

# Introduction to International Relations

## POLS 2040

### Syllabus

Welcome to Political Studies POLS 2040, Introduction to International Relations. Most of us in our daily lives have developed at least passing interest in world affairs, but for others this interest is deeper. We would like to move beyond just understanding international events and be able to explain these events. Introduction to International Relations is the course for people whose interest in world affairs goes beyond simply witnessing events. This course teaches us how to analyze and categorize events and familiarizes us with the ideas and theories that shed light on international politics.

“Civil conflict in Syria seen as a threat to Israel.”

“North Korea tests ballistic missile.”

“Deaths reported as earthquake shakes Iran.”

“Greek protesters demand end to euro.”

These are all headlines taken from national newspapers in Canada, United States, and Europe. At first glance, they might seem to deal with very different stories and events in the world. But there are some common keystones to all of these stories.

Harold Lasswell, an American political scientist, suggested that all politics is about “who gets what, why, and how.”<sup>1</sup> If you think about it, just about any event of importance, domestic or international, and including those in the headlines listed above, can be thought of in these terms. Think about the headlines listed above, which appeared in newspapers and online media in 2013. Civil war in Syria affected energy supplies, the Arab-Israeli conflict, dictatorial governments, and humanitarianism (can you decide which was most important?). North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un has threatened his neighbours and the United States on many occasions, but the test of an advanced missile raised the spectre of renewed conflict on the Korean peninsula. The earthquakes in Iran were devastating, but information from that authoritarian country was sparse, leading to speculation about how serious the disaster was. And the protests in Greece have been recurring since that country saw its financial situation deteriorate. This is hard to imagine for Canadians, who enjoy a relatively strong economy with a viable currency. In all of these instances, we can see the way in which some will benefit—and others lose out—in such a competitive world.

International Relations is a study of a competitive and often anxious environment. For those of us interested in International Relations, understanding why some people and groups are able to get more than others is a crucial part of our investigation.

### Course description

The *University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar* describes Political Studies POLS 2040 as follows:

An introduction to the analysis of international political action and interaction. The course examines the manner in which the foreign policies of states are formulated and the conflict, competition and cooperation produced by state interaction. Examples are drawn mainly from international events since 1945, with appropriate references to earlier periods. Students may not hold credit for POLS 2040 (or 019.204) and any of: POLS 2041 (or 019.204) or the former 019.153.

The course examines international politics and the important relationship that exists between international and domestic events. The world, after all, is made up of many different individual countries, and not all react to global events in the same manner. Conflict, competition, and cooperation are all hallmarks of international politics, and we often see them taking place at the same time. There is no correct version of International Relations that applies to all countries and for every situation. This course, then, helps us come to terms with the variety of concerns; historical, social, political, and economic that result in modern International Relations.

## Course goals

International Relations is a wide-ranging field with a variety of approaches and interpretations. The general objective of this course is to introduce you to the study of International Relations in a broad and encompassing manner. By studying International Relations you will become aware of the effect that activities in other parts of the world can have on our everyday lives. The goals of this course are to:

- introduce you to the study of all the dimensions of International Relations;
- provide the basis for subsequent courses in International Relations and political studies;
- stimulate interest in the numerous topics that encompass International Relations, including historical, socio-economic, military-defence, societal, and diplomatic subject matter; and
- develop and foster your analytical and writing skills.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

- describe the connection between political studies and the study of International Relations;
- explain and clarify fundamental concepts, theories, and analytical frameworks that are used by International Relations specialists;
- apply this knowledge in the context of the real world of global politics; and
- explain current events in the international system using a rigorous and broad-based approach.

## Course materials

### Required

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

Sens, Allen, and Peter Stoett. *Global Politics: Origins, Currents, Directions*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: Nelson, 2014.

