

Sul Ross State University

PS 5302:W01 Seminar in International Relations
Online Format
Lawrence Hall 201
Sul Ross State University
Spring 2015

Contact Information

David Watson

Office: Lawrence Building room 203.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:15-5:00pm, and by appointment.

Office Phone: 837-8742

Email: dwatson@sulross.edu

Course Description

This is a graduate course on International Relations. It is designed to provide students with the theoretical underpinnings they will need to interpret analytical studies of the international system. We will take a broad overview on topics relevant to this area such as the Realist, Liberal, and Constructivist paradigms. As the class progresses, the focus will be on broad-based theoretical studies, moving toward more quantitative research (i.e. papers testing and confirming a set of research hypotheses) rather than case studies.

Format: The size of the class permits me to forgo a pure lecture format. Instead, we will engage in a more collaborate environment. In other words, this class will rely on a great deal of discussion. As a result, participation is crucial, and classes like this may well succeed or fail based on your efforts much more than mine. Additionally, this version of the course is exclusively online, which creates a unique situation concerning assignments and participation. Online courses require a good deal of discipline and persistence. Please be aware of this, ex-ante.

Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science)

The graduating student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of significant theoretical approaches of political science through written work and oral communication.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze domestic and international political processes in written work.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop arguments about global equity and equality issues in politics through written work and oral communication.

TEXAS Domain III Competency 19: The teacher understands and applies social science knowledge and skills to plan, organize, and implement instruction and assess learning.

TEXAS Domain III Competency 23: The teacher understands and applies knowledge of concepts of government, democracy, and citizenship, including ways that individuals and groups achieve their goals through political systems.

Course Goals

We will be repeatedly trying to answer 6 major questions in this class:

- What questions have scholars posed about international politics?
- What answers did they unearth?
- Are these answers logically sound?
- Are these answers empirically supported?
- Are these questions the right ones?
- Of what relevance are these answers to policymakers?

Method of Evaluation:

Participation, Discussion Questions, Examinations

- I. **Participation (total 40% of grade): to be assessed on the following criteria:
40% weekly discussion questions**
- II. **Midterm and Final Examinations (30% each)**

Weekly Questions: One of the most underrated skills in academia is the ability to ask *good* questions (contrary to popular belief, there are such things as stupid questions.). This is your chance to practice. The questions should be analytical (theoretical) or methodological in nature and can focus directly on the reading or attempt to develop a tangential line of inquiry. In the latter case, these questions may be ideas for research papers. Perhaps you were inspired by an “offhand” comment in a footnote, or would like to examine how a particular work’s thesis might be updated to understand contemporary politics. You may also develop questions that “speak” to multiple readings or other regions of the world. Be creative. Questions will be graded on a +/- basis. You are required to turn in 9 sets of weekly questions. A set of questions is 3 questions. You need not turn in questions for the first week of class, spring break, and are permitted 2 “bye” weeks of your choosing. The discussion within the questions and their responses (including my own responses to your questions) is free to follow whatever path develops. Consider the class time to be a good, old-fashioned barroom debate (only more sober). To turn in these questions, you will need to post them on the blackboard under discussions for the appropriate week. These need to be in by Friday at midnight for each “question week”.

Midterm and Final Examinations:

These will be take home exams, utilizing essay questions germane to the subject matter from the readings and discussions. Because of the depth of the course, you will be given a week to address the questions. Since you have a good deal of time and resources, I will expect these answers to be particularly well-written (obviously, with proper citations—Wikipedia is not a proper citation). When completed at the end of the week, these are to be emailed to the instructor at dwatson@sulross.edu.

Expectations

The duty of the instructor for this course is to be prepared and on time for the lectures. In turn, the students’ duty is to be on time and prepared for the lectures as well. “Prepared” means having completed the assigned reading prior to the lecture. This course will rely heavily on discussion between instructor and students; so advanced reading by the students will facilitate an active classroom environment. Keeping up with the readings is essential in order to actively participate in class and to help the instructor

monitor the students' understanding of the material before the exams, rather than on exam days. Please turn off cell phones during class. Seriously.

**Although attendance is not mandatory, you will have a difficult time passing this course if you do not attend it. Occasionally, I will take attendance and use this to determine 10% of the course grade. Further, it behooves you to come to class because a good deal of knowledge needed to pass the tests will be derived from the lectures.

If you happen to miss class it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student in class or come by my office hours. It is not my responsibility to provide notes for students that miss.

