

## **POL 240: Introduction to International Relations**

UNC Greensboro

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Curry 333A

Office Hours: M: 9-10

### **Course Description**

The international system includes the 185-plus sovereign states, international and non-governmental organizations, transnational business, and various sub-national groups. The course examines this entire system with a primary focus on the question of how do you settle conflicts and solve problems in a complex political system which lacks central authorities. The course does not regularly or closely examine the foreign policies of the separate states and other actors, but, rather, the general problems with which they all must deal and the techniques by which they attempt to do so. The greatest attention is given to security issues including the general causes of international and transnational conflict and to the techniques employed in efforts to manage these conflicts. Other issues that are examined include economics, trade, environment, resource depletion, health, the effects of technological change and population problems.

### **Course Objectives**

At the end of this course you should have a strong grasp regarding:

- Various theories of state behavior and how they apply to current and past political events.
- The causes of war and other forms of conflict, such as ethnic conflict.
- How non-state actors such as international organizations can affect the actions of states.
- How and why cooperation occurs in the international system.
- The issues that concern international relations today and how they shape the foreign policy decisions of states.

### **Required Text**

Rather than a single textbook source, we will be using a large variety of readings and segments of article to explore each topic. These can be accessed through the e-reserve module in Canvas.

### Assignments in Brief

There will be three tests, three in class formal debates, forum postings, response and debate papers and many reading quizzes. Class participation and attendance is required. A more complete listing of assignments with greater detail can be found in Canvas on the assignment calendar.

### Class Policies

All late work will be penalized one letter grade for each day that it is late. Assignments turned in late on the day they are due will be docked half a letter grade. Excuses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but extensions will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances. Written verification, such as a doctor's note, will be required.

If you have an extenuating circumstance, you must let me know ASAP. I will be far less sympathetic to excuses received after an assignment is due.

You are expected to stay on top of the reading and take the initiative to learn the material. If you do not complete the reading you may fall behind and lose participation points in class. If you know that an assignment will fall at a busy time of the semester, I suggest you start working on it earlier. If you are active and engaged in class it will be easier to learn and the process will be much more enjoyable!

Please be respectful and exercise decorum during our class sessions. This means, among other things, that cell phones must be turned off, iPods should be put away, there should be no side conversations, respect your classmates' opinions in class discussions, and please no reading of non-class materials during class. *Use of laptops is restricted to note-taking for class.* If I become aware of inappropriate usage (working on other classes, reading online, shopping, etc.), you will get a zero for your participation grade.

**Most importantly**, please be on time for class. Consistent lateness is disruptive to the class and will result in a much lower participation grade. *Three absences allowed*, after that there is an 7 point deduction from your final grade point total for each day over.

I am always available to answer questions or discuss any class-related issues. Please feel free to send me an email, stop by my office during office hours, or make an appointment when needed. If you have a disability and need any special learning accommodations, please let me know ASAP so arrangements can be made.

**Cheating and plagiarism will be punished with a failing grade and a report to the Dean of Students. Plagiarism is defined as "stealing and passing off (the**

**ideas or words of another) as one's own or using (another's production) without crediting the source" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). It is a serious act and will be treated as such. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me.**

### **Special Needs**

If you have special needs that will affect your ability to learn in this class, let me know and appropriate steps will be taken to assist you.

### **Honor**

The university's Academic Integrity Policy is available via the web at:  
<http://www.uncg.edu80/Leg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>.

### **Grading**

Debates/Participation/Quizzes - 140 points

Debate papers – 150 total

Tests – 300 points total

### **Canvas**

I use Canvas extensively. You will find another copy of the syllabus, and the course calendar in the 'Course Information' folder. In the discussion forums you will find a, 'Questions for the professor' which I will check everyday, M-F. One forum is for you to get in touch with fellow students, 'Coffeehouse.' There are also some assignments in the forums. Reading questions can be found in the weekly modules.