

Introduction to International Relations

PSC 124 (M200) – Fall 2020 online

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30am – 10:25am
Professor Audie Klotz

Section Instructors:

André Anselmo – Fridays

Lindsay Burt – Thursdays

Daniel Jackson – Thursdays

Check the “Coursework Schedule” tab on Blackboard for a weekly planner, which will list any synchronous meetings and access codes or link to asynchronous recordings and notes.

Check the “Instructor Information” tab on Blackboard for individual contact information, details about office hours, tips on email etiquette, and other communication options.

Course Logistics

We seek to balance needs and preferences. Based on preliminary results of the “Online Logistics” survey, most students taking this class expect to be in the Syracuse time zone, with reliable Internet. Some of us, however, do use older devices and software, which increases the probability of glitches. At the same time, without a crystal ball, we hope to preempt possible disruptions due to any virus spike. Given that normally flu season starts mid-semester, we anticipate an increased number of students, regardless of location, will need to be online later.

Each week, no later than class-time (9:30am) on Mondays, you will find a schedule posted on Blackboard listing session formats, readings, tasks, and any assignments. Also, regularly check the Q&A Forum, which offers a place to post logistical and content questions.

Lectures will typically meet virtually using a mix of pre-recorded asynchronous videos posted on Mondays and optional synchronous (often recorded) meetings on Wednesdays. We aim to provide transcripts and/or notes too.

Sections will typically meet synchronously (often recorded), with some small group activities. You will receive a supplementary section syllabus with more information.

Since a plurality of respondents prioritized consistency over experimentation, we will rely mainly on Blackboard and its linked programs. Along with integrated Zoom, Blackboard functions include discussion boards, surveys, quizzes, and journals. Assignment due-dates will provide a bit of flexibility, so no one should worry about penalties due to software headaches or connectivity issues. In part to reduce anxiety over technological glitches, this course will not use timed online exams. In addition, eliminating online exams circumvents potential problems with cheating.

In making these logistical decisions, we also considered privacy concerns and so-called Zoom fatigue. Please let us know of any other logistical issues that we should reexamine.

Course Objectives

We live in a complex world, where the actions of people around the world affect us locally more than ever before. The coronavirus pandemic makes these connections apparent in unique and urgent ways. This course provides analytical tools to help you make sense of this complexity by:

- ✓ Elucidating key features of historical trends and current controversies
- ✓ Explaining causes and consequences through application of social science theories
- ✓ Exploring how actors, collectively and individually, influence global issues

We will cover a wide range of topics, including: nuclear weapons (e.g., North Korea, Iran); asymmetric warfare (e.g., drones, terrorism); rising powers (e.g., China, BRICS); trade disputes (e.g., NAFTA 2.0, Brexit); migration (e.g., remittances, refugees); human rights (e.g., gender, race), and multiple dimensions of the environment (e.g., pollution, climate change, sustainability). You will also have opportunities to put additional issues on our agenda, for lecture and for section.

You will complete a variety of tasks and assignments that teach how to:

- ✓ Apply major theories of International Relations (IR)
- ✓ Build analytical claims based on logic and evidence
- ✓ Clarify the conceptual foundations of your own views
- ✓ Distinguish opinion from analysis in public commentaries
- ✓ Expand your historical and geographical knowledge of the world
- ✓ Fine tune your listening, speaking, and writing skills

By the end of the semester, you should be able to use the tools of IR in order to recognize trends across time and track current controversies as they unfold. We also hope that you will discover ways to have a beneficial impact on the world.

Assignments & Grades

We will use a textbook to ensure a shared baseline understanding of terminologies and histories, upon which we will build analyses of specific issues or trends over time.

You should procure a copy of Paul **D'Anieri's** *International Politics: Power and Purpose in Global Affairs*, **4th edition** (Cengage 2017). Please do **not** buy an expensive new copy or the newer 5th edition. You should readily find used copies, or you can opt for digital versions. Bird Library Reserve provides at least one physical copy, but no digital version, due to publisher restrictions.

We will refer to the textbook by author name – **D'Anieri** – because many textbooks use very similar titles. The course schedule (below) provides an overview of topics and key assignment due-dates. The weekly planner will provide tailored guidelines for which pages to read carefully and which to skim. You will usually complete short weekly comprehension quizzes or surveys.

You will find all other required readings, videos, and podcasts posted on Blackboard. You will also find guidelines for assignments, announcements, lecture slides, recordings, and other resources. Often, you will find supplementary (optional) materials on topics we cover or breaking news, for anyone who wants to delve deeper.