I expect you to act as responsible adults in your conduct in the classroom. If you infringe on my ability to conduct class, I will ask you to leave.

Common courtesy expected in class:

- Coming to class on time
- Disabling the ringer on cell phones
- Refraining from talking, sleeping, and reading outside material during class
- **Respect/tolerance for fellow students regarding their political views

I am here to help you with the course material. Please feel free to come by my office hours or make an appointment with any questions you have. If you find that you are having difficulty with the material please come and see me as soon as possible particularly if you do not do well on the first exam and I can suggest study techniques that may help you do better on subsequent exams.

Books

There are three required books for this class. They are:

- 1) Russett, Bruce and John Oneal. Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations. W.W. Norton and Company, 2001.
- 2) Waltz, Kenneth. Man, the State, and War. A Theoretical Analysis. Columbia University Press, 1959.
- 3) Zakaria, Fareed. From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role. Princeton University Press, 1998.

Grade Scale: A: 100-89 B: 88-79 C: 78-69 D: 68-59 F: 58-0

Exams: Each exam will consist of topical essay questions. The final exam will be cumulative, but greater weight will be placed on the material covered in the later half of the class. The final exam will be due at the scheduled time, May 15th at 12:00 PM.

**Students who come to class on exam day after the first student has completed the exam and left the classroom will not be permitted to take the exam, so it is advised that you arrive on time for all exams.

Makeup Exams: I expect that students will take exams on the day that they are given. If you have to miss an exam you must contact me **in advance** and plan a day to take the makeup exam. Any absences on an exam day require written documentation (doctor's note, etc.) and I reserve the right not to permit you to take a makeup. All makeup exams consist of essay questions and no one will be allowed to take a makeup for more than one exam. No makeup exams will be given for the final.

ADA: Disability Policy: It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such an accommodation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact Mary Schwartz (University Center 211), the coordinator for program accessibility 837-8178.

Religious Holiday: A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Honesty: Students will be expected to adhere to the university honor code for all assignments. Any student who is caught cheating or plagiarizing will be punished by automatically receiving a zero on the assignment in question and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Cheating is defined in the Student Code of Conduct as:

- 1) Use of any unauthorized aid, sources, and assistance and assisting others in taking a course, quiz, test, or examination, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out assignments;
- 2) The acquisition without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University community;
- 3) Alteration of grade records;
- 4) Bribing or attempting to bribe a member of the University community or any other individual to alter a grade.

Plagiarism is defined as: Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgement. Any student, who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, and other reference works, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes:

- 1) Deliberate copying or use of another's work without citing the source.
- 2) Cutting and pasting of information off of the Internet without citing the source.
- 3) The use of an exact sentence from a source (book, Internet, etc.) without quotes.

Drop/Withdrawal Policy: April 10th is the last day to drop a course with a "W". Once the deadline to withdrawal has passed, the student receives an 'F' for the course if he/she still chooses to withdrawal. Thus, it is imperative for students to be cognizant of these dates to avoid earning an 'F' for the course.

Important Dates: April 10th is also the last day to drop a course and receive a refund (Does not apply to students who drop below zero hours).

Schedule of Classes (**Subject to Change)

Week 1: Methodological Concerns in IR

**Have read: Articles 1, 2, 3 (questions are due on Friday, January 23rd)

Week 2: Realism I

**Have read: Articles 4, 5, and 6

Week 3: Realism II

**Have read: Waltz, Kenneth. Man, the State and War (entire book).

Week 4: Hegemony

**Have read: Articles 8, 9, and 10

Week 5: Power Transition Theory

**Have read: Articles 11, 12, and 13

Week 6: Liberalism

**Have read: Russett and Oneal chapters 1-6

Week 7: Spring Break: No assignments

Week 8: International Political Economy

**Have read: Articles 15, 16, and 17

Week 9: Defining the Power of the State

**Have read: Zakaria, Fareed. From Wealth to Power (entire book)

Week 10: Constructivism

**Have read: Articles 18, 19, and 20

Week 11: Cultural Considerations

**Have read: Article 21, Russett and Oneal Chapter 7

Week 12: Domestic Considerations in IR

**Have read: Articles 22, 23, and 24

Week 13: Audience Costs

**Have read: Articles 25, 26, and 27

Week 14: Measuring Conflict

**Have read: Articles 28, 29, and 30

Final Exam

Due electronically, 12:00 Wednesday, May 15th