

POSC 1020: Introduction to International Relations

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Class Hours: TR 2-3:15 p.m.

Class Room: *online*

Course Description

This introductory-level course will survey several core topics in the study of international relations and its discussion in policy circles. Our approach to these topics will be targeted even though our survey of the field will be broad. We will focus our inquiries to the interests that actors have, the means by which they interact, and the institutions in which they operate that constrain or facilitate their behavior. We will take this approach, along with a broad understanding of the history of international politics, and start first with a study of the causes of conflict and war. This is our biggest question in the entirety of international relations, making it an ideal place to start. We will continue with a review of international trade, finance, and monetary policy. These topics are obtuse to lay observers but we will make sense of these topics within our approach of actors' interests, interactions, and institutions. We will close the semester with newer topics in international relations, like human rights and environmental concerns, that will shape our discussion of world politics in the years to come. By the end of the semester, students should have a deeper knowledge of international relations and, importantly, better understand current events and policy discussions.

Course Objectives

1. Gain a cursory knowledge of important topics in international relations, preparing students for upper-division courses with more focused applications in the field.
2. Understand conflict as bargaining process and explain why bargaining "breaks down" (i.e. war onset).
3. Learn that, despite popular commentary and outward appearances, terrorism is rational behavior and part of a bargaining process.
4. Appreciate the benefits of globalization and free trade, notwithstanding the externalities these policies can create.
5. Discuss current issues at the fore of international politics (e.g. human rights, global warming) and the problems we have trying to address these issues.

Required Readings

Frieden, Jeffry A., David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz (2016). *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. 3rd. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

A Comment on the Required Reading

For what it is worth, I intend to teach around this book this semester. It is surprisingly difficult for instructors to teach an introductory class to an entire subfield in political science without a textbook that can easily synthesize volumes of information in a manner comprehensible to a student audience for whom this might be their first college class (let alone their first political science class). I assign this particular textbook because I think it the best on the market. If it did not exist, I would feel compelled to write it myself. However, I understand the nature of the pandemic is leading students to evaluate how to cut important costs. So, I intend to teach this class with some grace around actually obtaining the book itself. Students should explore their options on [eBay](#) and [Amazon](#). For what it is worth, I assigned the third edition of the textbook thinking it would be cheaper to obtain secondhand than the more current fourth edition. Yet, I have seen used versions of the fourth edition for purchase that are cheaper than the third edition. If it is cheaper, students should consider the fourth edition. The structure of the book is almost identical across editions even as the fourth edition is more current. Students should be able to follow along just fine with it.

Course Policy

This section of the syllabus details multiple policies that will be implemented in this class through the semester. Continued enrollment in this class constitutes acceptance of the terms outlined in this document.

Grading Policy

- 15% of your grade will be determined by discussion of the material throughout the course of the semester. I will clarify what I mean by this in the next subsection.
- 20% of your grade will be determined by a first midterm due **before Thursday, Feb. 18, 3:15 p.m.**¹ I will upload the midterm to Canvas with about 48 hours to spare before it is due.
- 30% of your grade will be determined by a second midterm to be administered on **before Thursday, April 1, 3:15 p.m.** I will upload the midterm to Canvas with about 48 hours to spare before it is due.
- 35% of your grade will be determined by a final exam. This final exam is due **before Thursday, April 29, 10:15 a.m.** I will upload the final to Canvas with about 48 hours to spare before it is due.

¹Allow me to reiterate the “before” qualifier. A midterm submitted at 3:15:00 p.m. is *late* by this interpretation. I do not accept late work. Do not assume your laptop’s clock perfectly coincides with the system’s time or atomic time. Resist the urge to punt assignments until the proverbial eleventh hour.