There is an excellent companion site for the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the text (no companion site for 5<sup>th</sup> edition available) at <http://www.globalpolitics4e.nelson.com/student/>. You will find a glossary, website links, search tools, and additional information about the course material. It is highly recommended that you use these resources, as they will supplement your readings and also provide some information that otherwise would have come in class lectures. This book and the Charlton book, also published by Nelson, include a free four-month subscription to InfoTrac that provides you with access to the latest news and research articles from over 600 scholarly and popular publications online.

Goldstein, Joshua S., Jon C. Pevehouse, and Sandra Whitworth. *International Relations*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian ed. Toronto: Pearson Education, 2013.

Go to <http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/educator/product/International-Relations-Third-Canadian-Edition/0321714504.page> for the companion site for this book. Now in its third edition, this book has been a popular university text across Canada, bringing a domestic dimension to global affairs. The text website has links, test and paper preparation material, and updates.

Charlton, Mark, ed. *Crosscurrents: International Relations in the Post-Cold War Era*. 5th ed. Toronto: Nelson, 2010.

More information about this book is found here:

<http://hed.nelson.com/nelsonhed/instructor.do?pagefrom=search&disciplinenumber=20&productisbn=9780176440848&insurl=null&stuurl=null>. This book is set up as a 'debate' for major issues in International Relations. You will find that the topics in the book enhance the course material. Instead of seminar debates, this book gives a good alternative for independent study.

All three textbooks also provide a good list of supplementary readings that you might find useful. If you find these URLs cumbersome, simply go to the publisher's website ([www.nelson.com](http://www.nelson.com), or [www.pearsoned.ca](http://www.pearsoned.ca)) and search using the author's name or book title.

## Optional

Some writer's manuals are available in the University Bookstore or online. They include:

Buckley, Joanne. *Fit To Print: The Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing*. 8th ed. Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 2013.

<http://www.fittoprint8.nelson.com/student/>

Schmidt, Diane E. *Writing in Political Science: A Practical Guide*. Toronto: Pearson Education, 2010.

<http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/educator/product/Writing-in-Political-Science-A-Practical-Guide/9780205617364.page>

Scott, Gregory M., and Stephen M. Garrison. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 2012.

<http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/educator/product/Political-Science-Student-Writers-Manual-The/9780205830121.page>

## Course overview

International relations are an inescapable part of our modern political lives. The very process of creating political communities also creates partitions in the global environment, leading to an inevitable competition for scarce resources, territory, and power. However, while this competition is unavoidable, International Relations is also about global co-operation, mutual points of interest, and worry. To understand the variety of issues affecting contemporary world politics, it is necessary to examine many different but inter-related fields.

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To that end, this course is organized into six separate but interconnected units. The purpose of these six units is to present the basic subdivisions of International Relations in a coherent and practical fashion. The knowledge you gain through the study of these diverse elements of International Relations will make you more aware of the complexities of global issues, and also the manner in which they affect us at a very basic level.

At the end of this course you will be familiar with the basic concepts and theories used in International Relations by both political analysts and politicians. You will come to see how certain values and ideals become extended into political ideologies used by governments to create and promote policy, both domestic and foreign. You will understand the range of issues of concern in International Relations, including security and defence issues, the economy, national identity, the environment, and human rights. You will also appreciate how these issues determine and affect each other in vital ways. And, we will integrate examples both historical and contemporary to give you a better sense of how these points of concern intersect.

As indicated above, this course consists of six units.

**Unit 1** offers a general introduction to the content of International Relations. There are three main issues in this unit: an overview of the goals and areas of concern in International Relations; a description and explanation of the major actors in International Relations analysis, and a description of the forces of change in global politics. These three topics will also appear throughout the other units in the course.

**Unit 2** introduces the numerous concepts and theories used in the study of International Relations. This section of the course will introduce you not only to the various theories and ideas that provide the basis for International Relations but also to some of the key theorists and thinkers in the discipline. Not all theorists see the world in the same way, and the 'lenses' they use help us understand the varying perspectives available to us. But, although these theories and approaches are distinct, they are all based on values that stem from society. Our modern political institutions, including those in our own country and those that extend beyond our borders, are based on these values. You may find yourself 'siding' with one perspective or another, but you will likely see the utility in the others, as well. It is

important for us to fully comprehend the continuing purpose that these traditional approaches and theories have for contemporary political thought.

