

PSC 240 - The International System



PSC 240.1: The International System
Graham 212
TR 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm
blackboard.uncg.edu

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Course Objectives

We live in an active and changing world, but what is driving these changes and what perspectives do we use to explain these occurrences? This course is designed to provide you with some of the analytical concepts and tools necessary to make sense of the various issues facing the international system. To do this, the course is divided into three primary sections. In the first section we will focus on what has long been considered the central problem of international politics—war and peace—and we will develop various arguments regarding the likelihood of conflict and cooperation. In the second section we will focus on international political economy, a set of issues that are not always as seductive sounding as war and peace but are more likely to have a bigger impact on our day-to-day lives. Finally, we will examine other issues in international politics—such as failed states, terrorism, and the environment—issues that do not fit as nicely into the first two sections but are important nonetheless.

Course Requirements

Exams & Quizzes (75%)

There will be three in-class exams and six online reading quizzes throughout the semester. Each exam is worth 20 percent of your final grade and will cover the lectures and readings from the preceding section of the course. These exams are not necessarily cumulative; however, the final exam will include an essay that asks you to reflect on what you have learned throughout the semester. There will also be six quizzes total, two per section, covering the assigned readings. The quizzes will be administered through Blackboard. The average grade of all six quizzes will count towards 15 percent of your final grade. The in-class exams will be on September 29, November 5, and December 10. The online quizzes will be posted on September 3, September 17, October 15, October 29, November 17, and December 1. Each quiz will be made available beginning at 2:00pm on that date and will remain available for 48 hours.

Paper (15%)

During the final section of the course you will submit a paper that explains and evaluates one current event issue through two of the perspectives discussed throughout the semester. The paper will require you to both research an issue and apply the course materials to get a sense of how different perspectives will respond to the same basic issue in international politics. Specific directions regarding the paper will be posted at the beginning of the

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second section of the course (October 1). The paper will count towards 15 percent of your final grade and is due at the start of class on November 19.

Participation (10%)

Although this is a lecture course, I will attempt to include modest discussions of current events in the class, and I would encourage all of you to follow international news so that you are able to participate in these discussions. Outside of the classroom, students may participate by utilizing my office hours or setting up appointments to ask questions about the material or review assignments. Additionally, beginning in September, I will set up times for small, informal meetings with groups of students to talk about international politics, current events, etc. Please keep in mind that frequent participation does not necessarily mean a better grade if that participation proves counterproductive, disruptive, and so forth.

Other Guidelines & Information

The information included within the syllabus should be a reliable guide for the course, its requirements, its policies, and the schedule. However, this information is subject to change as the semester progresses and, therefore, you may not claim any rights based solely on the syllabus. Official announcements are always made in class and on Blackboard and may supersede the information contained here if they are announced after the date specified in the syllabus. In the absence of more recent announcements, however, the following guidelines are not negotiable and will be strictly adhered to during this semester:

Attendance: Attendance will be taken 10 times over the course of the semester and will form the basis for your overall participation grade, up to 80 percent. Please keep in mind that attendance does not equal participation. If you wish to receive a participation grade above an 80, you will need to actually participate in class, see me during office hours, or sign up for one of the small group meetings that I will set up later in semester.

Grades: Letter grades will be assigned using the following scale: A 93 and higher; A- 90-92.99; B+ 87-89.99; B 83-86.99; B- 80-82.99; C+ 77-79.99; C 73-76.99; C- 70-72.99; D+ 67-69.99; D 63-66.99; D- 60-62.99; F 59.99 and below. Please keep in mind that I generally do not round up; however, I will take a look at your overall performance in the course your grade is close to the line between two grades.

Late Work: Due dates for all assignments are listed on the course schedule and will be announced in class and on Blackboard. Late work will be accepted with a 5 percent penalty per day for up to 7 days, after which you will receive a 0 on the assignment. You must contact me before an assignment is due if you are aware of any potential conflicts that will affect your ability to complete an assignment on time so that we may discuss alternatives.

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Readings: All of the readings listed on the course schedule are viewed as required readings unless otherwise noted. It is expected that you will have completed these assigned readings prior to your participation in the forums, writing your papers, or completing the exams. I reserve the right to change readings, but I will also tell you in advance whenever this happens.

Student Conduct Code: The Academic Integrity Policy of UNCG is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating violations of this policy seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at academicintegrity.uncg.edu.

Submitting Your Paper: Although I would prefer to receive a hard copy of your at the start of class on the day it is due, you have the option to submit your paper via email in .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .wps file formats. Your email message must be received prior to the start of class on the day the paper is due. If I cannot open the file, I will contact you for a replacement; however, if the deadline has passed I will also consider your paper late. Please note that you will not receive any written feedback if you submit just the electronic copy.

Technology in the Classroom: Modern technology is a wonderful thing; my cell phone is a “smart phone,” and I am a huge fan of all “Web 2.0” has to offer such as having a Facebook account and using Twitter. However, I also believe these services have no place in the classroom during our class time. Please turn off your cell phones and only use laptops to take notes while in class, otherwise your participation grade could be severely affected.

Required Textbook

Nau, Henry R. 2009. *Perspectives on International Relations*. 2nd Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (a.k.a. **Perspectives**)

Additional reading assignments listed on the course schedule will be posted as PDF files on Blackboard. The list of assigned readings is subject to change as the semester progresses. However, I will inform you of any additions or changes in advance.

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Course Schedule

Introduction

25 August	Introduction to the International System <i>Perspectives: Introduction</i>
27 - 3 September	The Perspectives & Levels of International Politics <i>Perspectives: Chapter 1</i>
	Quiz 1 - <i>Posted September 3 - 5</i>

International Conflict

8 - 10	Where do States Come From? <i>Perspectives: Chapter 2</i>
15 - 17	The Major Conflicts of the 20th Century <i>Perspectives: Chapters 3, 4, and 5; PDF: Mearsheimer</i>
	Quiz 2 - <i>Posted September 17 - 19</i>
22 - 24	Creating a More Peaceful World? <i>Perspectives: Chapter 6; PDF: McCormick</i>
29	Exam 1: Introduction and International Conflict

International Political Economy

1 October	Origins of the Modern International Economy <i>Perspectives: Chapter 8</i>
6 - 20	International Trade, Finance, and Investment <i>Perspectives: Chapters 9 and 10</i>
13 October	<i>Fall Break</i>
	Quiz 3 - <i>Posted October 15 - 17</i>
22 - 27	Development & the Developing World <i>Perspectives: Chapters 11 and 12</i>

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29 - 3 November Globalization & Global Inequality
Perspectives: Chapter 13; *PDFs:* Krugman, Mazur

Quiz 4 - *Posted October 29 - 31*

5 **Exam 2:** International Political Economy

Other Topics in International Politics

10 - 12 Failed States and a World of Terror
Perspectives: Chapter 7; *PDFs:* Laqueur, Rotberg

17 - 19 Population Growth and the Environment
Perspectives: Chapter 14; *PDF:* Hardin

Quiz 5 - *Posted November 17 - 19*

Paper - *Due at Beginning of Class, November 19*

24 - 1 December Global Governance and Global Civil Society
Perspectives: Chapters 15 and 16

26 November *Thanksgiving Break*

Quiz 6 - *Posted December 1 - 3*

3 What's Next?
Perspectives: Conclusion; *PDFs:* Barber, Fukuyama,
Huntington, Kaplan

10 **Exam 3:** Other Topics in International Politics