

POLS 1600 – Introduction to International Politics

Spring 2021

Location: Online

Professor Matthew Nanes – matthew.nanes@slu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Goals:

This class introduces students to the systematic study of international politics. Our overarching question is how actors – countries, NGOs, multi-national corporations, international organizations, etc. – interact with one another in the modern world. We will focus on the way that anarchy in the international system, or the absence of a “world government,” shapes these interactions. We will explore the foreign policies of several world powers and apply both classic and innovative theories to contemporary events.

The class is aimed towards students with minimal background in political science coursework but a healthy interest in international politics. There are no prerequisites, and I encourage students of all majors to enroll.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify key actors in the international system
- Differentiate between domestic politics and international politics, and especially the way that anarchy in the international system causes actors to behave differently
- Apply existing theories of politics to contemporary events in order to (a) explain what has already happened, and (b) predict what might happen next
- Effectively communicate complex ideas about politics verbally and in writing

Class Format:

This class is conducted in a **synchronous** online format, which means that you **will** need to be online at the scheduled class time. **Most weeks, we will have a required meeting on Thursday at the scheduled class time.** We will use this time for discussions, activities, and mini-lectures. The scheduled class time Tuesday will only be used as needed; most weeks you will *not* need to be online during that time.

The course is organized into six modules. I encourage you to go online at the beginning of each module to review the material and map out a plan for completing the upcoming work.

This course covers three credit hours over fifteen weeks. You should plan to devote about six hours a week to the class. Since much of the work, including most reading, can be done offline, you do not have to log in every day.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance and active participation are required for all synchronous class sessions. Unexcused absences will result in a loss of three points per absence from your overall course grade. Absences are excused if they result from a scenario which is *both* unforeseeable and unavoidable, for example getting sick, attending a funeral, or a sudden loss of electricity/internet. I handle excused absences on a case-by case-basis. If something comes up, just email me as soon as you're able and we will sort it out.

If you miss a class, whether excused or not, you should review the recording and follow up with me and/or a classmate if you have any questions about what you missed. Graded activities from a synchronous class generally cannot be made up. However, if your absence is excused, I may be able to give you an alternative assignment to make up the grade. It is your responsibility to ask about this option when you ask to have the absence excused.

Absences from some class sessions may be eligible to be made up by doing the following:

- a) Watch the recording of the class.
- b) Spend about 10 minutes reflecting on the class via zoom with others who were unable to attend. Students taking the course for honors credit will lead this discussion.
- c) Turn in a one paragraph written summary of that reflection to the professor. Each participating student must turn in his or her own written summary, due 48 hours after the reflection discussion. The written reflections will be graded as pass/no-pass. A no-pass reflection will be treated as an unexcused absence for grading purposes.

If you would like to make up a missed class this way, please email as soon as you know you will miss the class, and no later than 9 am on the morning after the class which was missed.

Students who reside in a substantially different time zone may request to complete some classes this way. Please contact me at least 48 hours before the scheduled class to discuss this option.

Communication Policy:

We will communicate mainly via email. You should get in the habit of checking your email at least twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. If you plan to be completely out of contact for more than 36 hours during the week, or more than 48 hours on weekends or holidays, please let me know in advance.

I am online several times a day during the week during normal business hours. For urgent matters, you can expect a reply within 4 hours on weekdays and 8 hours on weekends (excluding overnight). Less urgent matters will receive a response within 24 hours during the week, or by Monday morning after the weekend – but usually sooner. I am also available for meetings by phone or zoom.

Communicating professionally in an online setting, whether via email or on a class discussion board, is a learned skill. This online class gives you an opportunity to practice this skill which you will undoubtedly need beyond college. Here are a few guidelines:

- Do use professional language and grammar. Write in complete sentences with proper punctuation and capitalization to help your reader understand the information you'd like to convey.
- Do be polite. When we are stressed or upset, it comes out in the way we communicate. If you write it down and hit 'send' immediately, your email will sound upset even after you've cooled down.
- Do address your reader by name. That applies to emails, but also to discussion board messages with your classmates.
- Do sign your name on your emails. If you'd like to be called something other than your full name, feel free to let me know!
- Do not be overly formal. It's ok to use straightforward language when communicating in writing just as you would if having a verbal conversation with your professor or boss. You're not inviting the queen to a formal ball!

Grading and Assignments:

The assignments evaluate you based on the course goals listed above, with an emphasis on a) your understanding of concepts related to international politics, b) your ability to explain, analyze, and solve current events in international politics, and c) your communication of these items clearly and effectively.

