

# **PS 240 INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

## **SPRING 2025**

Annenberg Hall G21  
Mon/Wed 2:00-3:20 pm

### **Prof. Saera Lee**

**Office:** 231 Scott Hall

**Email:** saera.lee@northwestern.edu

**Office Hours:** Tue & Wed 10:30-11:30 am or email for an appointment at other times

**Teaching Assistant:** Summer Pappachen

**Email:** MeghaPappachen2027@u.northwestern.edu

**Sections:** 62, 64

**Office:** Scott Hall 313 (office hours will be on zoom)

**Office hours:** Wed 12-2pm or email for an appointment at other times

**Teaching Assistant:** Lucas Camara

**Email:** lucascamara@u.northwestern.edu

**Sections:** 60, 66

**Office:** Scott Hall 219

**Office hours:** Mon 4:00-6:00 pm or email for an appointment at other times

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Why states go to war? Why states trade? Are individuals as important as states in international politics? In this course, we are going to discuss answers to these questions by focusing on two main goals: (1) to introduce key issues and questions in the field of international relations, and (2) to equip you with analytical tools for understanding global politics. This course is designed to help you critically think about international politics, international events, and to prepare you for more advanced topics in international relations. We will frequently go over the historical and current events as examples and apply theories to see how they do or don't explain the events. I encourage you to find a good source of news or history, such as The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, or Foreign Policy. There is no prerequisite for this course.

### **CLASS MATERIALS**

One text is required for the course. Traditional paperback copies can be purchased through an online seller or university bookstore or electronic copies directly from Cengage:

- Kinsella, D., Russett, B., and H. Starr, H. 2012. World Politics: The Menu for Choice, 10th edition (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth).
- [www.Cengagebrain.com](http://www.Cengagebrain.com)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Midterm exam: 25%

Final exam: 25%

Paper outline: 7%

Final paper: 28%

Participation in section: 15%

*From time to time, pop-up extra credit opportunities will be provided. Because these are extra-credit, no make-ups are given.*

### Participation in Section (15%)

Your sections provide an important opportunity for active learning and discussing the material critically. The sections allow you to explore topics in depth that we cannot adequately cover in class. Sections will involve a variety of activities from discussion to simulations. Each student is expected to think critically about the readings before the class period listed. Participation points are assigned based upon the quantity and quality of a student's contributions to the class.

Quality is weighted significantly more heavily than quantity. Attendance in section is expected. You cannot participate if you are not in class. *Each student has one unexcused absence that does not affect the participation grade.* After that, each unexcused absence will count as 0 participation points for the day. Students who miss sections for university events, illness, family emergencies, etc should communicate with their TA as soon as possible to discuss the absence and request it to be excused. See section syllabi for other details and useful information.

### Two Exams (25x2%)

The in-person midterm exam is currently set for **Monday, April 28**, and will cover all lectures and assigned readings (possibly including the cases) up to that date. The final exam is currently scheduled for **Monday, June 2**. It will be cumulative but will focus more on material from the second half of the course. Additional details about the exam formats and expectations will be provided.

*Policy on Rescheduling Exams:* Students are required to take the exam as scheduled. The only allowable exception to this policy is a documented emergency or university event. In cases of severe illness and family emergency (death in family), students need to provide sufficient proof of the absence (e.g. a doctor's note, the obituary, etc). If an emergency arises, students will need to contact me or TA **BEFORE** the exam or will receive zero credit.

### Paper outline & Final paper (35%)

See instruction on Canvas.

I calculate end-of-quarter grades as follows:

A = 93-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72; D = 60-69; F < 60.

## COURSE POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATION

### Use of GenAI is prohibited in this course:

This course focuses on the development of independent critical thinking and the mastery of international relations. To ensure that all submitted work accurately reflects personal understanding and original thought, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools in completing assignments or assessments is strictly prohibited. This policy supports our commitment to academic integrity, the

development of each student's learning, and direct interaction with international relations. Any work suspected to be generated by AI will be reported to the Dean for Academic Integrity.

#### Academic Integrity Statement

Students enrolled in Northwestern courses are required to comply with [Northwestern's academic integrity policy](#). All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. Any form of cheating, including improper use of content generated by artificial intelligence, constitutes a violation of Northwestern's academic integrity policy. To download Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide go to <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/index.html>

#### Accessibility Statement

Northwestern University is committed to providing a supportive environment for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact [AccessibleNU](#) to move forward with the university's established accommodation process. If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let your instructor know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we they can work with you to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

#### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Difference enhances both the teaching and learning experiences. The classroom is a space where all students are welcome, regardless of age, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender identity and/or expression, national origin, race, religious non/belief, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious non/belief, and alignment with other identities or contexts. Furthermore, if any student has a particular consideration, including learning and participation style, that affects their ability to meet course expectations, please see me as soon as possible.

