ETHICS OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION

Under what conditions is it appropriate for a state to use military force against other state? Is it right for elected governments to overthrow autocratic regimes? Should an invading army remain, after formal hostilities have ceased, and occupy the target country? Does a state have a moral responsibility to prevent the killing of large numbers of civilians by another government? This course addresses these and other questions of armed foreign intervention: a state’s threat or use of force into the territory of another state to accomplish political aims.

We will approach these topics by reflecting on broader questions about how human beings ought to behave: ethics. Time constraints mean we will only be able to sample a small number of major thinkers and ideas, but we will try to put their approaches to good use.

Our weekly pace will involve approximately 2.5 hours of in-class work comprising discussions, lectures, student presentations, impromptu short writing, and video viewing, plus a roughly equal amount of reading and writing outside of the class periods. Grades will come from six short homework essays (hand-written) (24%), readiness and participation in class (26%), a midterm essay exam (typed) (20%), a group debate (10%), and an end-of-semester paper done individually or with a coauthor (20%).

Coursework will cultivate the following skills: 1) reflecting in solitude on challenging texts, 2) articulating one’s own thoughts on the texts and prompts provided by the instructor, 3) applying different models of ethical reasoning to cases of foreign military interventions, 4) communicating in writing and speaking as clearly and concisely as comfortably possible.

FLAGS

This course carries the **Ethics, Writing, Independent Inquiry** Flags. Courses carrying the **Ethics Flag** equip students for making ethical decisions in their adult and professional lives. **Writing Flag** courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. **Independent Inquiry** courses provide students with the opportunity for independent investigation of an academic question, problem, or project.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

All of the content in the course (readings, lectures, videos) is covered under the University of Texas at Austin’s commitment to free speech and academic freedom as embodied in the Chicago Statement (2014). One relevant excerpt of the Chicago Statement reads:

“Because the University is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the University community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn... it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive... concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a justification for closing off discussion of

ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.”

One important message of this statement is that being intellectually offended or challenged is not a bug of university learning but a feature. For members of an intellectual community it is integral to the learning process, especially when the process of education introduces them to previously unfamiliar ideas and perspectives.

The following is an example of a conventional text addressing important issues of foreign military intervention. The excerpt comes from an article by journalist Kathy Gannon, “Afghanistan Unbound,” that was published in the May/June 2004 issue of the mainstream journal *Foreign Affairs*.

“In 1994, bitter fighting between competing warlords raged throughout Kabul, Afghanistan's capital city. It was a time marked by endless attacks, many of them on civilians. I saw one young boy raise his hand to catch a ball, only to have it sliced off at the wrist by a rocket. A 13-year-old girl, running home to retrieve blankets and clothes left behind by her fleeing family, stepped on a land mine, which exploded and blew off the bottom of her leg. All told, 50,000 Afghans—most of them civilians—died in the four-year fight for Kabul, and even more were maimed. In one particularly grisly attack, five women from the Hazara ethnic group were scalped. Their attackers were not Taliban; this was still two years before that radical Islamist militia took Kabul. The assailants were loyal instead to one of many warlords battling for control of the city...”

It is each student's responsibility to review the syllabus and decide if they would like to learn about the ethics of foreign military intervention in a class that upholds the Chicago Statement. A student's decision to remain enrolled in the course indicates that the student acknowledges that free and open inquiry can mean encountering ideas and images in lectures and other materials that the student finds “unwelcome, disagreeable or even deeply offensive” and that such encounters are a normal and healthy part of a robust university education.

READINGS AND WRITING

One **course packet** will be required and is available for purchase. Students will also need to acquire two blue books or other bound notebooks for the weekly writing assignments, as well as paper and pen for in-class work and notetaking.

Students should expect to spend an average of 4-6 hours work outside of class on the readings and writing assignments. Class meetings therefore constitute about one-third of the time commitment needed for satisfactory performance. If you do not have that kind of time for this course, I encourage you to select another class or choose another semester to take this class.

MINIMAL-SCREEN POLICY

We will minimize the intrusion of screens upon class activities. All phones should be put in airplane mode and stowed during class. Beginning the second class (Thursday 1/18), laptops and other electronic devices are to be stowed unless Professor Brownlee invites their use. All students are expected to participate using paper and conventional writing utensils.

GRADING POLICY

The final grade will come from in-class oral and written work, plus writing, reading, and research outside of class.