We will base grades approximately on four weighted components:

Tasks (30% total) = you will complete a wide variety of small assignments, including comprehension quizzes and short surveys. These will typically be scored based only on completion or used as requirements to access subsequent tasks. Your grade therefore will reflect whether you complete these tasks on time and how many attempts you need to reach a passing score. Your grade will be split: Module 1 (15%) and Module 2 (15%).

Memos (30% total) = you will write six (6) memos. Each memo will be scored separately. However, your grade for this component will be based on cumulative score, combined with any substantial improvement or extenuating circumstances. You must submit all memos to receive a passing grade on this component.

Participation (30% total) = you will have many opportunities to demonstrate engagement, primarily in your discussion sections. Since we do not require attendance at synchronous sessions, you will have alternative options. Your grade will be split: Module 1 (15%) and Module 2 (15%).

Journal (10% total) = you will post periodically in a Climate journal on Blackboard (visible only to you and the instructors). In lieu of a final exam, you will then write a Climate Action Proposal, focusing either on your own behaviors or as a policy proposal for a country of your choice. Your grade for this component will combine the memo along with consistency and thoughtfulness of your journal postings.

Weekly Schedule

This overview aims to help you map out the pace of the semester. **Check the Coursework Schedule on Blackboard every Monday** for details of required readings, assignments, and tasks. Also check the Announcement page of Blackboard for any logistical updates.

Introduction

During these early weeks of the semester, we will provide an overview of the course, along with virtual opportunities to meet your instructors and peers. Check your technology, too.

[Week 1, starting Monday, August 24](#)

We will talk about theories as analytical tools and ways to distinguish analysis from opinion. In section, we will discuss professional expertise and personal experience.

[Week 2, starting Monday, August 31](#)

We will elaborate on the role of theories and their connection to policies. Lecture and readings will look at the concept of civil war. In section, you will explore additional concepts and policies.

**** Due to the pandemic rescheduling, we have a class session on Saturday, September 5. We will use this time for additional office hours (maybe even outdoors in person if the weather cooperates) and for individual virtual appointments (not necessarily on Saturday). Also use this time to fix any tech issues.*

Module 1: International Systems

We will cover five theoretical perspectives, one per week, outlining their key assumptions and providing a few applications. Keep in mind that theories purposely simplify. Thus each framework highlights specific features of international systems and downplays or ignores other features. Often we will combine select pages of different chapters in the textbook.

[Week 3, starting Monday, September 7](#)

We will concentrate on Realism.

**** Due to the pandemic rescheduling Labor Day will be a school day, not a holiday.*

Memo 1 due by section time, via TurnItIn

[Week 4, starting Monday, September 14](#)

We will concentrate on Liberalism.

Memo 2 due by section time, via TurnItIn

[Week 5, starting Monday, September 21](#)

We will concentrate on Marxism. (No memo due this week.)

[Week 6, starting Monday, September 28](#)

We will concentrate on Constructivism. (No memo due this week.)

[Week 7, starting Monday, October 5](#)

We will concentrate on Feminism.

Memo 3 due by section time, via TurnItIn

[Week 8, starting Monday, October 12](#)

Review and recovery: no additional meetings, readings, assignments, or tasks this week. (Happy Canadian Thanksgiving, too!)

Any missing work must be submitted by noon on Wednesday, October 14, for partial credit in Module 1 grades for Tasks and Participation: Late > Never

Module 2: Actors and Issues

We will cover five broad themes, with a mix of historical and contemporary illustrations. Each week will typically be split into multiple topics, with multiple tasks.

[Week 9, starting Monday, October 19](#)

We will concentrate on states and societies, including sovereignty, democracy, nationalism, and self-determination. (No memo due this week.)

**** Due to pandemic rescheduling, Thursday sections officially have an extra session on Sunday, October 25. We will offer asynchronous activities.*

[Week 10, starting Monday, October 26](#)

We will concentrate on foreign policy-making processes.

Memo 4 due by section time, via TurnItIn

[Week 11, starting Monday, November 2](#)

We will concentrate on roles of non-state actors, especially International Organizations (IOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

**** Due to pandemic rescheduling, Friday sections officially have an extra session on Sunday, November 8. We will offer asynchronous activities.*

Memo 5 due by section, via TurnItIn

[Week 12, starting Monday, November 9](#)

We will concentrate on economic interdependence, especially trade and migration. (No memo due this week.)