Discussion Policy

This class would otherwise have an attendance/participation policy and a map quiz to flesh out the assignments for the semester. However, a hybrid class during a pandemic is going to eliminate the traditional attendance/participation policy. The map quiz, which is one of my favorite assignments, is not really amenable to a hybrid class where all examination must be done online because that technology is not available in Canvas (and you'll probably be using Google Maps as an assistant for it).²

In lieu of these, I am going to demand that you ask some questions or populate the "Discussion" section of Canvas through the course of the semester. Notice (in the class schedule later in the document) we have roughly three sections coinciding with material before and after the midterms. The first section will be foundation stuff and the causes of conflict. The second section will be about international political economy. The third section will be about some "newer" topics in international relations like climate change, human rights, and what we think the future of the field will be in the next few decades. *For each of those sections, I want you to populate the "Discussion" section of Canvas with something germane to that section. You can do this in a variety of ways. You can ask me a question about how something you read or something in lecture relates to a current or past event. You can share an interesting news article you read and riff on what you think it means relative to the class material. You can reply to something someone asked with a well-reasoned and thoughtful take. There are multiple pathways here, but you must do this at least once for each of these three sections. That means, at a minimum, you must post three things in the "Discussion" section.*

This can devolve into a grease fire without careful management on my end, so I want to add a few caveats. One, for our collective sanity's sake, do not ask anything specific to the upcoming general election in a way that anchors the question to who you would like to win or who "should" win, per your personal tastes. This is a political science class, so "political" questions are unavoidable here. However I won't count for credit a discussion post that reads something like "here's why I think (Biden | Trump) should have won." However, something like "what do you think is the future of NATO (now that Biden won | after a Trump presidency)?" is fair game. Notice the difference. Second, this is an international relations question so I am disinclined to count for credit a post with no clear connection to international relations.³ Third, do not be a troll, and be respectful. Be mindful of Clemson University's Title IX policy as well.⁴ Posts or questions that I do not think come from a position of good faith won't count for credit and I may even delete them. I will make my displeasure with it explicit as well. Fourth, do not repeat or simply echo another person's post, *though you can riff on extend your thoughts on it* for credit. Fifth, your post must involve some level of commentary. You can't just provide a link in it with something minimal like "what do you

²I know I would if there was no way to stop me and no punishment for doing it.

³There is nevertheless some flexibility here. For example, Americans tend to think of abortion and gay marriage as purely domestic issues and ones that straddle political interpretations of religious doctrines. However, Europe understands both more as fundamental human rights, which have implications for international relations given the supranational organization of much of the region. Should you be interested in a domestic issue in the United States, explore international components to it.

⁴Notice the inclusivity in Clemson University's "Title IX Policy" statement no matter the prominence of the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex from the Higher Education Amendments of 1972. Comments that are hostile to others on the bases outlined in the Title IX policy later in the syllabus may be reported, will be deleted, and will not count for credit.

think about this?” or “I thought this was interesting!” Say more than that. Sixth, and related to an above point about good faith, I will not count for credit discussion posts or comments that link to less than reputable sources. Disinformation is a major problem that has long affected the political right, but is drawing in the political left too. When in doubt, I will make a judgment call about whether a source is reputable, whether the content is disinformation, and whether the student’s post counts for credit. Seventh, questions are welcome if you do not understand the material, but questions like “I didn’t understand the reading for this week. Could you elaborate this?” do not count and you can privately email those to me.

If I feel your discussion post/question counts for credit, I will respond with “+1” and offer my own thoughts or commentary, where appropriate. If I feel it does not count for credit, I will say so and briefly explain why. Your post for each of these three sections must come *before* one of the exams. In other words, your post for the first section material must come before Midterm 1. Your post for the second section material must come before Midterm 2. Your post for the third section material must come before the *start* of final exam week. The student can discern these exact deadlines on the Canvas module for the course.

Office Hours

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This is an online class and I will not be available for any in-person meeting. I am, however, available by any number of means. Students can email me or chat with me over a number of videoconferencing/video chat applications. I have FaceTime, Google Hangout, Skype, and Zoom. I think I even used Microsoft Teams once. It is not hard to get a hold of me, but the nature of this viral pandemic means I intend to make it difficult to get a hold of me in person. Again, please do not take that personally.