- I. Six short homework essays, hand-written (150-500 words) (4% each, 24% total).
- II. Near-complete attendance and readiness for lectures, student-driven discussion, and in-class activities (26%, each class of ready attendance, earns a point, 26% total).
- III. One midterm essay exam with opportunity for revision (3-5 double-spaced typed pages, 900-1,500 words) (20%).
- IV. Group participation during an in-class team debate (10%).
- V. One solo or partnered research report of 5-10 double-spaced typed pages (1,500-3,000 words) (20%).
- VI. Select opportunities for additional points from extra-credit quizzes (1-3%).

In this class, it is a violation of the [honor code](#) to misrepresent work that you submit or exchange with your instructor, including work produced by a generative AI tool such as ChatGPT, by characterizing that work as your own if it is not your own.

I. SIX SHORT POSITION ESSAYS (24%).

No later than Thursday in each week, I will announce a prompt for at-home writing, to be completed before the following Tuesday. For example, the prompt announced in Week 1 (1/18), and due the Tuesday of Week 2 (1/23), is:

Consider this statement: "It is better for one to set a positive moral example through one's own behavior than to go about instructing others in how they should behave." Take a position on one side or the other. There is no right answer. Support that position in one to five clearly written paragraphs. The essay should not exceed 500 words.

Often the prompt will involve drawing on course materials. For example, the prompt for Week 3 (1/30) will be:

Whose approach offers a better ethical guide in today's world, Jenny Odell's or Immanuel Kant's/J.S. Mill's (pick one, Kant or Mill)? There is no right answer. Support your argument in clear prose that accurately engages the texts. The essay should not exceed 500 words.

Completed position essays are submitted, in one of your blue books or notebooks, at the beginning of Tuesday's class. They will be graded based on how well they respond to the prompt in intelligible language that is generally easy to read. Good answers will receive 4 points. Fair answers will receive 3 points. Essays that evince a meaningful effort but have significant flaws will receive 2 points. Answers that display minimal work will receive 1 or 0 points.

You may submit up to six short position essays (for a maximum grade of 24 out of 24) over the course of the following weeks: 2 (1/23), 3 (1/30), 4 (2/6), 5 (2/13), 6 (2/20), 7 (2/27), 8 (3/5), 10 (3/19), 11 (3/26), 12 (4/2), 13 (4/9), 14 (4/16). The following constraints apply. At least one of the six total essays must be submitted in Week 2 or 3. At least three of the six must be submitted before Spring Break, i.e., during Weeks 2-8. Students cannot submit essays in Weeks 13 *and* 14. These provisions may sound complicated; they are simply a means of preventing procrastination. One reasonable schedule of submissions would look like this: Week 2, Week 4, Week 5, Week 7, Week 11, Week 12.

II. ATTENDANCE AND READINESS (26%)

I will take attendance. Each day of class in our 14-week semester counts for one point of attendance and readiness. The maximum score is 26, meaning two absences will not prevent receiving full credit. Excused absences also count toward the grade, although students may be asked to submit an alternate assignment to make up for not being able to participate in class discussion and activities. Earning credit in this area depends not only on showing up on-time, but also on coming to class ready to talk about the assigned material and work actively with the professor and classmates.

Readiness begins with students coming to class on-time for a close discussion of the material. Students are encouraged to take notes by hand and ask questions about any points that are unclear. Readiness also includes being able to address (orally or in writing) the following items on each week's readings:

1. What is the author's argument in your own words?
2. What does the author provide that sounds new about foreign intervention?
3. What is a question you have about the reading and on which you would like to hear your classmates' thoughts?

NOTE: This is a participation-heavy class that requires students to attend actively. Students who do not think they are prepared to show up and engage consistently are encouraged to seek a course that does not expect participation.

The main categories of absences are medical emergencies, athletic events, religious holidays, and major family crises. In all of these cases, I will need documentation or evidence that the absence in question is recognized by the university as legitimate.

III. MIDTERM ESSAY EXAM (20% total)

After the Thursday of Week 8 (3/7) students will take a self-administered 90-minute essay exam on a question posted on Canvas. Students may take the exam at any time before the end of the day (11:59pm) Monday 3/18, although they will be asked to not share the essay question with classmates. The prompt will resemble the setup of the homework essays; it will be designed to elicit a well-supported argument rather than a specific answer. It is expected that the essay will run 2-4 double-spaced typed pages in length (600-1200 words).

The exam will address issues from Week 8 while building on materials from prior weeks. During the exam period, students may consult their notes and course packet, but not any other materials, including people and online resources. Exam will be graded, on a 1-10 scale, based on the quality of engagement of course material and the intelligibility of the prose, taking into consideration the time constraints. Exams earning less than full credit will be eligible for revision and resubmission two weeks later (4/1). The second submission will also be graded on a 1-10 scale. The full score will comprise the sum of the initial and second submissions. For papers not revised and resubmitted, including those that earned a 10 originally, the first score will simply be doubled.

