**PS 205: Introduction to International Relations**

Ronald Mitchell  
Professor of Political Science and Environmental Studies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time: T-Th 10:00-11:20</th>
<th>Office Hours: PLC-921 on Tues/Thurs 11:30-1:00, by signup and appt.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rmitchel@uoregon.edu">rmitchel@uoregon.edu</a>: 346-4880</td>
<td>Course website (and Prof/GTF info) on Blackboard</td>
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Why does international conflict occur? How can nations resolve it? From the Trojan and Peloponnesian Wars in ancient Greece through the wars among Native American tribes to recent conflicts in Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, nations have gone to war. For centuries, historians have recorded the acts of war, describing in detail the who, what, when, where, and how of international conflict. As political scientists and public citizens, however, we want to better understand why nations go to war and how we can make it less likely. Are war and armed conflict inevitable given the structure of nation-states and the international system? Does war arise because some people are evil? Even if we assume that conflict among states is inevitable, does that mean that war is inevitable? What alternatives to resolving conflict by military force exist and how effective are they?

If security concerns are central to contemporary international relations, so too are economic issues, human rights, and environmental protection. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, we need to understand how states regulate—and why they often fail to successfully regulate—the multinational corporations that are increasingly in charge of flows of goods, capital, information, and people around the world. The European Union, NAFTA, and other regional trade blocs are lowering their barriers to trade, influencing not only what we can buy but all aspects of people's lives. The news media and the Internet make us increasingly aware of violations of human rights around the world, yet we know little about how to prevent these all-too-common atrocities. Scientists make us increasingly aware of the ubiquity of our degradation of the natural environment and how quickly we are increasing the rate at which we degrade it. What obstacles does the international system pose to efforts to protect the globe from such problems as climate change and what strategies exist to overcome them?

This course introduces students to some of the answers to such questions—and more important, to ways to think about answering such questions—by reviewing major schools of thought on the causes of international conflict and the means of resolving it. We will examine themes of continuity and of change. We will examine how well lessons from the Peloponnesian War help us understand why countries develop nuclear weapons today. We will examine how increasing economic, informational, and ecological interdependence will change and reshape international relations in the future. The course will help you develop a theoretical and empirical understanding of such questions and provide you with tools that foster a causal understanding of many social problems and their resolution.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND I-CLICKER**

The course book is on sale at the UO Bookstore (to save money, you may buy an earlier edition, which should be adequate for the course). A few copies will be on reserve at Knight Library.

- Most required readings are available via the Course Blackboard Site. Referred to as Online Reading.
- Daily reading of the *New York Times* is encouraged. Read online, in the library or check the UO Bookstore.
- For required quizzes, you will need to have an I>clicker. You can buy/use your own, borrow one from a friend, or buy an I>clicker app for your smartphone. Instructions will be available on the Blackboard site.
- The course Blackboard site will help you succeed in the class. Check the website every 2 or 3 days for class news, lecture notes will usually be posted before class; links for relevant news articles, online surveys, etc..

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Understand key theories used by scholars to explain why conflict is common among countries and how, despite the pressures for conflict, countries sometimes are able to cooperate.
- Recognize both similarities and differences in how states interact in the issue areas of national security, international trade, human rights, and environmental protection.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and communication skills, including the use of counterfactuals, by using insights from various theoretical perspectives to explain empirical variation across issue areas and across problems within issue areas.
**ESTIMATED STUDENT WORKLOAD / HOW GRADES WILL BE DETERMINED**

Student workload involves 120 hours for this 4-credit course. Time for each class component is detailed below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class element</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class attendance:</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>All class elements and your grade depend on staying on top of the readings. Readings are intended as additional to (rather than redundant with) class lectures. Please raise questions about readings in class or in section.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plagiarism assignment:</strong></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Read links in Blackboard assignment, my plagiarism policy (below), and come in with any questions.</td>
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<td><strong>Pop quizzes (best 2 of 3):</strong></td>
<td>5% each</td>
<td>1 each of prep</td>
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<td>3 class sessions will start with 10-minute unannounced quizzes of 10-15 questions on readings and lectures. There will be no makeups. Only top two scores will count: missing a quiz will not affect your grade and those who take all three will have their lowest score dropped. <strong>Quizzes will end at 10:10 sharp.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Midterm exam (in-class):</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Will include both essay and short-answer questions.</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion section:</strong></td>
<td>15% (total)</td>
<td>26 (total)</td>
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<td>Attend and actively participate in discussion section each week. Discussion sections will clarify issues from lectures and involve two case studies. Case study materials and requirements (including writing assignments) will be provided on the course website.</td>
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<td>• Case study 1: individual paper</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Case study 1: group paper</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Case study 2: individual paper</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Case study 2: group paper</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Class participation</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10 (attendance)</td>
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<td><strong>Final exam:</strong></td>
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<td>Will include essay, medium, and short-answer questions.</td>
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<td><strong>Extra credit:</strong></td>
<td>1/3% each</td>
<td>5 min each</td>
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<td>The ONLY extra credit for this course will be 3 online surveys during the course of the term. Survey answers will be confidential and ungraded. Filling out each survey prior to the deadline (noted in syllabus) will receive 1/3 of 1% for each survey.</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment of final grades</strong></td>
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<td>Students will receive grades based on the following criteria:</td>
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<td>• A+: if given at all, given to those few students whose performance stood out as significantly stronger than all other students in the course</td>
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<td>• A: all assignments completed in ways that demonstrate a particularly strong and nuanced understanding of almost all course concepts and the ability to clearly connect theories from the course to empirical evidence</td>
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<td>• B: all assignments completed in ways that demonstrate solid understanding of most course concepts and the ability to adequately connect theories from the course to empirical evidence</td>
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<td>• C: completed assignments demonstrate only a basic understanding of course concepts and/or one or more assignments missing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• D: many assignments are missing and completed assignments demonstrate little understanding of material</td>
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<td>• F: assignments completed account for less than 80% of total grade.</td>
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<td>Expected distribution of grades: ~20% As, ~35% Bs, ~35% Cs, ~7% Ds, ~3% Fs.</td>
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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Late assignments**

