

# POL S 469: ETHICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Winter 2021 – University of Alberta

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Will Kujala	<b>Time:</b>	Th 10:30a – 12:00p
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**Course Description :** This is a course in international ethical thought. This is not a course analogous to “business ethics” or “medical ethics,” examining the best practices and norms of practitioners. Instead, we examine the ethical problems that emerge out of international politics for us—as individuals, as citizens, and as students. What do our entanglements in global social, economic, and political life entail for the question of ethics: how ought one live? International relations notoriously has been taken to be a place devoid of ethical meaning, with order typically prioritized over justice and the pursuit of values. Nevertheless, international and global politics poses a set of problems that can and should be fruitfully investigated in terms of ethics. These include: what do we owe to those across the planet, as opposed to those close to us? On what grounds can borders be established, closed, or opened? How is and should war be legitimated? What is the ethical significance of global inequality? Climate change? Colonialism (ongoing and historical)? Finally, how do we navigate the conflict and difference in ethical orientations across the globe, and emerging from diverging religious, political, and cultural contexts?

To this end, while we will have live seminars, much of class assignments will be structured around blog posts and comments on others’ blog posts as a form of asynchronous participation. The point of this is to showcase the usefulness of the reflections we read here for thinking about ‘real life’: for making the dangerous jump of taking a clear position on irreducibly complex issues.

**Prerequisites:** POL S 260 (or 261) or consent of the Department.

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays from 10:30a to 12p or by appointment (book at [calendly.com/wkujala](https://calendly.com/wkujala)).

**Required Texts:** No required physical text. All readings will be made available on eClass.

**Learning Objectives:** At the end of this course, students should have improved their capacity to:

1. Clarify the ethical stakes of complicated issues in IR, and take a reasoned position on them in public and academic terms
2. Reconstruct some central theoretical positions in the field of ethics and IR
3. Translate difficult scholarly and theoretical material into practical, public language, and therefore
4. Improve their practical writing skills in relation to politics, IR, and philosophy

**Class format:** This class will be held for 1 hour and 30 minutes (10:30a-12:30p) on Thursdays in a Zoom meeting accessible by eClass. I will upload **brief** (20-25 minutes or less) lectures/introductions to the material to help guide your reading and provide a class baseline for discussion. Other elements of participation will be assessed outside of live session through the preparation of critical questions for class and through comments on other students’ blog posts.

## Assessments:

1. **Personal Reflection Paper (10%):** Technically a ‘blog post’ but shorter and with a different purpose. It is the first post of your blog, introducing where you’re coming from, why you are interested in ethics and IR, and where your central concerns and commitments lie (to begin with!).

2. **Blog Posts (4 x 15% = 60%):** Blog posts engage the readings for a given week. The goal is to apply, extend, or disagree with a reading in a reasoned way grounded in reference to the text. Further, as the name implies, the blog post should translate (*not* dumb down) the material to a language suitable for general public discussion. Five chances, I count four.
3. **Participation (20%):** Half of this is live seminar participation and attendance, including a requirement to bring critical questions to class when it is your turn (to be explained). The other half is comments on other students' blog posts. Comment policy explained further in separate handout. Two posts on each blog: 1 post within a week of blogs being posted, 1 post before the next blog is due. For example, for the blog due February 11, you must make one comment before February 18, and another before February 25. Of course, if you wish you can make 2 comments immediately, there's no requirement to wait. You must comment on blogs in your group (see eClass for your group and blog links).
4. **Final Reflection (10%):** This will be your final, brief blogpost. It need not contain citations etc., but can. The aim of this last post is to take stock of what you've learned and how it affected how you think. Have you changed your mind on central issues? Have your main concerns shifted at all? What things struck you, and what things left you cold?