IV. IN-CLASS TEAM DEBATE (10% total)

For week 14 (April 23, 25), students will be randomly assigned to debate, on a team of their classmates, an assigned position on a major contemporary issue related to foreign intervention. They will participate in the debate, submit a paper summarizing their individual preparing on the topic, and also participate, as audience members, in week's second debate.

V. RESEARCH REPORT (20% total)

The capstone of the course is a well-researched topic that the student selects and pursues individually or with a single partner and co-author. 5% of the grade comes from submitting a research plan on the Tuesday of Week 11 (4/2). The remaining 15% will come from the paper itself, a 5-10-page double-spaced report (1" margins, 12 pt. font) submitted no later than 11:59pm, on Monday 4/29, the last day of the semester, and graded with the following rubric.

If you use generative AI for research tasks, you must acknowledge your use by briefly describing it, including the most successful research queries, in an appendix to your assignment.

Grading Rubric for Research Report	
SUBSTANCE OF ARGUMENT: How persuasively has the paper explored a major issue in the ethics of foreign intervention, including referencing major approaches? 0-5 points.	
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH: How much has the paper demonstrated a command of course materials and at least ten outside sources, properly cited? 0-5 points.	
PROSE STYLE: How easy and enjoyable is the essay to read (linearity, flow, organization)? How well has the author used concrete language and omitted needless words (clarity)? 0-5 points.	
	TOTAL:

VI. EXTRA-CREDIT COMPREHENSION QUIZZES (1-3 points)

Periodically there will be short extra-credit quizzes that reward close reading and careful work.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week One – 1/16, 1/18	No readings. Obtain the course packet and two bluebooks.
Week Two – 1/23, 1/25	Jenny Odell. 2019. “Introduction” and “Chapter 1” in <i>How To Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy</i> .
Week Three – 1/30, 2/1	Philip A. Pecorino. 2002. “Ethical Traditions: The Categorical Imperative.” Immanuel Kant. 1784. “What is Enlightenment?” John Stuart Mill. 1863. “Utilitarianism” in <i>Utilitarianism</i> .
Week Four – 2/6, 2/8	Thucydides. Late fifth century B.C.E. “The Melian Dialogue” in <i>The History of the Peloponnesian War</i> . International Committee of the Red Cross. 2002. “The Law of Armed Conflict: Basic Knowledge.” The Council on Foreign Relations. 2023. “Backgrounder: The United Nations Security Council.”
Week Five – 2/13, 2/15	Jean-Paul Sartre. 1946. “Existentialism is a Humanism.”
Week Six – 2/20, 2/22	Noam Chomsky. 1967. “The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” <i>The New York Review of Books</i> .
Week Seven – 2/22, 2/29	Michael Walzer. 1977. “Interventions” in <i>Just and Unjust Wars</i> .
Week Eight – 3/5, 3/7	Taylor B. Seybolt. 2007. “Rwanda” and “Bosnia and Herzegovina” in <i>Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Success and Failure</i> . Samantha Power. 2002. “Preface” and “Conclusion” in <i>“A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide</i> .
SPRING BREAK	
Week Nine – 3/19, 3/21	Midterm exam due by 11:59pm on Monday, March 18. No new readings.
Week Ten – 3/26, 3/28	William Kristol and Robert Kagan, “Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy,” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , July 1996, 18-32. Lee Feinstein and Anne-Marie Slaughter, “A Duty to Prevent,” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 83(1), (Jan. - Feb., 2004), pp. 136-150.
Week Eleven – 4/2, 4/4 Research plan due 4/2.	Leila Ahmed. 1992. “The Discourse of the Veil” in <i>Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate</i> . Bob Needham. 2023. “Bennoune Argues in New Paper That Afghanistan Situation Amounts to ‘Gender Apartheid’ and Demands Action.” Naheed Farid and Rangita de Silva de Alwis. 2023. “Afghanistan under the Taliban: A State of ‘Gender

	Apartheid?’” Obaidullah Baheer. 2023. “Gender Apartheid and Occupying Us to Freedom.”
Week Twelve – 4/9, 4/11	IN-CLASS FILM SCREENING. <i>The Fog of War</i> (2004). No new readings.
Week Thirteen – 4/16, 4/18	IN-CLASS FILM SCREENING. <i>The Final Year</i> (2017). No new readings.
Week Fourteen – 4/23, 4/25 Final research papers due by 11:59pm, Monday, 4/29.)	IN-CLASS DEBATES Tuesday: Red and gold teams. Thursday: Blue and green teams. No new readings.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

COMMUNICATION

I am happy to field questions, in person or by email, on substantive matters. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and information from classmates on what was covered. After doing so, you are welcome to approach me with outstanding questions. When communicating by email, plan for a 48-hour (or two business day) response time.