Cell Phones, Pagers, Laptops, PDAs

This is an online class, so go nuts with these things for all I care. However, you and your phone should probably be on mute during an online lecture.

E-mail Policy (or: Why I May Not Respond to Your E-mail)

I am usually quick to respond to student e-mails. However, student e-mails tend to do several things that try my patience. I have a new policy, effective Fall 2016, that outlines why I will not respond to certain e-mails students send. Multiple rationales follow.

1. The student could answer his/her own inquiry by reading the syllabus.
2. The student missed class for which there was no exam. I do not need to know the exact reason for a missed class. Students with excusable absences are responsible for giving me a note *in hard copy* that documents the reason for the missed class. An e-mail is unnecessary unless the impromptu absence involved missing a midterm or final.
3. The student wants to know what topics s/he missed during a class s/he skipped. The answer is always “you missed what was on the syllabus.”

4. The student is protesting a grade without reference to specific points of objection. See the policy on protesting a grade in the syllabus. These e-mails tend to be expressive utility on the part of the student and do not require a response from me. Students interested in improving their knowledge of material should see me during office hours.
5. The student wants to know how many classes s/he missed at some point during the semester. I assume the student has a better answer to that question than me until the end of the semester.
6. The student is requesting an extension on an assignment for which the syllabus already established the deadline. The answer is always “no.”
7. The student is proposing an excuse for why an assignment that is late on *Turnitin* is “not actually late” by some flimsy pretense. I will ignore these e-mails.
8. The student is “*grade grubbing*” or asking to round up a grade. The answer is always “no.” *I round grades down, not up.*
9. The student is asking for an extra credit opportunity, a request that amounts to more grading for the professor. The answer is “no.”

Make-Up Exam Policy

All exams will be online. Further, I will give roughly 48 hours (or maybe even a lot more) to complete a midterm or a final exam. Thus, there is no real exam to “make up” like one would during a normal semester. I only caution that the deadlines I communicate are quite rigid and I do not accept late work. This implies students should strongly resist the urge to complete an assignment and upload an assignment to *Turnitin* proximate to the deadline. Give yourself ample time to finish and upload the assignment (you’ll have it!). The student bears responsibility for potential ISP issues.

Disputing an Assignment Grade

I am willing to accommodate students who believe my grading of an assignment was too harsh or misunderstanding. Students who wish to dispute a grade on an assignment must submit a one-page, single-spaced argument for a grade change before I consider the request. From there, I will re-grade the entire assignment. The student should not assume a “ratchet effect” for disputing an assignment as the subsequent reevaluation may result in a lower grade.

Title IX Policy

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

The University is committed to combatting sexual harassment and sexual violence. As a result, students should know that Clemson faculty and staff members who work directly with students

are required to report any instances of sexual harassment and sexual violence, to Clemson University's Title IX Coordinator. As your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence or misconduct, stalking, domestic and/or relationship violence that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

I take academic integrity seriously and will show no tolerance for any instances of academic dishonesty. The logic behind cheating or plagiarism may be self-interest, but this is too myopic. Penalties for being caught are severe and the consequences of being found culpable will extend well beyond the student's time as a college student at Clemson. In the interest of clarification, I provide the definitions of several types of academic dishonesty below, [as understood by Clemson University](#). Avoid intentionally or inadvertently committing any of these acts:

- **Cheating:** Giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid, including the inappropriate use of electronic devices, in any work submitted to fulfill academic requirements. In examination situations all electronic devices must be off and stowed unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- **Plagiarism:** The intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts.
- **Unlawful Access to Private Material:** Attempts to copy, edit, or delete computer files that belong to another person or use of computer accounts that belong to another person without the permission of the file owner or account owner.