### Grading Scheme:

Meaning	Letter	% Range
Excellent	A+	91
Excellent	A	85-90.0
Excellent	A-	80-84.9
Good	B+	76-79.9
Good	B	73-75.9.9
Good	B-	70-72.9
Satisfactory	C+	67-69.9
Satisfactory	C	60-65.9
Satisfactory	C-	55-59.9
Pass	D+	53-54.9
Minimal Pass	D	50-52.9
Fail	F	0-49.9

The Faculty of Arts recommends that the class average for 400-level Arts courses fall in a range around the **historical average grades of 2.98-3.58.**

### Important Dates:

January 10	Classes Begin
January 15	Winter registration deadline
January 28	Personal Reflection due
February 3	Winter Term refund deadline
February 11	Blog Post 1 due
February 15-19	Reading Week, no class
March 4	Blog Post 2 due
March 18	Blog Post 3 due
April 1	Blog Post 4 due
April 9	Last day of Winter Term Classes
April 15	Blog Post 5 due
April 22	Last day to post final reflections

**Class Schedule:****January 14: What is Ethics in IR?**

- Hutchings, *Global Ethics*, 1-28
- Ignatieff videos on Ordinary Virtues

**Part I: International Ethics and its Limits****January 21: The Scope of International Ethics**

- Critical Questioners: KARAH AND LEAH
- Parekh, 'Principles of a Global Ethic'
- Frost, 'A Turn not Taken: Ethics at the Turn of the Millennium'
- If you want to get into the weeds regarding ethics in the *discipline* of IR and things like realism vs. liberalism, etc., you can read Hutchings, *International Political Theory*, the first couple chapters (uploaded on eClass)

**January 28: The Ethical Stakes of Statecraft**

- Critical Questioners: KALLIE AND TRISHA
- Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation,' 32-34, 76-94
- Epp, 'The Limits of Remorse'
- **Personal Reflection Due**

**February 4: Ethical Frames; Moral Guts**

- Critical Questioners: GRAYSON AND SAHIB
- Butler, *Frames of War*, 1-32
- Muppidi, "Shame and Rage" from *The Colonial Signs of IR*

**February 11: Order and Justice**

- Critical Questioners: PRANJAL AND LEANNA
- Bull, 'Order vs. Justice in International Politics'
- Pasha, 'Decolonizing the Anarchical Society' (skim/optional)
- **Blog Post 1 Due!**

**FEBRUARY 18: READING WEEK NO CLASS!****Part II: The Geography of Morals****February 25: Cosmopolitanism and its Critics**

- Critical Questioners: ZACH AND KATELYN
- Lu, 'Cosmopolitanism and its Critics'
- Calhoun, 'Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers'

**March 4: Global Justice**

- Critical Questioners: BILLIE AND JADE LYNN
- Chung, 'Domination and Destitution in an Unjust World'
- Young, 'Responsibility and Global Justice'
- **Blog Post 2 Due!**

### **March 11: Treaty 6 and International Ethics**

- Critical Questioners: KAREL, GABRIEL
- Treaty Six
- Venne, 'Understanding Treaty 6: an Indigenous Perspective'
- Starblanket and Hunt, 'COVID-19, the Numbered Treaties, and the Politics of Life'

### **Part III: Ethical Issues**

### **March 18: War and Peace I**

- Critical Questioners: ASMA AND ELINA
- Walzer, 'The Triumph of Just War Theory'
- Idris, *War for Peace*, xiii-xx, 1-9
- **Blog Post 3 Due!**

### **March 25: War and Peace II**

- Critical Questioners: SHELAH AND RHONA
- Jacqui True, "Continuums of Violence and Peace: a Feminist Perspective"
- James Der Derian, 'Virtuous War/Virtual Theory'

### **April 1: Border Crossings**

- Critical Questioners: ELIZABETH AND KEYSEL
- Carens, 'Ethics of Immigration'
- *Viewpoint Magazine*, 'The Border Crossing Us'
- Simpson, 'Borders, Cigarettes, and Sovereignty'
- **Blog Post 4 Due!**

### **April 8: Climate Change**

- Critical Question: OPTIONAL
- Todd, 'Indigenizing the Anthropocene'
- Scranton, 'Learning to Die in the Anthropocene'

### **April 15: Topic TBD/Wrap-up**

- Critical Question: OPTIONAL
- We will decide collectively (by vote most likely) on the topic/readings for this week out of some options.

