POLS 207: International Cooperation and Conflict  
Fall Semester, 2015  
[B] Monday, Wednesday, & Friday, 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.

This course satisfies a requirement in Global and Historical Studies Core and in the Political Science or International Relations major or minor.

Instructor: Dr. Joel H. Westra  
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Telephone: 616/526-6727  
Office: 261H DeVos Center  
Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the study of international cooperation and conflict, using a social scientific approach. Topics include the role of power, interests, and ideas within the international system, the origins of interstate war and the prospects for international cooperation, the functioning of global economic and security institutions, the causes and consequences of globalization, the impact of transnational actors, and the role of the United States and other global actors in the post-Cold War international system.

The course consists of four parts. Part I introduces basic methodological and theoretical concepts used in the study of international relations. Part II builds upon these concepts by introducing major theoretical perspectives used in the study of international relations. Parts III and IV more closely examine selected issues of international cooperation and conflict from the post-World War II era to the present day and seek to provide social scientific explanations for them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course readings, assignments, and examination are intended to achieve three objectives. Firstly, they are intended to introduce students to basic concepts, approaches, and methods used in the field of international relations and to help students use these concepts, approaches, and methods to analyze broad patterns of global interaction. Secondly, they are intended to provide students with a basic understanding of global economic and security issues from the past, present, and future. Thirdly, they are intended to assist students in developing analytical skills such that they can provide thoughtful, coherent, and empirically supported arguments in oral and written form. The first and second objectives are necessary for continued study in international relations, while the third is essential to a liberal arts education. All three help to equip students as agents of redemptive change.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing this course will be able to demonstrate understanding of contemporary global issues and their historical roots and be capable of critically evaluating these issues and policies and perspectives that pertain to them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete all assigned readings (approx. 70 pages per week) and homework assignments before each class period and must be active and engaged participants throughout the semester. The instructor will circulate a seating chart for students to fill out, which will be used throughout the semester to record attendance and to facilitate classroom interaction.

There will be three short writing assignments of five to six double-spaced pages in length, which will be due on the dates listed below. Students will be called upon in class to discuss their paper drafts before turning them in. In addition to the writing assignments, there will be several short homework assignments and a comprehensive final examination.

COURSE GRADES

Course grades will be based on the course objectives listed above, as determined by students’ participation and engagement (including homework assignments), writing assignments, and final examination.
Participation and Engagement

Participation and engagement will be weighted as 20% of the final course grade. This is a real course at a real college, and as such you will be expected to read all of the assigned readings before class, with your participation and engagement attesting to how carefully you have read them. You will not necessarily be expected to agree with the readings, your fellow students, or the instructor, but you will be expected to be engaged participants, so as to learn from the lecture and discussion each day. In doing so, you will become part of an ongoing conversation.

Your participation and engagement grade will be based on your overall contribution to that conversation. More than simply engaging in classroom “chatter”, making a meaningful contribution to the conversation will require that you arrive in class (and/or come to office hours) prepared to give an account of what you understand from the course readings and discussion and/or what you do not understand. There is no excuse for having nothing to say; learning requires preparation. If necessary, the instructor will call upon students who do not participate in class and/or otherwise demonstrate engagement with the course material (such as through homework assignments, email, office hours, etc.).

In addition to regular classroom participation, the instructor will call upon students in class on the dates noted below to discuss the content of the papers that they will be submitting. The instructor will ensure that each student is called upon to discuss the content of his/her paper during at least one of the class periods allocated for this purpose.

There will also be several short homework assignments, based on the course readings, which will be available online from Moodle and due at the beginning of class on the dates noted below. Class lecture and discussion will provide general feedback on these assignments. If you would like more specific feedback, please see the instructor.

Ideally, students would be so motivated by the intensity of the readings and the perspicacity of the instructor that attendance would not need to be required. But because these are not ideal times, attendance will be included in assessing participation and engagement. Every student will be allowed three unexcused absences (i.e. one full week), after which a penalty of 5% per day will be deducted from the course grade. Please see the instructor as soon as possible if you know in advance of an absence due to an extracurricular activity or other excusable reason (at the instructor’s discretion; documentation may be required). Other than illness, most absences will not be excused, so plan accordingly.