1. **READING QUESTIONS** – 25%. These short-answer and multiple-choice questions are designed to ensure that you are learning the expected material from the readings. They are **open book**: you can and should reference the textbook when answering the questions. However, **please work alone**. Questions are posted at the beginning of each week and due by the end of the week.
2. **DEBATES** – 10%. We will have two debates. Further instructions will be provided (2 debates, 5 points each)

3. HOMEWORK – 20%. Assignments are posted at the beginning of each module and due by the end of each module
4. MIDTERM EXAM – 20%.
5. FINAL EXAM – 25%.

You will turn in all assignments and exams via Blackboard. Late assignments will not be accepted by default, but I will make reasonable exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Students taking the course for honors credit will be responsible for leading the zoom discussions for those who missed class as described in the attendance policy above.

I will convert your numeric grades to a letter course grade using this scale:

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|---|----------|
| A | 93-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D | 60-70 |
| A- | 90-92 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | F | below 60 |
| | | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | | |

Readings and Resources:

Textbook: Frieden, Lake, and Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. 4th Edition. W.W. Norton, 2018.

Feel free to purchase a used copy of the book; we will NOT use the CD or online content. If you use an older edition of the book, you are responsible for identifying and accessing any material that has changed.

You should keep up with the news in world politics throughout the semester (and hopefully beyond) by regularly reading one or more of the following newspapers:

- New York Times
- Wall Street Journal
- Washington Post
- The Economist
- Foreign Affairs
- BBC.com

Academic Integrity:

I take academic integrity very seriously. I intend to make the guidelines for each assignment clear regarding outside sources. If you are not sure what is allowed on an assignment, you should contact me for clarification. Unless I specify otherwise, assignments should be completed on your own with no input from anyone else. Unless otherwise specified, assignments are closed-book and you may not use any resources to help complete them. Any violation of academic integrity will result in an automatic F in the class. **Academic integrity is especially important in an un-proctored online format.** If an assignment is closed-book, please take that restriction seriously. The above penalties apply regardless of the importance of the assignment. You should familiarize yourself with the university's general guidelines on academic integrity found here: <http://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php>

Students with Disabilities

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please visit the Office of Disability Services website (<http://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services>) for details. Please also contact me as soon as possible if you wish to discuss any of these options.

https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt_disability-accommodations.docx

Technology Requirements

This course uses Blackboard to host content, assignments, and class discussions. Therefore, you must have internet access and a computer which meets [Blackboard's minimum system requirements](#). You can find Blackboard's [privacy policy here](#).

If you need IT support related to this course, you can contact SLU IT Services by emailing helpdesk@slu.edu, calling 314-977-4000 or 844-348-3957, or going to <https://www.slu.edu/its/index.php>

Title IX

SLU requires me to report certain types of information you discuss with me to the university's Title IX coordinator. You can find details about SLU's policy here: https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt_title-ix.docx

Student Success Center

"In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the Student Success Center to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching."

University Writing Services

"Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit the Student Success Center or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484."

Basic Needs Security

"Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need."

Module 1: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions (and Introduction)

January 28th – February 14th

By the end of this unit, students will:

- Identify whether any phenomenon in international relations is an interest, interaction, or institution.
- Explain the significance of major turning points in the history of international politics since 1500.
- Accurately describe anarchy as the central defining feature of international politics.

| Week | Reading, Videos, and Assignments (Due @ 2 pm on date) | Synchronous Sessions (2:15-3:30) |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Message board: Introduce yourself (1/31) | Thurs 1/28: Introductions |
| 2 | Read FLS Intro and Chapter 1 (2/4) Watch "World History 1500-1948" (2/4) Watch "World History 1048-2020" (2/4) | Thurs 2/4: Global politics since 1990 |
| 3 | Read FLS Chapter 2 (2/11) Watch "The Three I's" (2/11) Watch "The Prisoner's Dilemma" (2/11) | Thurs 2/11: Discussion of bargaining failures |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Watch “Collective Action Problems” (2/11) | |
|--|---|--|

Module 2: Causes of War

February 15th – March 1st

By the end of this unit, students will:

- Describe war as a bargaining failure, and why the occurrence of war is somewhat surprising.
- Identify and explain the possible reasons why “rational” states go to war.
- Explain the role of anarchy in war

| Week | Reading, Videos, and Assignments (Due @ 2 pm on date) | Synchronous Sessions (2:15-3:30) |
|------|---|--|
| 4 | Read FLS 3 Why are there Wars? (2/18) Watch “The Bargaining Model of War” (2/18) | Thurs 2/18: TBA |
| 5 | Read FLS 4 Domestic Politics and War <i>pages 138-168</i> (2/25) Read FLS 6 Violence by Non-State Actors <i>pages 236-268</i> (2/25) Watch “Domestic Interests and International War” Answer reading questions for Chapters 3, 4, and 6 (2/25) HW: “Prisoner’s Dilemma” game and short paper (2/28) | Thurs 2/25: Case studies on US War in Iraq, 6 Day War, Falklands War |

