



**PLS 150 – Introduction to International Relations**  
*Fall 2018*

Dr. Spencer L Willardson

Office: 8:133

Class Location: Blue Hall

Office Hours: M/F 13:00-14:30 and by appointment

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Class Time: MWF 09:00-09:50 a.m.

**Course TA**

Bagnur Karbozova

Office: 8.239

Office Hours: Daily 10:00-12:00 and 15:00-17:00

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The study of international relations is important in a number of ways. It is an important academic endeavor that provides background to political leaders, journalists, companies, and other international actors. It is also important for everyone whose work and lives are affected by international forces: all of us. In this course we will explore many different concepts of international relations. You should have an overview of the breadth of the academic field of IR. The most important thing for you to know is that your goal is to find something in this course that is exciting and interesting to you personally. This should be easy, since we are discussing such a wide range of topics.

**Course Objectives**

The course has three primary objectives. The first is to familiarize each student with the field of international relations (CLO 1). The second is to improve students' ability to apply concepts from the study of international relations through active engagement with news media, journal articles, and other sources of information on international relations (CLO 4). The third objective is to improve student ability to express their understanding of international relations topics in written and verbal form (CLO 6).

**Overview of Course**

This course offers an introduction to the study of international relations in a political science context. We will examine the prevailing theories and paradigms within which international relations are studied. We will also study different substantive areas of political science including conflict, trade, international law and human rights, political economy, global environmental concerns, development, and more. We will not be able to explore all issues in IR, but we should cover a representative sample.

**Required Text:**

McGlinchey, Stephen. 2017. International Relations. E-International Relations Publishing, Bristol, England. Available online free: <http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/International-Relations-E-IR.pdf>

Additional Readings: Listed for each week in the reading schedule (in this syllabus) with a link or available via Moodle.

## Grading

Students will be graded based on the following items:

Item	Date	Percent	Points
Reading Quizzes (5)	See Schedule	25	50
Film assignment	5 October	10	20
Research Assignment	2 November	15	30
Final Paper	16 November	20	40
Final Comprehensive Exam	TBD	25	50
Participation	Ongoing	5	10
Total	-	100%	200

Student scores will be based on a percentage of points earned on each item totaled and divided by the total points possible (200) in the course. Grades are assigned based on the following scale:

### Grading Scale:

95-100	A	90-94.99	A-		
85-89.99	B+	80-84.99	B	75-79.99	B-
70-74.99	C+	65-69.99	C	60-64.99	C-
55-59.99	D+	50-54.99	D	0-49.99	F

## Course Content

### *Reading*

Each week we will be reading and discussing both the chapter from the book and during most weeks at least one academic article or book chapter that relates to the week's topic. Each student is required to read the assigned reading prior to the class period in which we will be discussing it. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week's article and to participate. Because this is a large class, reading and active participation and listening during lecture become even more crucial to your success.

### *Participation*

During the first part of the course we will take attendance (this is mandated by Nazarbayev University for 100-level Courses). During the semester I will call on each student at least once (randomly) and you will be assessed on your preparedness in answering questions. Negative participation (disruptive behavior such as sleeping, talking, texting, etc.) will cause loss of participation points. If your behavior is especially disruptive, I will warn you in writing. If the behavior persists after a written warning, I reserve the right to adjust final grades. I will inform students in writing when I have made this decision along with the number of grades (i.e. full

letter/half letter, etc) of the reduction. This written record will be made via official university email address.

### *Quizzes*

Because of the number of students and difficulty in proctoring large exams, we will have a series of short quizzes during the semester. Each of these quizzes will have five multiple choice/true false questions and an essay question. The quizzes will be administered through Moodle during a fixed time window and each quiz will be randomized.

### *Final Comprehensive Exam*

The final exam will have questions similar to the weekly reading quizzes and will cover material from the entire semester. The final exam will have 20 multiple choice/true false questions, 4 short answer questions, and a long essay question.

### *War Film Assignment*

This assignment requires students to choose a film about war. The film can be classic or contemporary, in any language, and about any war. After watching the film, the student will produce a brief synopsis of the film and how the film fits with what we have learned about war and the international system up to this point in class. I will provide further guidelines on this assignment during week 6.

### *Research Assignment*

This assignment is used to help students learn the basics of doing academic research in international relations. Each student will choose a topic of interest, narrow that topic into a question, and then find five appropriate academic sources on that topic. The students will create a proper annotated bibliography from those sources as well as a traditional reference list. More guidelines on this assignment will be given in week 4.

### *Final Paper Assignment*

The final paper assignment is designed to help students demonstrate their mastery of the topics in course, to reflect on the course itself, and to provide a further roadmap for the student's personal study of and interest in international relations. This paper will be a 500 word paper that builds on the research assignment. A full description of this assignment along with a rubric will be provided to students in week 10.

## **Other Policies**

### **TA**

Bagnur Karbozova is the TA for the course and is a resource for students. I expect you to come to her with questions about the course and assignments as well as to me. Bagnur is part of the academic staff and as such deserves your respect. Any attempt to pressure, influence, or intimidate a course TA is considered academic misconduct and I have a zero tolerance policy for

it. Any student who is rude or abusive to Bagnur will be reported for academic misconduct by me.

### **Attendance**

As noted above, attendance will be taken during the first part of the semester. Absenteeism and lack of attendance will only hurt you and your grade. Coming late to class is considered disruptive behavior, so plan on being on time. (See participation above on disruptive behaviors).

