

**PS 3306-001: International Relations**  
Spring 2025  
Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM  
LH 303

Instructor: Dr. Yen-Hsin Chen

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Office hours:

- Monday & Wednesday: 9:00 AM-10:00 AM & 11:30 AM -12:30 PM
- Tuesday & Thursday: 10:45 AM- 11:45 AM & 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

### **Course Description**

PS 3306 International Relations is designed to introduce students to the basic concepts of international politics. This involves understanding the core concepts of international relations (IR), the pertinent actors, and the characteristics of the world political system.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

Students will be expected to learn about broad schools of thought, power relations, system dynamics, human rights, political economy, and conflict management basics. Achieving this goal will involve understanding basic geography and current events, which will be regularly visited to apply the concepts and ideas to the current period. At the end of the course, students should be able to analyze international events and draw on the theoretical explanations provided in the class.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

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

### **Marketable Skills**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- identify and articulate the major concepts and approaches utilized in one of the social or behavioral sciences.
- evaluate and interpret relevant scientific or textual evidence and formulate conclusions based on that evidence.
- identify and articulate the limitations of the approaches (e.g., theories, models, methodologies) within one of the social or behavioral sciences.

## Assignments and Grading

### **Short Essay/Short Paper** (20% of your grade, 5% for each):

Students are required to submit four short essays over the semester. Each essay is required to be at least **two** but at most **three double-spaced pages** in length. A short essay has to be related to an international news item. The news source can be from a particular media outlet (e.g., CNN, ABC, or FOX News) or a government-run source (e.g., Xinhuanet of China), but it should not be blogging.

In each short essay, students will summarize the article and show evidence of their' independent thoughts. Further, students could focus on a particular theme, such as regional military issues, international conflicts, or territorial disputes. Each short essay will be turned in on Blackboard. Thus, please do not email your papers to me or leave them in the department office or my mailbox.

### **Policy Proposal/Semester Paper** (30% of your grade):

One policy proposal will be required for this class and will focus on teaching students how to integrate current events and what we have learned in class. One of the most valuable skills you can learn in university is finding appropriately sourced information and integrating it into arguments. This paper will be the place to demonstrate that. Students will analyze an IR-related event of their choosing using a concept, theme, or theory presented in the course. For example, students might analyze an international cooperation/institution, the crisis of the Korean peninsula, or international inequality. Please notice that students must establish a clear argument and defend it with references to appropriate readings. An appropriate citation must back up any argument that rests on a point of fact.

This paper includes the following sections. Students are required to schedule virtual meetings with me to discuss your plan. Please keep in mind that these meetings are **NOT** optional.

1. Identify the issue (first meeting by January 31st)
2. Review our current solution(s) (second meeting by February 14)
3. Provide a proposed solution (Third meeting by March 14)
4. Implementation (Fourth meeting by April 11)

This paper requires the use of at least 10 scholarly articles. This paper is required to be at least 8 double-spaced pages and no more than 10 pages. Further details will be provided on a separate handout in the future.

Please remember that I do not accept late papers except for very special situations. Also, please do not email your paper to me or leave it in the department office or mailbox except for special situations.

A student's paper will be judged not on the length but on the quality of its argument. Students should present a reasoned, analytically sound, and empirically valid argument in their paper. It is due on **April 30<sup>th</sup>**. Students will lose 10 points for every calendar day their paper is late. **Students will also present their policy proposals in class.**

### **Exams** (50% of your grade, 25% for each exam):

Two closed-book exams will be given during this course. The exams will include multiple-choice questions and short essays on topics covered in the course. The midterm exam will be held during our class meeting time on March 4th, and the final exam will be held on the final exam week.

### **Quiz** (Extra credit):

A number (to be determined by the instructor) of unannounced quizzes will be given occasionally. The scores of the quizzes will be added to your grade as extra points.

### Grade Scale

Your points= Short Essay scores + Policy Proposal  $\times$  0.3 + Midterm Exam  $\times$  0.25 + Final Exam  $\times$  0.25 + your total earned extra points. Your grade will be determined based on the following grading scale:

Points	Letter Grade
100- 90.0	A
89.9-80.0	B
79.9-70.0	C
69.9-60.0	D
59.9 or less	F

### Assigned Reading

The required text for this course is:

James M. Scott, Yasemin Akbaba, Ralph G. Carter, and A. Cooper Drury. 2024. *International Relations: Seeking Security, Prosperity, and Quality of Life in a Changing World Fifth Edition*  
ISBN: 978-1071937303

Students are expected to have read the assigned chapters before coming to class. Should class need to be canceled due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, the material scheduled for the missed class will be covered the next time the class meets. All additional readings will be on the Blackboard and through the Library website.