Students are permitted to use portable electronic devices in class, provided that such devices are used for course purposes and that their use does not undermine the participation and engagement of the user or other students. However, such use is strongly discouraged, insofar as numerous studies have demonstrated a correlation between the use of a laptop computer to take lecture/discussion notes and decreased retention and understanding of concepts discussed. Recording of class lectures and discussions is allowed with prior, express permission of the instructor and only may be used for personal, study-related purposes.

Writing Assignments

Each of the three writing assignments will be weighted as 20% of the final course grade. The instructor will distribute the writing assignments in advance, as well as an analytic writing handout (incorporated herein by reference), which is intended to help students avoid basic mistakes.

Students must follow the stylistic guidelines contained in the APSA Style Manual for Political Science (2006), available online in Moodle. See pages 17–21 for in-text (i.e. parenthetical) citation guidelines and pages 24–33 for reference (i.e. works cited) guidelines. These guidelines are based on the Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition).

Papers will be due on the dates listed below. Students must submit both printed and electronic versions (i.e. via email) of all papers. Printed and electronic versions must match exactly. The instructor will return the printed version and will archive the electronic edition. Papers must be submitted in a serif font (such as Times New Roman) of size 11 or 12 with 1” margins on all sides. The filename of the electronic version must include the name of the student submitting it. The instructor may assess a 0.25 grade point penalty (each instance) for failure to follow all instructions contained in the syllabus and/or writing guide.
Grades will be based on analytical rigor, writing skill, and empirical evidence. Grades will be determined as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent; Clear, thorough, and well-supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Very good, with few shortcomings; or Clear, but incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Generally clear, but some gaps; or Good, though somewhat unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Gaps in logic and evidence; or Disordered; or Undeveloped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Multiple gaps and unclear parts; or Containing contradictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Unclear throughout; or Wrong question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Vague and unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Very unclear and confusing; or No argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>Unclear and misunderstood; or Incorrect/missing citations throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>Extremely poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Insufficient effort; or Dishonesty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instructor will not accept late papers in the absence of a medical or other substantive excuse. Students seeking to submit a late paper must contact the instructor before the deadline and may be required to provide documentation and/or accept a grade reduction. Papers electronically submitted before the deadline will not be counted as late, provided that a printed version is submitted to the instructor’s office within 24 hours. The instructor will only grade papers submitted both electronically (via email) and in hard copy. DIXI.

Examination

The final examination, which will be weighted as 20% of the course grade, will consist primarily of short answer questions. The examination is intended to assess students’ mastery of course concepts and their application to international politics.

The instructor will not administer makeup exams in the absence of a medical or other substantive excuse. Students seeking to excuse a missed examination should contact the instructor as soon as possible and may be required to provide appropriate documentation and/or accept a grade reduction. No early exams will be given, except as required for extracurricular activities. The instructor will distribute handouts throughout the semester, which together with the syllabus will serve as a study guide to help students prepare for the examination.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The student-faculty relationship is based on trust and mutual respect, which can be seriously undermined by the suspicion or reality of academic dishonesty. If you are in doubt about whether some form of assistance or use of materials constitutes academic dishonesty, please see the instructor. In all instances, the instructor expects that students will adhere to the following guidelines.

1. Students will not take words from any source without putting quotation marks around such words and giving credit to the source using a proper citation. This includes sentences and phrases, as well as significant words, such as those that express opinion or judgment. In paraphrasing (even with a proper citation), students will not use words so close to those contained in the source that, if a student’s work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that the student could not have written what s/he did except by borrowing directly from the source with only superficial changes.

2. Students will not take findings, concepts, or ideas from any source without giving credit to the source using a proper citation. This includes facts that are not general knowledge, as well as opinions, judgments, and conclusions.

3. Students will organize their thoughts and ideas according to a plan of their own creation. To the extent that a student’s plan of organization is based upon another source, s/he will give credit to that source using a proper citation.

4. Students will not cite sources that they have not actually read. If a student would like to use citations from another source (without actually reading the material cited), s/he must give credit to the source containing the citations and indicate clearly that the citations were taken from that source without having been read.
(usually by combining the citations with the words “cited in” followed by a citation to the source from which the citations were taken).