Late assignments will lose 2 points per day (at midnight): an assignment that arrives before midnight of the 1st day after it was due will lose 2 of 100 points, one that arrives before midnight of the 2nd day after it was due will lose 4 of 100 points, etc. Please turn in all assignments, even if late, however. NOTE: Passing this course if you miss ANY assignment is difficult. Help me help you pass the course by turning in all assignments on time.
**Grade complaints**
Contested grades will first be read by a second GTF. If the second GTF assigns the same grade, no grade change will occur. If the second GTF assigns either a higher or lower grade, the professor will read the assignment and independently assign the final grade, which can be either higher or lower.

**Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, Fabrication, Cheating, and Misconduct:**
By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the University’s Student Conduct Code. You must read the three webpages linked on Blackboard for Assignment #1. Understanding these documents is a course REQUIREMENT that you MUST complete by the end of week 1. Everything in your assignments must be your own work. Neither ignorance of these policies nor the lack of an intention to cheat or plagiarize will be considered a legitimate defense. Raise questions you have with the professor before problems arise. I will flunk all students who plagiarize and will report them to University authorities. Unfortunately, I have done so two or three times in the past few years.

**Students with disabilities**
I as a professor, and the University of Oregon, are committed to creating inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if any aspects of my instruction methods or course design result in barriers to your participation. If you have a disability, I encourage you to contact Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu If you have already been in contact with Accessible Education Center and have a notification letter, please provide me with a statement from Accessible Education Center during the first week of class so that we can make appropriate arrangements. University policy requires that students present a notification letter from AEC to receive testing accommodations (see http://aec.uoregon.edu/students/current.html ).
COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Introduction and Basic Concepts

The Syllabus designates readings that you should have read before coming to class that day. For example, you should have read Nye (ch.1), Thucydides, Crawford, and Aristophanes BEFORE the Week 1-Thursday class.

Tuesday, Week 1
- Introduction to class. No readings assigned.

Thursday, Week 1
Assignment #1: Absolutely required plagiarism/cheating readings. By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the University’s Student Conduct Code. You must read the websites linked via the course Blackboard site by this day and understand what they imply about your conduct in this class. Raise any questions you have with the professor. You will be assumed to have read and fully understood what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

- Nye, Ch. 1.

Realist Theories of IR

Tuesday, Week 2
- Nye, Ch. 2.

Thursday, Week 2
- Prisoner’s Dilemma Game conducted in section – see web page for instructions and come prepared.

Institutionalist Theories of IR

Tuesday, Week 3

Gender and Race and Theories of Disenfranchisment in IR

Thursday, Week 3
The Use of Force

Tuesday, Week 4: The Two World Wars

First Case Writing Assignments - both Group and Individual
- due at beginning of discussion section for this week

Also, due date for Survey on Nuclear Weapons (Survey #1) on Web.

- Nye, Ch. 3 and Ch. 4.

Thursday, Week 4: Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction

- Nye, Ch. 5.

Tuesday, Week 5: Terrorism


Thursday, Week 5

MIDTERM EXAM

International Political Economy

Tuesday, Week 6

- Nye, Ch. 7.

Thursday, Week 6: Globalization and Development

"Hunger Game" to be played in class
(developed by, and used by permission of, Dr. Carolyn Shaw, Wichita State University, 2005)

- Watch at least one of the videos at: Gapminder Website. 2010. Gapminder videos showing development. *URL on Blackboard.*

International Institutions

Tuesday, Week 7


Thursday, Week 7: The European Union

Due date for Survey on Human Rights (Survey #2) on Web for extra credit points.


Human Rights

Tuesday, Week 8

Second Case Writing Assignments - both Group and Individual
- due at beginning of discussion section for this week

- Nye, Ch. 8.
Thursday, Week 8

Due date for Survey on Environmental Issues (Survey #3) on Web for extra credit points.

- View some portion of: Canadian Broadcasting Company. Witness to Evil. URL on Blackboard.

**The Environment**

Tuesday, Week 9


Thursday, Week 9


**Summary and Conclusions**

Tuesday, Week 10

- Nye, Ch. 9.

Thursday, Week 10

**FINAL EXAM REVIEW SESSION**

Final Exam Will Be Given On The Day Scheduled By The University for Classes held at this Day/Time

See: [http://registrar.uoregon.edu/calendars/final_exam](http://registrar.uoregon.edu/calendars/final_exam)