**Unit 3** explores our ideas about identity and who we are as nations in a global society. Nationality has always been a basic concern for International Relations, but in the modern context of globalization and regional integration, who we are and how we form political communities have taken new twists. Identity can give us community, development, and growth as individuals and societies, but it can also result in competition, conflict, and even war. At the same time, however, they demonstrate the durability of identity in political life. This unit will explore the concepts of statehood, nationhood, and nationality, as well as issues relating to patriotism and nationalism. This unit also will deal with the increasing problem of population growth and migration, and the seemingly contradictory forces of globalization and regionalism. We will investigate ways that these forces affect state behaviour and foreign policy.

**Unit 4** addresses one of the most perpetual issues of International Relations: security and insecurity in the global arena. Even though global politics has undoubtedly taken on a series of new concerns, the basic apprehension concerning personal and territorial security has not gone away. Indeed, the outline of security problems in the international environment ranging from weapons proliferation, to terrorism, human security, and war illustrates the convoluted array of security matters that affect all of us. In this section you will become acquainted with the nature of war, both historical and contemporary, and its relationship to insecurity in the international system. The world system has changed dramatically in the last decade, and in large part due to the effects of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Canada, for instance, went to war in Afghanistan in support of its American ally. Canada's presence in Afghanistan is now largely in the form of training personnel, but has taken part in other military operations, including the UN mission in Haiti, and assisting France in Mali in 2013. This unit will explore continuing security matters such as arms racing, sanctions, ballistic missile defence and weapons proliferation, as well as new worries, including international terrorism, peacekeeping, and human security. Of course, these fears are not really new, yet they certainly have taken on a new level of awareness in recent years.

**Unit 5** is about one of the most fundamental themes in modern International Relations: international political economy. Anyone who gives even casual attention to politics appreciates the relationship between political power and wealth. The massive and global downturn of the economy that began in 2008 resulted in a long list of serious effects on the world's economies. The United States, for its part, has witnessed a decline of its primacy in the global political economy. While it has been said that we live in a "post-industrial world" where those that benefit live in comfort, many more live without basic needs. Industrialization is not entirely a thing of the past, but the coming of a new "information age" placed new pressures on a global economy that is more inequitable now than ever before. The same may be said of the international environment, where divisions between who has material goods and resources and who does not are even more extreme than what we might see in our own country. Rather than becoming more equitable, countries in the world today are actually witnessing a more acute divide in the distribution of wealth. Even more troubling is the fact that, while the world is more detached in terms of wealth, we are more aware of it as a result of increasing attention to globalization. In short, thanks to globalization, we are getting better at understanding even greater inequity in the world today. This unit will look at the connection between states and wealth and the continuing problem of underdevelopment in the Third World. We will also scrutinize the concept of globalization, its meaning for current International Relations, as well as the related growth in regional integration worldwide.

**Unit 6** will survey some emerging issues in International Relations today. In this section of the course we will describe and explore emerging topics, such as human rights, the environment, and international law. Also in this unit, we will explore the changing nature of power, leadership, and the future for cooperation in the global arena. Not unlike many other subjects raised in this course, these areas are not necessarily new; however, the manner in which we contemplate them has changed noticeably in modern International Relations.

You may want to jump ahead in the course material and scan each of these units to get a more complete picture of the content in this course. You will understand how these six sections are integrated and expand on each other. Although the ordering of these units does not necessarily convey any

ranking of importance for International Relations, there are certain topics, such as concepts and approaches that need to be dealt with before others.