- **Final Blog Post Due**

**Statement on Remote Teaching:**

Given the COVID-19 global pandemic, this course is delivered remotely. The principles that guide my remote delivery are the following:

1. Placing the health and well-being of University of Alberta students, TAs and staff above all other considerations;
2. Striving to provide the best possible learning experience for students;
3. Emphasizing academic content rather than the technology delivering it;
4. Designing online activities that work for everyone.

**Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning:** Surveys and course evaluations have shown that students have expressed a strong desire for at least some part of their learning to take place in ‘seminar’ or what we now refer to as synchronous learning experience.

Spring and summer instructors found that it was often difficult to provide a synchronous heavy course but a totally asynchronous course (no student engagement with the instructor) was problematic. The most successful courses had either some synchronous activities built in, or the instructor otherwise made themselves available to students.

This is for a few reasons: Courses in Political Science often require that the classroom provide a ‘cohort’ experience.

Students learn better when they have an opportunity to speak with each other and the instructor in real time.

The skills that students learn in Political Science are tied to excellent communication, and that requires some learning of how to speak with each other, as well as listen to each other.

Therefore, students in POL S 469 should expect this course to have synchronous elements.

**Course Policies:**

These policies apply when you do not have an excuse/permission from me! Excusable absence/late include severe illness and family emergencies. These things happen but please have a schedule and plan for what you are doing so if something does happen you are not sitting with a blank page while recovering from illness/trauma! However, **please note that I am aware the pandemic is deadly serious, and that common sense and care will prevail in adjudicating extensions, lates, and absences.**

- **Late Policy:** Assignments handed in late will be assigned a 2-point decrease per full day. E.g., your a blog response that deserves a 13/15 will get an 11/15 after one day; a position paper that deserves 20/25 will get an 18/25 after one day.
- **Attendance:** I understand we’re all living under a very bizarre sense of time these days. However, attendance in synchronous sessions is important for this course as it is largely discussion/question based. Missing more than 3 classes will result in a significant hit to your participation grade. If you are going to be late or absent and have a sense of that ahead of time, it is always better to let me know.
- **Missed Work:** In special circumstances, at my discretion, missed work can be reweighted. Typically missed work results, however, in a zero.

**Student Responsibilities:**

- **Academic Integrity:** The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize

themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult the Academic Integrity website. If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process.

- **Recording of Lectures:** Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).
- **Student Resources:** The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.
- **Accessibility Resources:** (1 – 80 SUB) The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the Accessibility Resources webpage:  
see: [www.ualberta.ca/current-students/student-accessibility-services](http://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/student-accessibility-services)
- **The Academic Success Centre:** (1-80 SUB) The Academic Success Centre offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.  
see: [www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre](http://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre)
- **The Centre for Writers:** (1-42 Assiniboia Hall) The Centre for Writers offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.  
See: [www.ualberta.ca/current-students/centre-for-writers/](http://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/centre-for-writers/)
- **First People's House:** The First Peoples' House provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth:  
[www.ualberta.ca/current-students/first-peoples-house/index.html](http://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/first-peoples-house/index.html).
- **Health and Wellness Support:** There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit Health and Wellness Support webpage:  
<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/wellness/index.html>.
- **Office of the Student Ombuds:** The Office of the Student Ombuds offers confidential interviews, advice, and support to students facing academic discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties ([www.ualberta.ca/current-students/ombuds](http://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/ombuds)).

### Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. This includes virtual environments and platforms.

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the Evaluation Procedures and Grading System section of the University Calendar.