Clemson University's Academic Integrity Statement broadly defines breaches of academic integrity as "lying, cheating, or stealing in any form." This broad definition of academic integrity that will be enforced in my classroom.

Accessibility Policy

Federal laws mandate the provision of services at the university level to qualified students with disabilities. If a student requires special provisions, I encourage that student to let me know *privately* as soon as possible (preferably within the first two weeks of the semester). Afterward, I am required to refer the student to the [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#), which will determine the necessary provisions that I must make. SAS will give its recommendations to the student, who must relay their recommendations to me. I, as the instructor, am responsible for providing the necessary accommodations, but only at the behest of SAS. The student maintains privacy rights on the matter, which I wholeheartedly will respect. That said, *it is the student's responsibility to initiate the provision process*. This can only be done, privately and securely, through SAS. I am unsure what this might look like in a "hybrid" class like we have, but please let me know if I can expect to hear from SAS on your behalf as it will get my gears spinning earlier about what changes I might need to make to my class in a peculiar semester like this.

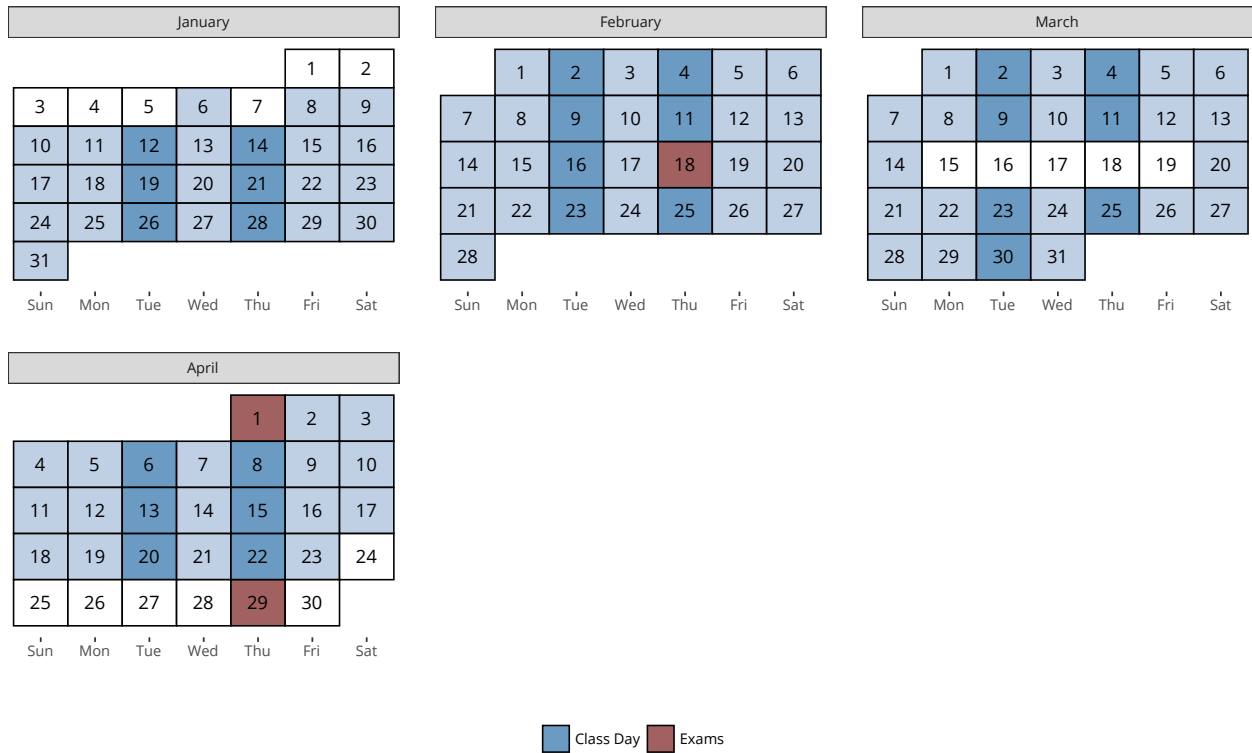


Figure 1: A Calendar for POSC 1020 (Introduction to International Relations, Spring 2021)