### Attendance and Participation

Students decide to attend college and are responsible for their college education. As this is a college-level course, I do not take attendance. However, if you are not in class consistently, it will affect my evaluation of your performance. Also, since much of the exam material is based on class lectures, it would be in your best interest to attend class meetings regularly. I will occasionally give pop quizzes as extra points, so attending class regularly will improve your chances of success in this course.

### Classroom Rules

All students must treat the instructor, the other students, and the classroom setting with respect. Please come to class on time, stay for the entire class, turn off cell phones during class, and refrain from potentially disruptive activities such as talking with friends or passing notes. These policies facilitate a classroom learning environment that allows all students to focus on the lecture and class discussion. It is also essential to respect alternative opinions and points of view during class discussions. Thus, you should listen when the instructor or a fellow student is speaking to the class and refrain from insulting language and gestures, no matter how vehemently you disagree with your classmates. Please note that I reserve the right to stop the discussion at any time.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule of topics and reading assignments for the course. Thus, items on this syllabus are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. If I deem it necessary to make schedule changes and/or modifications, I will announce them in class.

**A. In the following weeks, we will discuss international relations and why they are important to everyone.**

**Week 1** (1/15): Introduction to International Relations (IR)

- Chapter 1

**Week 2** (1/20): Actors in International Relations

- Chapter 2

**Week 3** (1/27): Major Theories of IR

- Chapter 3
- **First short essay due on 1/30**

**Week 4** (2/3): Major Theories of IR

- Chapter 4

**B. In the following weeks, we will be talking about international conflicts and what we have done to prevent them from happening.**

**Week 5** (2/10): Conflicts and IR

- Chapter 5

**Week 6** (2/17): Conflict Management

- Chapter 6
- **Second short essay due on 2/20**

**Week 7** (2/24): Conflict Management and Peace Building and Institutions

- Chapter 6 and Chapter 7

**Week 8** (3/3): Midterm Exam week

- **Online Midterm exam on March 4<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) from 9:30 to 10:45**

**C. In the following weeks, we will be talking about international political economy**

**Week 9** (3/10): Economic Security and Trade

- Chapter 8

**Week 10** (3/17): Spring Break!

- No class meetings. Enjoy your Spring Break

**Week 11 (3/24): Economics: Sanctions and Foreign Aid**

- Chapter 9
- **Third short essay due on 3/27**

**Week 12 (3/31): International Development and Inequality**

- Chapter 10

**D. In the following weeks, we will discuss human rights issues.**

**Week 13 (4/7): Human Rights**

- Chapter 11

**Week 14 (4/14): New Actors? Transnational Advocacy Networks**

- Chapter 13
- **Fourth short essay due on 4/17**

**Week 15 (4/21): Students In-class Presentation**

- Students presentation on 4/22 and 4/24
- **Policy proposal due on 4/30**

**Final Exam on the final exam week**

## **Other Course Policies & Resources**

### **Academic Integrity**

Intellectual development requires hard work. Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. The policy can be found at: <https://www.sulross.edu/about/administration/university-policies/> In addition, please note that plagiarism detection software will be used in this class for written assignments.

### **Course Blackboard Resources**

There are several resources on the course Blackboard page. You are expected to review and familiarize yourself with the items in Blackboard in the first week of class.

### **Blackboard Technical Support**

SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support Online Support Desk Contact Info: Toll Free: 888.837.6055. Email: [blackboardsupport@sulross.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@sulross.edu)

### **SUSR Library Services**

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may also use online resources available through SWTJC website, [library.swtjc.edu](http://library.swtjc.edu). The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for Inter Library Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery from the Alpine campus.

### **SRSU Distance Education Statement**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

### **ADA Statement**

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Rebecca Greathouse Wren, LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email [rebecca.wren@sulross.edu](mailto:rebecca.wren@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

### **Classroom Climate of Respect**

This class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.