[Week 13, starting Monday, November 16](#)

We will concentrate on human rights, spanning civil/political and social/economic issues.

Memo 6 due by section, via TurnItIn

[Last class on Monday, November 23](#)

We will review to help with the Climate Action Proposal.

Reading and Exam weeks, November 30 – Dec 9

Reminder: no final exam. Contact us if you want to discuss your Climate Action Proposal.

Any missing work must be submitted by noon on Monday, November 30, for partial credit in Module 2 grades for Tasks and Participation: Late > Never

Climate Action Proposal due by noon on Monday, December 7, via TurnItIn

Policies & Resources

This course follows policies established by the university to comply with a plethora of legal requirements and align with educational best practices. You can find a wide array of support services across campus. This list merely highlights rules and resources most directly relevant to the content or procedures of our course. Ask us if you need additional information or assistance.

Accountability

We require that all work be your own (albeit with minor modifications for any group assignments). If in doubt, ask before submitting. You can find details of SU policies and procedures, including potential penalties, on the Center for Learning and Student Success website (class.syr.edu). If necessary, we will discuss any concerns with you. Any penalties will be calibrated based on the severity of infractions.

We recognize that one of the main drivers of plagiarism is panic, rather than intent to deceive. Therefore, we prefer a proactive rather than punitive approach, which includes instruction about proper paraphrasing and reminders to avoid bad habits. Two of the most common problems: copying from webpages or shared documents from study groups.

You will submit most graded writing (notably memos) via TurnItIn. Papers you submit for this class will become part of the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. Turnitin compares your submitted file against documents on the Internet and against other student papers submitted to Turnitin (at SU and elsewhere). You will see an “originality report” and the sources of any text matches. Keep in mind that benign matches can merely be bibliographic information or common phrases.

Another common concern that leads people to copy is insecurity about their own writing. We recognize that students reach college through diverse education avenues. Therefore, our assignment guidelines and rubrics stress clarity and logic rather than grammar. While some of you enter this course with a stronger writing base than others, we all benefit from feedback. As you work on memos, considering signing up for a tutoring session at the Writing Center, which currently offers both synchronous and asynchronous appointments (<https://syr.mywconline.com>). You can also find information about the individual Tutor Matching Service through the Center for Learning and Student Success (class.syr.edu).

Accommodations

Whether or not you request a formal letter from the Center for Disability Resources (<https://disabilityresources.syr.edu>), please let us know of any concerns, oversights, or suggestions. Especially if you will be requesting transcription or other services that require time to organize, please let us know as soon as possible. Another benefit of eliminating online exams in this course: no one needs to request accommodations for extended time and alternative locations.

Even without a pandemic, some people juggled schedules and responsibilities, including childcare or jobs, which sometimes adversely affected participation in their courses. These types of considerations may be exacerbated by pandemic disruptions, including additional financial pressures and hybrid local school schedules. While online asynchronous options hopefully eliminate most problems, let us know if you face additional challenges to timely completion of assignments or participation.

Absences

Since we will offer asynchronous options for synchronous sessions, some of the typical concerns about attendance become moot. Still, you should communicate with your section instructor about any significant illnesses, or other circumstances that may delay your completing weekly tasks or submitting memos by the due date. You should also continue to provide routine notifications, including Religious Observances (registered on MySlice at the beginning of the semester) and any sports that intend to travel. Also let us know of other major commitments, such as reporting for the *Daily Orange*, which may not generate official documentation.

Regardless of how the pandemic impacts us individually, right now everyone needs to juggle restrictions and disruptions. Such pervasive stress undermines our brain functions, as well as our immune systems. We hope that campus procedures and flu shots will keep everyone physically healthy all semester. Mental health matters too. Anxiety and grief may deserve extra attention, especially when your typical ways of coping with stress may not be available. You can find alternatives wellness activities and multiple formats of assistance through the Barnes Center (315-443-8000 or <https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/fall-2020/>)

Even without stresses of a pandemic, topics that we cover in this course – especially war – can be emotionally jarring. Also, both in and beyond the content of this course, every day we encounter references to sexual violence. While we purposely avoid materials (especially videos) that may be disturbing, we cannot always anticipate reactions. Please consider making a counseling appointment if you feel anxious, for whatever reason. Veterans may also find help via the VA hospital (on Irving Street, directly across from campus, 315-425-4400). Vera House, a local community organization, provides 24/7 support services (315-425-0818, verahouse.org).