Each unit is constructed with a consistent style and approach; every unit is organized in the following manner:

1. **Introductory comments:** the introductory comments set the stage for the unit.
2. **Learning objectives:** a short-form overview of what you should be able to do upon completion of the unit.
3. **Assigned reading:** relevant text or chapters corresponding to that particular unit. In the first reading, you should try to establish the main theme(s) that the author is trying to convey. Do not try to understand all of the ideas and arguments presented at one time. This is also the time to request additional books or further readings in anticipation of your written assignments.
4. **How to proceed:** an outline of the steps required to work through the material in each unit.
5. **Study notes:** a detailed overview and commentary on the content for each unit.
6. **Learning activities:** this short section gives you 3 or more optional activities you can work on if you want to go further with the material in the unit.
7. **Self-test questions:** there are 5 self-test questions to help you review the material from each unit. Write your response and then check your response in appendix A.
8. **Supplementary material:** a list of additional resources.

While an assignment is provided for each unit of the course you are only required to complete three assignments for the entire course. This means that you will be able to choose your three assignments from a total of six separate assignments, one from each unit of the course material. One of these assignments must be taken from either unit 1 or unit 2. The rationale for asking you to complete an assignment from an early unit of the course is to give you feedback before you have to write the next assignment.

Although the content for each unit is different, the method for completing each unit is the same. You should begin by reading the introductory comments and focus on the learning objectives in the course materials. Then finish the assigned textbook readings before reading the study notes section for each unit. The study notes are like an in-class lecture. It is a useful strategy to think about the assigned readings as preparation for your lecture or the study notes for each unit. Then, as you would after listening to a lecture, review the assigned text readings before proceeding to the learning activities and self-test questions. As you work through the material, determine if you would like to do one of the 4 possible assignment questions for that unit.

## Evaluation and grading

To meet the course requirements you must complete three assignments and the final exam:

1. Three assignments, each of which is worth 20% of your final grade. One of these assignments must be taken from the topic list in either unit 1 or unit 2. Complete this assignment as early as possible if you want to get feedback from the instructor before you work on the next two assignments. The second assignment may be chosen from the topic lists for units 3 and 4. The final assignment is to be chosen from units 5 or 6. Your three assignments are worth 60% of your final grade. The possible assignments are located in course website.
2. There will be a scheduled three-hour exam that will cover the entire year's work. The final exam will be scheduled by the University as already indicated in your *Distance and Online Education Program Guide*. Your final exam is worth 40% of your final grade.

## Self-assessment questions

Self-assessment questions involve interpretation of material and critical thought. They are intended to develop and sharpen your thinking about the course material, and to help you prepare for the final examination. They should also be valuable for you as you consider your response to assignment topics. Reading the study notes and the required texts should provide you with the necessary information to answer the self-assessment questions. Try to answer the self-assessment questions in one or two brief paragraphs before checking the sample responses found in the Appendix A.

In addition there are numerous self-assessment questions you can answer in the website for each textbook.

## Assignments

The assignments are on the course website. The essay assignments must be typewritten, double-spaced, and be approximately ten pages (or around 2,500 words) in length.

You are encouraged to contact your instructor if you have any questions about the format of your paper. You should also consult your writing guide. A list of appropriate guides is provided earlier in this section.

Although you choose units for which you will write your essays, your final exam will require an understanding of the material in all six units. For that reason, good effort in all of the units will improve your performance on the final exam.

### Assignment due dates

Assignment	Sept.- Apr.	Jan.- July
1	October 15	February 15
2	January 15	April 15
3	March 15	May 31

The final exam will be written at the University of Manitoba (UM), Fort Garry campus or at an approved off-campus location. **Students needing to write at an off-campus location must declare a location by the specified deadline date** (see off-campus declaration and policy under Student Resources on course homepage). **Students writing at the UM Fort Garry campus do not need to declare an exam location.**

The Registrar's Office is responsible for the [final exam schedules](#) which is available approximately one month after the start of the course.

## Examination

A three-hour final exam will be written either at The University of Manitoba or at one of the approved exam centres listed on the form in the course website. The examination will consist of two sections:

The first section contains short essay questions that require about 2 or 3 double-spaced page answers. The questions are similar to the self-assessment questions provided at the end of each unit, but worded in such a way so as to allow you to expand on your response to the specific question posed.