5. Students will neither ask nor allow someone else to write, revise, or otherwise modify their work in any way, nor reuse papers submitted in other courses or written by other students. Students are encouraged to solicit comments and suggestions from fellow students and/or from the Rhetoric Center, but what they submit must ultimately be their own work, which may or may not incorporate such comments and suggestions. Any violation of these guidelines and/or other rules contained within the Student Conduct Guide will result in an F for the assignment and/or other appropriate disciplinary action, at the instructor’s discretion.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
The college will make reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities. Students seeking accommodation should notify both the instructor and the Coordinator of Services to Students with Disabilities (Hiemenga Hall 455) within the first two weeks of the semester and make appropriate arrangements.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The following are required texts for this course and are available for purchase at the bookstore.


Other supplemental journal articles and book sections are available online as noted in the syllabus. Access to certain websites is available only via a Calvin College internet connection. The instructor will distribute supplemental news articles throughout the semester as well as instructions for finding online journal articles.

COURSE READINGS
[Please note the page numbers listed below, as only selected pages of certain articles or book sections are assigned.]

Part I: Introduction and Basic Concepts

September 9 – International Relations as Social Science


September 11 – The Concept of Anarchy in International Relations (Homework #1 due)


September 14 – Levels of Analysis in International Relations: Individual-level Analysis


September 16 – Levels of Analysis in International Relations (cont’d): State-level and System-level Analysis

September 18 – Case Study 1: Iran Nuclear Talks (2013–2015) (Homework #2 due)
[COME TO CLASS PREPARED TO DISCUSS HOMEWORK #2.]

Part II: Theorizing Anarchy and Its Consequences

September 21 – Realism and Neorealism: Anarchy and the Balance of Power

September 23 – Realism and Neorealism: Anarchy and the Balance of Power (cont’d)

September 25, 28 – The Balance of Power and the Outbreak of World War I (Homework #3 due September 25)

September 30 – Classical Liberalism: Cooperation through Democracy and Interdependence
Kant, Immanuel. 1795. “To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch.” Read selections available online from Moodle.

October 2 – Democracy, Interdependence, and World War I
Doyle, Michael. 1983. “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs.” Read the footnote re Imperial Germany available online from Moodle.

October 5 – Constructivism: Intersubjective Understandings of Anarchy

October 7 – Nationalism, Identity, and World War I
October 9 – Contingent Realism: Prospects for Cooperation under Anarchy  
(Homework #4 due)


October 12, 14 – Case Study 2: The Outbreak of World War One (1914)


[COME TO CLASS ON OCTOBER 12 PREPARED TO DISCUSS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1, DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14.]

October 16 – Neoliberalism: Institutions as Enablers of Cooperation under Anarchy


October 19 – Limits of International Institutions


October 21 – The Failure of Institutions and the Outbreak of World War II  
(Homework #5 due)


Part III: Anarchy and Cooperation in the Post-World War II Era

October 23 – Hegemony and the Post-War Economic Order  
(Homework #6 due)


October 26 – Institutions and the Post-War Economic Order


October 28 – Institutions and Postwar Economic Globalization


October 30, November 2 – Consequences of Economic Globalization

November 4 – ACADEMIC ADVISING

November 6 – Case Study 3: Consequences of Economic Globalization for MICs, LDCs (comparison)  
[NO CLASS; INDEPENDENT RESEARCH]

November 9 – Globalization and International Governance  
(Homework #7 due)

November 11 – Globalization and Domestic Governance

November 13 – Case Study 3 (cont’d): Consequences of Economic Globalization for MICs, LDCs (comparison)  
[COME TO CLASS PREPARED TO DISCUSS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2, DUE NOVEMBER 16]

Part IV: Anarchy and Conflict in the Post-World War II Era

November 16 – Globalization and Transnational Actors
[WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD.]

November 18 – Transnational Terrorist Networks

November 20 – State Failure

November 23, 25 – Case Study 4: Non-State Actors as International Security Threats  
[NO CLASS; INDEPENDENT RESEARCH]

November 27 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 30 – Civil Wars and Ethnic Conflict  
(Homework #8 due)
December 2 – Managing Anarchy and Averting Conflict: US Hegemony

December 4 – Managing Anarchy and Averting Conflict: International Institutions

December 7 – Managing Anarchy and Averting Conflict: Transnational Actors

December 9 – Case Study 4 (cont’d): Non-State Actors as International Security Threats
[COME TO CLASS PREPARED TO DISCUSS WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3, DUE AT NOON ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11.]

December 18 – FINAL EXAMINATION [9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.]

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