

Introduction to International Relations

University of Utah

Political Science 2100: 3 credits

Summer 2025

Instructor: Tyler Pack

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Office: GC 3336

Office Hours: TuTh 8:30pm-9:00pm

Class Schedule: TuTh 5:30-8:30pm in Sandy 106 (Sandy Center)

Course Website: <https://utah.instructure.com/courses>

Course Description and Objectives:

In international relations we study questions and phenomena of global importance: Why do we see war between and within states? How do we deal with issues of human rights, terrorism, pollution, or refugees? What determines the success or failure of international organizations like the UN, the African Union, or the International Criminal Court? How do the history and culture of a country affect the ways that leaders and citizens act, both within the country itself and in its relations with others?

This course will introduce you to foundational concepts and theories in international relations, but it will also help you evaluate political theories and claims using the methodology of social science. We will discuss how we can decide which questions are important to answer, how to find those answers, and how confident we should be that our answers resemble reality. Taking this understanding further, in this course you will also take political questions of personal interest through the process of theory building, hypothesis formation, and evidence gathering and assessment.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will have improved your ability to:

- Explain foundational principles and theories of international relations.
- Apply theories of international relations to explain and predict political phenomena from a variety of policy areas.
- Analyze and evaluate political arguments and claims made by political scientists, the media, and people in general along multiple dimensions.
- Identify and produce effective examples and data to make and test political claims or policy ideas.
- Recognize and formulate effective research questions and begin the process of social

science research.

- Understand the role of perception and bias in our understanding of global politics.
- Communicate ideas in writing and other media.

Required Readings:

Scott, J. M., Akbaba, Y., Carter, R. G., & Drury, A. C. (2024) *World Politics: Seeking Security, Prosperity, and Quality of Life in a Complicated World*. Sage Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-0719-0216-5.

You can buy this through the university bookstore or your favorite online retailer.

Additional required readings include a number of articles and book chapters available through the course website as well as social science articles online. Many of the articles use data and political methodology to analyze real-world events and issues. I want these articles to be as topical and current as possible, so most do not yet appear on the syllabus. I will always give at least a week's notice for these readings.

Assignments and Grading

As stated above, this course introduces you to international relations as a way of approaching issues in global politics. I am less concerned with the facts that you learn about political science than I am with your ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate the concepts you learn and apply them to political situations in the world around you. To help you demonstrate your ability to do these things, course evaluation will consist of the following assignments (in-depth descriptions will follow):

1. Midterm and final exams: **20% of total grade**
2. Practical writing assignments: Two - **20% of total grade**
3. Concept and Data Assignments - **25% of total grade**
4. Participation: **15% of total grade**
5. Daily Prep: **20% of total grade**

Your final grade will be out of 100 points and will use a standard grading scale (i.e. 80-83.9 = B-, 84-86.9 = B, 87-89.9 = B+, etc.). Your grades will be kept up to date and available on the course website on Canvas.

Evaluation

Midterm and Final

We will have short exams taken in class at the halfway and endpoints of the class. Each is worth 10% of your final grade, and the final is not cumulative. Format and content will be discussed in detail as these exams approach, but they will mostly consist of short answer and short essay questions.

Practical Writing Assignments

For this course you will write one short policy paper and one op-ed on topics related to course material. I will provide topics and instructions one week before each due date.

Writing assignments will be submitted on the course website. If you are not satisfied with the grade you receive on your writing assignment, you may resubmit a revised version to be regraded. You can earn back *at most* half of the points you lost on the first submission (i.e., if you received 80% on the first submission your maximum score for a revised essay is 90%). You must resubmit a minimum of two days and a maximum of seven days after receiving your essay back with comments from me.

For these and other writing assignments, I am mostly concerned with the content of your ideas, but all the brilliant analysis in the world can be rendered incomprehensible through poor formatting, grammar, editing, etc. If you need help getting your ideas across in a more coherent and persuasive way, please take advantage of the University Writing Center here on campus. You can find out about making an appointment here: <https://writingcenter.utah.edu/>

Concept and Data Assignments

Each week there will be at least one assignment due that relates to material covered that week. Assignments will be due either on Wednesdays or Sundays at 11:59pm.

These assignments will involve more in-depth exploration of the process of social science as it relates to international relations issues. The dates for these are listed on the schedule below, and further instructions will be given in advance of assignment due dates.

Participation

I believe that learning works best as an interactive process among students and a teacher. Your personal insights and experience will help your classmates (and me) understand the material in a unique way. With our small class size, there will be many opportunities for discussion and small-group activities.

We only meet 12 times for the term, and many of the opportunities for participation will include in-class discussion, simulations, and other activities. These are not directly graded, but if you miss too many it will begin to affect your participation grade. If you have any questions or concerns about your current level of participation at any point during the class, please talk to me.