Class Schedule

Students must read the following *before* Tuesday’s class session each week. Important: class readings are subject to change, contingent on mitigating circumstances and the progress we make as a class. Students should attend lectures and follow the course website to keep track of any changes to the schedule. Weeks corresponding with midterms will have the exams on Thursday preceded by an in-class review on Tuesday. Figure 1 outlines the plan and highlights important dates for the semester. Dates within the semester that correspond with university holidays or in which the professor will be out of town are whitened out.

Week 01, 01/04 - 01/08: Syllabus Day (FLS, Introduction)

Read *all* associated documents on course website.

- [Taking Good Notes](#)
- [Fun with Attendance and Grades \(i.e. Students Should Attend Class\)](#)
- [The Educational Power of Discomfort](#)
- [Put Your Laptops Away, Kids \(Vol. 2\)](#)

Week 02, 01/11 - 01/15: What Shapes Our World and Worldview? (FLS, Chps. 1-2)

Themes: We start with a history of the world after 1492—since that is when “the world” first emerges as a meaningful unit—and discuss some major themes in it. We continue with a framework for understanding IR through the major actors involved (esp. heads of state), the interests they have, and how institutions can facilitate or constrain behavior in a strategic setting. There’s some rudimentary game theory in this week.

Week 03, 01/18 - 01/22: Why Are There Wars? (FLS, Chp. 3)

Themes: Understanding the causes of war between states is the foundation research question in the field. States fight wars, more often than not, over the allocation of territory between them. However, it is conceptually more important to think of war as a resulted of what we call “bargaining failure.” Three strategic problems recur in this context: issues that cannot be meaningfully divided, an incentive to misrepresent private information about capabilities and resolve, and an inability to credibly commit to peaceful conflict resolution. War, for first-year students, can be understood analogous to an ultimatum game where a range of possible deals exists that could prevent war.

Week 04, 01/25 - 01/29: Domestic Politics and War (FLS, Chp. 4)

Themes: Externalities notwithstanding, we think of war as a “public bad.” However, what might be bad for more people may be good for fewer people and this can push leaders toward war. First-year students have probably heard of some of this before—things like “diversions” and “rally (‘round the flag) effects” are tempting for leaders trying to hold onto power. Democracies, purportedly, are more peaceful than non-democracies because of some institutional quirks that limit this kind of opportunism. No matter, war can serve particularistic interests and one lamentable fact about policy-making is that smaller groups and smaller interests are better able to get what they want.

Week 05, 02/01 - 02/05: International Institutions and War (FLS, Chp. 5)

Themes: The nexus between inter-state conflict and international institutions will touch on two broad types of institution. The first are alliances. These are institutions of a kind aimed to coordinate mutual security policy. The second are collective security organizations (CSOs). These are institutions aimed to prevent acts of aggression. Alliances influence the bargaining range between states the extent to which they augment the capabilities of one side (all else equal). CSOs clearly do not succeed in preventing all forms of aggression but the international system is better off with them.

Week 06, 02/08 - 02/12: Civil War and Terrorism (FLS, Chp. 6)

Themes: We return to the bargaining framework (Week 3) to understand wars pitting central governments (states) against non-state actors. The same framework for bargaining failure applies but

the power asymmetry between central governments and non-state actors compounds issues of private information and credible commitments. Central governments may be absolutely more powerful than non-state challengers, but there's a reason these conflicts tend to be much longer than inter-state conflicts. Non-state actors—especially terrorist groups—acknowledge this endowment disadvantage they have relative to central governments and adapt to this fundamental weakness.