In the second section you will choose a longer essay question that requires more consideration of the material. You will be required to answer one question in this section. These questions are more detailed, and you will be asked to write about 8 pages, double-spaced, for your answer. The additional detail in these questions should assist you in your answer.

You are provided with a choice of questions in both sections, allowing you to prepare answers on those topics with which you feel most comfortable. The primary goal of the examination is to demonstrate what you have learned from the course. The final exam is usually the hardest part of the course for distance education students, so prepare well for it. Your preparation for the exam should include a review of the course material and the required texts prior to the final exam.

A sample final examination is provided in appendix B. You will be able to see sample questions and a few notes on the important elements your answer should include.

## Distribution of marks

Evaluation	Percentage
Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	20%
Assignment 3	20%
Final examination	40%
Total	100%

## Grading scale

Letter grade	Percentage range	Description
A+	90 – 100	Exceptional
A	80 – 89	Excellent
B+	75 – 79	Very good
B	70 – 74	Good
C+	65 – 69	Satisfactory
C	60 – 64	Adequate
D	50 – 59	Marginal
F	Less than 50	Failure

**Please note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.**

Many students are unsure of what constitutes an “A” or a “B” or another grade. Making matters more confusing, in the Faculty of Arts there may appear to be various conditions that lead to one grade or another, depending on the course, or the instructor. You may have a different instructor in POLS 2040 Introduction to International Relations than students in a previous year, or students taking the classroom version of the course at the University of Manitoba. It would be impossible to suggest that your papers will be graded exactly as they would with another instructor, but there are some standards that you can expect.

As the description of grades above shows, there are criteria for each grade. An exceptional paper, one that will receive the highest grade possible, would have to exceed all aspects of grading, including attention to research, literature review, bibliography and citation formatting, clarity of argument, persuasiveness of evidence and substantiation, and consistency of quality writing. An A+ paper is the closest thing to a flawless piece of work that you could submit, and the grade is given only rarely. As the grade descriptions show, papers that receive a grade lower than A+ (A, B+, B, and so on) are not as strong. On the same criteria – research, argumentation, writing, documentation, etc.–these papers will receive different grades.

This is not to suggest that an A+ is impossible; rather, you should bear in mind that a paper written in Political Studies is not simply “right” or “wrong” and your grade is contextual. That is, each paper is graded based on its own merits, and your instructor will have to take into account far more than “right” or “wrong” in the assessment of your grade. Your instructor will not necessarily have to agree with your paper’s argument, so you should not be concerned about his or her personal view. If you have any questions about the grade you receive on any of your assignments in this course, you should contact your instructor, who will provide you will more details, and suggestions for improvement.

## Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University’s policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>.

## **Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources**

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contact Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

Sample



# Acknowledgments

**Content specialist:**

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Dr. George A. MacLean is Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Professor of Political Studies at the University of Manitoba. He was Department Head for Political Studies from 2005-2011. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice. He holds an honours BA from Dalhousie University, a Masters in Political Science/International Relations from McMaster University, and a PhD in Political Studies/International Politics from Queen's University.

His research interests include Canadian foreign policy, human security, non-proliferation initiatives, and multilateralism. He is the author or co-author of several books including *Politics: An Introduction (2013, 2e and 2010 1e)*, *Ideas, Interests, and Issues*, (2008, 2e and 2006, 1e), *Clinton's Foreign Policy in Russia* (2006), *Canada and the United States: A Relationship at a Crossroads?* (2005), *Introduction to Politics: Power, Participation, and the Distribution of Wealth* (2001), and *Between Actor and Presence: The Future for the Transatlantic Relationship* (2001). His articles have appeared in *Journal of Human Security*, *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Foreign Policy Review*, *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Canadienses*, *The Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *Policy Options*, *Journal of Conflict Studies*, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, and *Journal of World Affairs and New Technology*.

MacLean has spoken before a wide range of audiences, in Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Asia, and Europe.

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