I am personally committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment for each and every student. Please, do not hesitate to contact me with specific needs or concerns, and the sooner the better. Maintaining transparency (and communication in general) with your instructor is not only a good professional skill, but also a good way to develop a more one-on one relationship. Furthermore, accommodations are far easier and effective to arrange when planned than when rushed. In short, I will make every effort to ensure students' equal access.

#### Prohibition of Recording of Class Session by Students

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University's [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

### Support for Wellness and Mental Health

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

### Exceptions to Class Modality

Class sessions for this course will occur in person. Individual students will not be granted permission to attend remotely except as the result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU.

### Electronic Etiquette

Cellphones may not be used during class. If you anticipate an important phone call (e.g. family emergency) put your phone on vibrate and leave the classroom, should you need to answer it. Other electronic devices like laptops or tablets are only allowed for classroom purposes. This policy is aimed at providing the best possible learning environment for all students.

### Email Communication

All email communication with the professor should include a subject line that begins with PS 240 followed by more specific information regarding the purpose of the email. For example, “PS 240: meeting to discuss paper ideas.” I check email periodically, and you can expect me to respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours or more over the weekend or holiday. Yet, if the answers to questions are already found in the syllabus, you may not receive an answer to your email. Always consult the syllabus before emailing a question.

Email is a useful way to ask quick questions. Replying to long questions about the readings/lectures, however, is highly inefficient for both you and me. If you want to talk about something you don’t understand, come to office hours! While I respond to student emails, I prefer to talk in person. Come see me during office hours!

### **SUMMARY OF KEY DATES**

First Midterm	4/28, in-class
Second Midterm	6/2, in-class
Paper Outline	5/16, 11:59pm
Final Paper	6/9, 11:59pm

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*NOTE: Readings subject to change*

- April 1 (Tues): Introduction
  - No reading
- April 2 (Wed): Introduction to the Study of International Relations
  - Required:
    - Ch. 3
- April 7 (Mon): Grand Theories of IR (Realism, Institutionalism, Constructivism)
  - Required:
    - Ch. 2
    - David Lake, 2011, “Why “isms” are evil: Theory, Epistemology and academic sects as impediments to understanding and progress”, *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 465-480
  - Recommended:
    - Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013, “Leaving theory behind: why simplistic hypothesis testing is bad for international relations”, *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3):427-457
- April 9 (Wed): Levels of Analysis
  - Required:
    - Ch. 1
- April 14 (Mon): International System
  - Required:
    - Ch. 4
  - Recommended:
    - Krasner, Stephen D. 2001. Abiding Sovereignty. *International Political Science Review* 22 (3): 229-251
- April 16 (Wed): States and Statecraft
  - Required:
    - Ch. 4&5
- April 21 (Mon): Inside the State
  - Required:
    - Ch. 5&6
  - Recommended:
    - Watch the movie “Thirteen Days”  
([https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.0eae608c-c028-2286-c969-6c0e37fc6adb?autoplay=0&ref\\_=atv\\_cf\\_strg\\_wb](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.0eae608c-c028-2286-c969-6c0e37fc6adb?autoplay=0&ref_=atv_cf_strg_wb))
    - Watch the movie “Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb” ([https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.70a9f6d8-1999-9d0b-0908-b973a7a1477f?autoplay=0&ref\\_=atv\\_cf\\_strg\\_wb](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.70a9f6d8-1999-9d0b-0908-b973a7a1477f?autoplay=0&ref_=atv_cf_strg_wb))
- April 23 (Wed): (cont.) Inside the State
  - Required:
    - Ch. 6

- April 28 (Mon): Midterm
- April 30 (Wed): Conflict between States and Arms Races
  - Required:
    - Ch. 7&8
- May 5 (Mon): Game Theory and Conflict within States
  - Required:
    - Ch. 7
- May 7 (Wed): Anarchy and Order
  - Required:
    - Ch. 10
  - Recommended:
    - (If you are really interested in this topic, you must read) Bull, Hedley. 2002. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, Third Edition. London: Macmillan
    - (If you are interested in future of the international order) Evelyn Goh, 2019, "Contesting Hegemonic Order: China in East Asia." *Security Studies* 28(3): 614-644 or
    - Theory talks: An interview with David Lake (<http://www.theory-talks.org/search?q=international+order>)
- May 12 (Mon): Overcoming Collective Action Problem
  - Required:
    - Ch. 10
  - Recommended:
    - Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162: 1243-1248
    - Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation*. Basic Books
    - Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action: Presidential Address." *American Political Science Review* 92(1): 1-22
- May 14 (Wed): International Institutions
  - Required:
    - Ch. 10&9
- May 19 (Mon): The Kantian Peace
  - Required:
    - Ch. 5, pp.123-128
    - Oneal, J. R., & Russett, B. 1999. "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations, 1885–1992". *World Politics*, 52(1), 1–37
- May 21 (Wed): Introduction to International Trade
  - Required:
    - Ch. 11
    - Follow News closely

- May 26 (Mon): No class – Memorial Day
- May 28 (Wed): Introduction to International Monetary System
  - Required:
    - Ch. 11
- June 2 (Mon): Final Exam