Week 07, 02/15 - 02/19: MIDTERM 1

Week 08, 02/22 - 02/26: International Trade (FLS, Chp. 7)

Themes: Conflict may be IR's "bread and butter" (from my humble conflict-oriented perspective) but international political economy (IPE) is itself a thriving research program. Trade, like conflict, is one of the oldest activities between states and it is a natural place to start for IPE. This week will be heavy on basics—e.g. factors of production, Stolper-Samuelson, Ricardo-Viner, Heckscher-Ohlin, comparative advantage. There is one takeaway I will repeat/yell until I am blue in the mouth: **imports are the gains from trade and exports are the costs**. Remember that next time you hear a politician complain about a trade deficit in the United States.

Week 09, 03/01 - 03/05: International Finance (FLS, Chp. 8)

Themes: In a given year, about \$5 trillion USD moves across international borders. That is a lot of money! Trade may be what gets most attention on the news or in pundit circles, but international finance might be where the real action is. This will involve discussions of types of foreign investment and where foreign investment typically goes (i.e. from rich country to rich country, no matter what you see on the news). We'll introduce the importance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to matters of international finance. This week will close with an aside on immigration. Labor is a factor of production. It too moves.

Week 10, 03/08 - 03/12: International Monetary Relations (FLS, Chp. 9)

Themes: How do you exchange your national currency for another national currency? This is deceptively difficult and monetary policy has been at the root of some of the wildest episodes in IR. There are two broad themes this week. The first is some basics—i.e. what does it mean to fix or float, what is appreciation/depreciation. The second theme is the international monetary regimes we have seen over time (e.g. gold standard, dollar standard), how they emerge, and how they end. The IMF plays an important role in monitoring changes to monetary policy.

Week 11, 03/15 - 03/19: SPRING BREAK

Week 12, 03/22 - 03/26: Wealth and Poverty (FLS, Chp. 10)

Themes: Why are some countries rich while others are poor? That is a basic, honest question that can spawn a million research articles. There are broad correlates that explain this as well as some important macrohistorical patterns. Some countries have succeeded in their development trajectories (e.g. the Asian Tigers, prominently) while others have not. This week will emphasize those

success stories and discuss how difficult those trajectories are to obtain, given how the modern economy is structured (i.e. by rich countries for the benefit of rich countries).

Week 13, 03/29 - 04/02: MIDTERM 2

Week 14, 04/05 - 04/09: Human Rights (FLS, Chp. 12)

Themes: This starts a third section of IR research. These are topics that I did not learn when I was your age because curriculum had not included some nascent scholarship on these topics (no matter the clear fit). We start with human rights, where there has been a slew of scholarship documenting and explaining human rights abuses. Some basic questions we will answer: why do states care about human rights across borders? If they care, why have they not been more successful preventing human rights abuses? And why do notorious human rights abusers commit to human rights treaties?

Week 15, 04/12 - 04/16: Environmental Concerns (FLS, Chp. 13)

Themes: The environment is a common that we have been free to use and pollute as we saw fit, but only recently have we realized that we are going to reap the whirlwind of centuries of environmental abuse. Climate change is an existential threat to *all* life on earth but environmental collective action has struggled to succeed because costs for environmental protection are concentrated on a handful of powerful actors whereas the benefit is diffuse. Much like trade, and domestic politics and war, smaller groups are better able to get what they want.

Week 16, 04/19 - 04/23: Looking Ahead, and a Review (FLS, Chp. 14)

Themes: The semester will close with a discussion of three main questions we believe will shape the future of IR. First, what are the implications of weapons of mass production becoming cheaper to produce with more countries obtaining them? Second, what is the future of American hegemony given the purported “rise of China” and, of late, an American abdication of its hegemony? Third, what is the future of globalization when its discontents aspire to throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater? There are no clear answers right now, but we can still riff on these topics given what we have learned over time (and in this semester).

Week 17, 04/26 - 04/30: FINAL EXAMS