

# PSC 240 - The International System



PSC 240.2: The International System  
Graham 307  
MW 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm  
blackboard.uncg.edu

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Graham 412  
MTWR 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm  
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## Course Description

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 an 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, 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.

### 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 respond to the same basic issue in international politics. Specific directions regarding the paper will be posted at the beginning of the second section of the course.

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## Participation (10%)

Although this is a lecture course, I will include some modest discussion in class. 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. Additional opportunities to meet for coffee will be announced in class. 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 on the first page of 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 85 percent. Please keep in mind that attendance does not equal participation. If you wish to receive a participation grade above an 85, 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.

**Late Work:** Late work will NOT be accepted. Due dates for all assignments are listed on the course schedule and any changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard. 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.

**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](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu).

**Technology in the Classroom:** Modern technology is a wonderful thing; however, I also believe services like Facebook and Twitter have no place in the classroom. Please turn off your cell phones and only use laptops to take notes while in class, otherwise your participation grade could be severely affected.

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## Required Readings

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.

## Course Schedule

### Introduction

20 January Introduction to the International System  
*Perspectives*: Introduction

25 - 3 February Actors, Levels, and Perspectives  
*Perspectives*: Chapters 1 and 2

**Quiz 1** - Posted January 25 - 29

### International Conflict

8 - 15 The Major Conflicts of the 20th Century  
*Perspectives*: Chapters 3, 4, and 5; *PDF*: Mearsheimer

**Quiz 2** - Posted February 8 - 12

17 - 22 Creating a More Peaceful World?  
*Perspectives*: Chapter 6; *PDF*: McCormick

24 **Exam 1**: Introduction and International Conflict

### International Political Economy

1 March Origins of the Modern International Economy  
*Perspectives*: Chapter 8

**Quiz 3** - Posted March 1 - 5

3 - 22 International Trade, Finance, and Investment  
*Perspectives*: Chapters 9 and 10

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9 - 11 March	<i>Spring Break</i>
	<b>Quiz 4</b> - Posted March 22 - 26
24 - 29	Development & the Developing World <i>Perspectives:</i> Chapters 11 and 12
31 - 5 April	Globalization & Global Inequality <i>Perspectives:</i> Chapter 13; <i>PDFs:</i> Krugman, Mazur
7	<b>Exam 2:</b> International Political Economy

## Other Topics in International Politics

12 - 14	Failed States and a World of Terror <i>Perspectives:</i> Chapter 7; <i>PDFs:</i> Laqueur, Rotberg
	<b>Quiz 5</b> - Posted April 12 - 16
19 - 21	Population Growth and the Environment <i>Perspectives:</i> Chapter 14; <i>PDF:</i> Hardin
	<b>Paper</b> - Due at Beginning of Class, April 21
26 - 28	Global Governance and Global Civil Society <i>Perspectives:</i> Chapters 15 and 16
	<b>Quiz 6</b> - Posted April 26 - 30
3 May	What's Next? <i>Perspectives:</i> Conclusion; <i>PDFs:</i> Barber, Fukuyama, Huntington, Kaplan
12	<b>Exam 3:</b> Other Topics in International Politics