Progress in the Course

Professor Brownlee is committed to helping all students understand the course material to the fullest extent of their interest. Toward that goal he is available during office hours or appointments to respond to questions about the assigned texts. When lectures incorporate slides, these slides will be posted on Canvas after the lecture.

Grade calculation

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the below rubric. A = 94-100; A- = 90-93.999; B+ = 87-89.999; B = 84-86.999; B- = 80-83.999; C+ = 77-79.999; C = 74-76.999; C- = 70-73.999; D+ = 67-69.999; D = 64-66.999; D- = 60-63.999; F = 0-59.999. The professor will not alter grades calculated at the end of the semester.

Suggestions for reading effectively.

Close reading entails reflecting on the text as you are reading, and evaluating the author’s argument.

- What is the main claim she makes?
- Does this make sense to you? Why or why not?
- What are the weaknesses of the argument?
- If there is a narrative, who are the main personas and the pivotal events?

Thoughtful reading takes time and energy. Space out readings in reasonable increments. It is more pleasant and more productive to read over several days than to try and compress all the reading into an all-nighter.

The goal of close reading is being able to say something about the material and evaluate it. When you are done reading, check to see that you can summarize the author’s argument in a few sentences. I encourage you to take 5 minutes and write down this summary. Notes and synopses can be used during class discussions, the exams, and the papers.

Attendance and Workload

Students are expected to come ready and on time for all class sessions. In the classroom students are expected to comport themselves in a professional manner. By enrolling and remaining in this course students indicate they

have understood the importance of carefully completing the weekly readings and being ready for in-class discussion led by Professor Brownlee. ***NB: If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for catching up on the material. That begins with consulting classmates, NOT with asking the Professor "So... what did I miss?"***

Academic accommodations

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact [Disability and Access](#) (D&A). Professor Brownlee is committed to working with students on providing reasonable accommodations, based on D&A documentation.

Religious holidays or official extracurricular activities

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day. If you miss a test due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. / Students missing class for an official extracurricular activity must provide documentation at least fourteen days prior.

Scholastic Dishonesty

“Scholastic dishonesty... includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act” (Section 11-802 (b), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*). Violations will be reported to Student Judicial Services and the student(s) in question will fail this course. In additions, students are expected to abide by the university's rules on student conduct.

Grade Appeals

Any complaints about grades should be initiated with a written explanation (by paper or email) of why the decisions behind the assignment of your grade should be revisited. You will have one week after an exam or paper has been handed back to submit this written explanation. Once you have submitted your written request, the professor will decide whether to re-grade your entire assignment. *Performance in other classes taken here at the university is not germane to any grading decision made in this class. Consequently, if receiving a D in this class places you on academic probation, this does not constitute a viable justification for requesting the regarding of an assignment.*

Cell Phones and other External Communications

Starting in the second class (Thursday, January 18), all electronic devices are to be turned off during class.

Syllabus Changes

The syllabus is subject to change by the professor. Any alteration in the syllabus course schedule will be announced in class and posted to Canvas.

Time management is a valuable skill in college and life. Professor Brownlee is glad to meet with you to discuss ways of organizing your schedule to carve out and protect the time needed for this class, e.g., thinking about when and where you study most effectively. Then set aside blocks of time that are reserved for homework for this class. Whatever your particular approach to managing time, if you would like assistance, it is best to approach Professor Brownlee in the first two weeks of class.

This course is expected to make up one component in a full student schedule of classes, extracurricular activities, work, and other commitments. The assignments and workload are designed to require approximately five hours, in addition to the time spent attending lectures. (If you do not have that kind of time to devote to this GOV 366C, I would encourage you to select another class or choose another semester to take this class.)

Strictness is fairness. Most students are busy; all students merit equal treatment. Professor Brownlee will be strict about applying the announced policies uniformly.

The syllabus specifies the workload, deadlines, and grading rubric for the course. If any changes occur, they will be announced in class. In short, everyone knows the expectations for the class. Further, by taking the course, students are indicating that they will honestly strive to submit their best work punctually.