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All students have been notified of Nazarbayev University's Student Code of Conduct and you have agreed to follow the university's standards. Plagiarism is defined as "intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own." In short, all of the work you turn in for this class is expected to be yours and yours alone. Plagiarized work will receive a zero and students will be reported to university authorities. Students caught cheating on any assignment will receive a zero for the assignment and will be reported to the academic misconduct committee in SHSS.

### **Office Hours**

I have office hours listed on the syllabus. I prefer that students come and see me during those times. If you cannot come during my posted office hours, you can email me and set an appointment. When you set an appointment, that is my office hour and I am happy to see you. Students who come to my office outside of office hours may be asked to come back at a different time or to make an appointment. I love to see students, but also need to manage my time and workload. Please respect my time and I will respect yours by giving you my full attention during my office hours.

**Writing Center** –Students are encouraged to work with the writing center to improve their essays.

### **Note on this course:**

*This is the first time that we have offered PLS150 for 120 students. Earlier we capped these courses at 45 or 50 students. Because we cannot offer textbooks for all students in these courses (not enough textbooks) and because I am interested in trying a different model of intro courses, we are using an open source/free textbook. While that textbook has some advantages (free/open) it also has some drawbacks. One of those is that it doesn't give enough depth of coverage on the different topics. That is why we are supplementing with other readings. I have chosen these readings to be generally accessible and understandable at the undergraduate level. Some of them will be challenging for first-time students. Because this is a new course in terms of the assignments/readings etc. I am asking for your patience and understanding. I may need to make adjustments to the syllabus if one particular element is not working. I have tried to anticipate challenges based on our location, time, level, and number of students. However, it is likely that I have missed something important that will need to be addressed in the midst of the semester.*

**Weekly Articles (See Reading Schedule for last name/year and click link):**

Behnke, Andreas. 2006. "The Re-Enchantment of War in Popular Culture." *Milenium: Journal of International Studies* 34(3):937-949. [Link](#)

Byers, Michael. 2008. "International Law." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* Christian Reuss-Smit and Duncan Snidal, Editors. [Link](#)

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. The Clash of Civilizations. *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22-49. [Link](#)

Hurd, Ian. 2008. "Constructivism." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* Christian Reuss-Smit and Duncan Snidal, Editors. [Link](#)

Levy, Jack S. 2002. "War and Peace." In *Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons. Sage, Thousand Oaks. (Moodle)

Moravcsik, Andrew. 2008. "The New Liberalism." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* Christian Reuss-Smit and Duncan Snidal, Editors. [Link](#)

Murray, Stuart; Paul Sharp, Geoffrey Wiseman, David Criekmans, Jan Melissen. 2011. "The Present and Future of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Studies." *International Studies Review* 13(4):709-728. [Link](#)

Patrick, Stewart. 2007. "Failed States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas." *International Studies Review* 9(4):644-662. [Link](#)

Reuveny, Rafael. 2007. Climate Change-Induced Migration and Violent Conflict. *Political Geography* 26:656-673. [Link](#)

Temby, Owen. 2015. "What are Levels of Analysis and What do they contribute to International Relations Theory?" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28(4):721-742. [Link](#)

Ross, Michael R. 2001. Does Oil Hinder Democracy? *World Politics* 53(3):325-361. [Link](#)

Simmons, Beth and Lisa L. Martin. 2002. "International Organizations and Institutions." In *Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons. Sage, Thousand Oaks. (Moodle)

Vayrynen, Raimo. 2003. Regionalism: Old and New. *International Studies Review* 5(1): 25-51. [Link](#)

Wohlforth, William C. 2008. "Realism." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* Christian Reuss-Smit and Duncan Snidal, Editors. [Link](#)

**Course Schedule (Subject to change)**

Week	Begins On	Theme	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Assignments
1	13-Aug	Introduction	None	"Getting Started"	Chapter 1	
2	20-Aug	Diplomacy	Chapter 2	Murray et al. 2011		
3	27-Aug	Actors	Chapter 3	Quiz 1	HOLIDAY	Quiz 1 (Wednesday)
4	3-Sep	IR Theory - 1	Temby 2015	Chapter 4	Wohlforth 2008	
5	10-Sep	IR Theory - 2	Moravcsik 2008	Hurd 2008		Quiz 2
6	17-Sep	War	Levy 2002	Behnke 2006		
7	24-Sep	International Law	Chapter 5	Byers 2008		Quiz 3
8	1-Oct	Int. Organizations	Chapter 6	Simmons and Martin 2002		War Film Assignment
9	8-Oct	Fall Break				
10	15-Oct	Civil Society	Chapter 7	Chapter 8 AND Ross 2001	Chapter 9 AND Huntington 1993	
11	22-Oct	Issues: Poverty and Protection	Chapter 10	Chapter 11	Patrick 2007	Quiz 4
12	29-Oct	Issues: Connectivity and Voices	Chapter 12	Vayrynen 2003	Chapter 13	Research Assignment
13	5-Nov	Issues: Terrorism and Environment	Chapter 14	Chapter 15	Reuveny 2007	Quiz 5
14	12-Nov	Issues: Hunger	Chapter 16	No Class	No Class	Paper
15	19-Nov	Conclusions	Chapter 17	Chapter 18		Final Exam (Date TBA)