We'll discuss the method for tracking participation during the first week of class.

Daily Prep

Your reading assignments each day will generally consist of one to two chapters from the textbook and one or two additional articles from scholarly journals, relevant websites, etc. Each week there will be an opportunity to demonstrate your completion and understanding of the

reading by answering a few multiple-choice questions (textbook readings) or a short-answer prompt (non-textbook readings) on the day's assignment. There will be one such opportunity each day.

You will access the Daily Prep on the course website and submit your answers there before class every day. These are due at 5:30pm each Tuesday and Thursday.

Weekly Schedule

With a few exceptions, your weekly schedule will look like the following:

- Each class day (Tuesday and Thursday)
 - Before class:
 - Complete Daily Prep
 - Closes at 5:30pm
 - In class:
 - Lecture, discussion, and activities based around readings
 - Participation check
- Wednesday and/or Sunday
 - Assignmen or exam due by 11:59pm

Course Policies

Students who succeed in this course attend class regularly, complete assigned readings on time, and turn in assignments by the appropriate due date. Repeated patterns of absence from class prevent you from participating meaningfully in class and will be reflected in your participation grade.

Your assignments and papers are due on the dates listed on the schedule below. There is value in meeting deadlines, but the core goals of this course do not include punctuality as such. I am more interested in the content of your ideas and analysis than the particular date on which you submit assignments. At the same time, meaningful feedback that builds into future assignments requires some structure in a course that doesn't just let you submit everything on the final day of class. With this in mind, this course has some flexibility in deadlines for assignments.

I provide flexibility on late submissions if you ask me in advance, and I trust you to know whether or not the reason is sufficient. (I don't consider it my job to adjudicate which reasons are valid and which are not). Late submissions that you don't clear with me will receive a 3% per day deduction but will never be worth less than 50%.

Course Website

You can find the course website at <https://utah.instructure.com/courses>. The website will include a copy of this syllabus, links to readings and other course materials, assignment links, and grades. If you have trouble accessing or using the website, please let me know as soon as

possible.

Office Hours

Please feel free to visit my office hours or email me with any questions about the course, political science in general, or life (though my expertise in the area will decrease as you go down that list). If normal office hour times don't work, please email me to set up an in-person or virtual appointment at another time.

Student and Instructor Conduct

Both you as students and I as the instructor have rights and responsibilities within the classroom. For more information about academic honesty, misconduct, freedom of expression, and other policies, you can refer to the following two documents:

- [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- [Code of Faculty Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Student Wellness

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the experiences and backgrounds that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of this - your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you. Finally, let me know how you would prefer me to address you in class and on assignments (name, pronouns, etc.).

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities.

All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Prior notice is appreciated. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q of the [Instruction & Evaluation regulations](#).

In compliance with ADA requirements, some students may need to record course content. Any recordings of course content are for personal use only, should not be shared, and should never be made publicly available. In addition, recordings must be destroyed at the conclusion of the course.

If you will need accommodations in this class, or for more information about what support they provide, contact:

Center for Disability & Access

801-581-5020

disability.utah.edu

162 Union Building

200 S. Central Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Safety at the U

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more safety information and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)

dps.utah.edu

1735 E. S. Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status, or genetic information.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to university officials:

Title IX Coordinator & Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

801-581-8365

oeo.utah.edu

135 Park Building

201 Presidents' Cir.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Office of the Dean of Students

801-581-7066

deanofstudents.utah.edu

270 Union Building

200 S. Central Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

To file a police report, contact:

Campus Police & Department of Public Safety

801-585-COPS (801-585-2677)

dps.utah.edu

1735 E. S. Campus Dr.

Salt Lake City, UT 84112

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to authorities, the U's Victim-Survivor Advocates provide free, confidential, and trauma-informed support services to students, faculty, and staff who have experienced interpersonal violence.

To privately explore options and resources available to you with an advocate, contact:

Center for Student Wellness

801-581-7776

wellness.utah.edu

328 Student Services Building

201 S. 1460 E.

Academic Misconduct

It is expected that students comply with University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one’s work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah’s Student Code: [Policy 6-410: Student Academic Performance, Academic Conduct, and Professional and Ethical Conduct](#).

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code:

“...Includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.”

For details on plagiarism and other important course conduct issues, see the U's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Course Schedule

The class schedule may change during the semester in accordance with the needs of the class. You will receive notice about any changes as soon as possible both through email and in class. You will always have at least a week’s notice of these additional readings or assignment due date changes.

Due Date	Assignment Name
May 14	Geography + Intro
May 18	Word Cloud Methodology Critique

May 21	Types of Power
May 25	Policy Paper
May 28	Rivalry and Conflict Management
June 3	Midterm exam (in-class)
June 8	Op-ed
June 11	Human Rights and Public Divides
June 15	Building a Great Power Index
June 19	Final exam (in-class)