Module 3: Preventing War

March 2nd – March 14th

- Provide possible solutions to prevent both interstate and civil war.
- Explain the relationship between democracy and interstate war
- Apply rationalist theories of war to the Iraq Wars, Falklands War, and Six Day War.

| Week | Reading, Videos, and Assignments (Due @ 2 pm on date) | Synchronous Sessions (2:15-3:30) |
|------|---|--|
| 6 | Read FLS 5 International Institutions and War (3/4) Watch “International Institutions and War” (3/4) Answer reading questions for Chapter 5 (3/4) | Thurs 3/4: Case Studies: Russian invasion of Crimea; NATO in the World in 2019 |
| 7 | Read FLS 4 Domestic Politics and War <i>pages 168-183</i> (3/11) Answer reading questions for Democratic Peace (3/11) | Thurs 3/11: NO CLASS |

Midterm Exam

Tuesday, March 16th 2:15-3:30 pm (online)

Module 4: Money, Trade, and the Global Economy

March 18th – April 11th

By the end of this unit, students will:

- Identify and explain conditions and policies which lead some countries to be rich and others to be poor.
- Evaluate the role of specialization in international trade.
- Predict the likely impacts of a US-China trade war.
- Analyze the role of domestic interests in international trade and finance policies.
- Explain where currency values come from, and how changing exchange rates impact international politics.

| Week | Reading, Videos, and Assignments (Due @ 2 pm on date) | Synchronous Sessions (2:15-3:30) |
|------|--|---|
| 8-9 | Read FLS 7 International Trade (3/25) Answer reading questions for Chapter 7 (3/25) | Thurs 3/18: Intro to IPE Thurs 3/25: International Trade |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 10 | Read FLS 8 International Financial Relations <i>pages 346-349, 358-371, 377-383</i> (4/1) Watch “Loans and FDI” (4/1) Watch “IOs and MNCs” (4/1) Watch “Economic Migration” (4/1) HW: Trade war game and writeup (4/4) | Thurs 4/1: Currency exchange activity. Eurozone case study. |
| 11 | Read FLS 9 International Monetary Relations <i>pages 386-402, 410-412, 415</i> (4/8) Watch “CNBC: Currency Manipulation” (4/8) Watch “Currency Values and Exchange Rates” (4/8) Answer reading questions for Chapter 9 (4/8) HW: Turn in writeup of debate prep (4/8) | Thurs 4/8: US-China Trade War Debate |

Module 5: International Laws and Norms

April 12th – April 25th

By the end of this unit, students will:

- Distinguish between laws, treaties, and norms.
- Explain why some minimal level of international law is necessary in a globalized world.
- Evaluate the argument that “global human rights” are little more than “Western values.”
- Propose how human rights may be protected in the absence of international enforcement.

| Week | Reading, Videos, and Assignments (Due @ 2 pm on date) | Synchronous Sessions (2:15-3:30) |
|------|---|---|
| 12 | Read FLS 11 International Law and Norms (4/15) Watch “Norms and International Law” (4/15) | Thurs 4/15: Cautionary Tales in International Development |
| 13 | Read FLS 12 Human Rights (4/22) Watch “Human Rights” (4/22) Answer reading questions for Chapter 12 (4/22) HW: Turn in writeup of debate prep (4/22) | Thurs 4/22: Human Rights Debate |

Module 6: Politics of the 21st Century: Climate Change, Nuclear Proliferation, and the End of US Hegemony?

April 26th – May 9th

By the end of this unit, students will:

- Apply the concept of collection problems to a variety of political challenges, including protecting the environment.
- Analyze political opposition to environmental protection laws. What are the interests of those who seek to prevent environmental protection?
- Explain the concept of “externalities” and apply it to the problem of environmental pollution.
- Is the world heading in the direction of greater economic and security interdependence, or are boundaries between states being reinforced?
- What are the consequences of a potential decline in US hegemony?

| Week | Reading, Videos, and Assignments (Due @ 2 pm on date) | Synchronous Sessions (2:15-3:30) |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 14 | Read FLS 13 The Environment (4/29) Watch “Tragedy of the Commons” (4/29) Watch “International Environmental Politics” (4/29) | Thurs 4/29: Start saving the planet |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | Answer reading questions for Chapter 13 (4/29) Group Assignment "Save the Planet" (5/2) | |
| 15 | Read FLS 14 Challenges to the Global Order (5/6) Answer reading questions for Chapter 14 (5/6) | Thursday 5/6: Presentations of Save the Planet assignment |

Final Exam

Thursday, May 13th 2:00-3:50 pm (online)