

POLS 1600 – Introduction to International Politics

Spring 2020

Location: McGannon Hall 211

Professor Matthew Nanes – matthew.nanes@slu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-12 and Wednesdays 10-11, McGannon Hall 123

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

Attendance Policy:

Attendance and active participation are expected at every class session. I will evaluate you on the quality of your participation. I will excuse absences that are both unforeseeable and unavoidable. Please contact me by email as soon as it is feasible so I can determine whether the absence is excused. Otherwise, you are permitted two unexcused absences. Unexcused absence after the first two will result in a zero for participation that day, as well as a zero on any quizzes or in-class activities that you miss (see below).

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 QUIZZES – 15%**. These in-class quizzes are designed to ensure that you have completed the assigned readings and are prepared to discuss them. They will not be hard, and you should do well if you complete the readings. We will not have one in every class, but they will occur fairly regularly. Missed reading quizzes cannot be made up at a later date. If you miss a quiz due to an *excused* absence, I will drop that quiz from your grade. In addition, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades.
2. **CLASS PARTICIPATION – 15%**. All students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions in a thoughtful manner. Your performance in any in-class activities is included in this category.
3. **HOMEWORK – 20%**. Assigned throughout the semester. Some are listed on the syllabus; others will be announced in class.
4. **MIDTERM EXAM – 25%**. In class, March 5th.
5. **FINAL EXAM – 25%**. Date TBA.

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		

Making the Most of Lectures:

Lectures are intended to help you in several ways:

- a. Provide exposure to a breadth of attitudes, perspectives, and experiences from your classmates.
- b. Highlight the most important parts of the assigned readings
- c. Use the assigned readings as a starting point for an expanded discussion of each topic

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.

Additional readings are either linked directly from this syllabus or will be available under the “content” folder on Blackboard.

Finally, 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, all 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 AND a referral to the Associate Dean’s office.

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.

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-smt_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."

Unless otherwise noted, bulleted entries underneath each date signify the reading due on that date.

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

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.

Tuesday 1/14: Course Intro

Thursday 1/16: World History, 1500-2019ish

- FLS Introduction (read carefully)
- FLS Chapter 1 What Shaped Our World? (skim)

Tuesday 1/21: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions

- FLS Chapter 2 Understanding Interests, Interactions, and Institutions

Unit 2: War and Peace

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, and why civil war is included in a class on international relations.
- Provide possible solutions to prevent both interstate and civil war.
- Apply rationalist theories of war to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Thursday 1/23: The Bargaining Model of War (Information Problems)

- FLS Chapter 3: Why are there Wars? *Pages 88-118*

Tuesday 1/28: The Bargaining Model of War (Commitment Problems)

- FLS Chapter 3: Why are there Wars? *Pages 118-136*

Thursday 1/30: Domestic Interests and International War

- FLS Chapter 4: Domestic Politics and War *pages 138-168*

Tuesday 2/4: The Democratic Peace

- FLS Chapter 4: Domestic Politics and War *pages 168-183*

Thursday 2/6: Solving Anarchy with Institutions

- FLS Chapter 5: International Institutions and War
- Case Studies: Russian invasion of Crimea; NATO in the World in 2019 (in class)

Tuesday 2/11: Civil War

- FLS Chapter 6: Violence by Non-State Actors: Civil War and Terrorism *pages 236-268*

Thursday 2/13: Terrorism and Insurgency

- FLS Chapter 6: Violence by Non-State Actors: Civil War and Terrorism *pages 268-291*

Tuesday 2/18: Fighting Newer, Smaller Wars

- Read Berman, Felner, and Shapiro (2018), “Chapter 3: Information-Centric Insurgency and Counterinsurgency.” In *Small Wars, Big Data*.

Thursday 2/20: States, Civilizations, and International Organization

- Read Huntington, Samuel (1993), “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*.

Tuesday 2/25

- [The Great Pizza War \(in class\)](#)

Unit 3: Money, Trade, and the Global Economy

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.

Thursday 2/27: International Trade

- FLS Chapter 7: International Trade
- Homework: 1-page response paper from The Great Pizza War. Details TBA. Due **Friday at 5 pm** (upload to Blackboard)

Tuesday 3/3: Midterm Review

Thursday 3/5

- **Midterm Exam (in class)**

Tuesday 3/10: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Thursday 3/12: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Tuesday 3/17 International Finance

- FLS 8: International Financial Relations
- Homework: Play the “Trade War” game three times. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-to-win-a-trade-war/> Use a different strategy each time. Record your results, including a screen shot of the outcome. Write a one-page summary of your results (plus attach the screen shots) in which you (a) explain why you chose the strategy that you did, (b) reveal whether the outcome was as you expected, and (c) explain how you think you could have improved your outcome. Due at the beginning of class (hard copy).

Thursday 3/19

- **Mini-debate on the Rise of China: A Threat to the US? (in class)**

Tuesday 3/24: Mentoring Session (Topic TBA)

Thursday 3/26: NO CLASS

- FLS 9: International Monetary Relations *pages 386-403*

Tuesday 3/31: International Monetary Relations

- FLS 9: International Monetary Relations *pages 403-422*
- Case Study: The Eurozone (in class)

Thursday 4/2: International Development

- FLS 10: Development: Causes of the Wealth and Poverty of Nations

Unit 4: International Law and Human Rights

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.

Tuesday 4/7

- FLS 11: International Law and Norms

Thursday 4/9: NO CLASS, HOLY THURSDAY

Tuesday 4/14: International Human Rights

- FLS 12: Human Rights

Thursday 4/16

- [In-Class Debate \(Human Rights\)](#)

Unit 5: The Environment

By the end of this unit, students will:

- 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.
- Engage with both sides of the argument that environmental protection places a disproportionate burden on developing countries.
- Apply the concept of collection problems to a variety of political challenges, including protecting the environment.

Tuesday 4/21: Collective Action Problems and Environmental Politics

- FLS 13: The Environment *pages 540-556*

Thursday 4/23: Climate Change, Barriers and Solutions

- FLS 13: The Environment *pages 556-582*

Unit 6: What Happens Next?

Study questions for this unit:

- What are the most important issues in global politics today?
- How do interests, interactions, and institutions shape these issues?
- Is the world heading in the direction of greater economic and security interdependence, or are boundaries between states being reinforced?
- How can the study of International Relations adapt to a changing global landscape? Are existing theories sufficient to understand new political phenomena?
- What are the consequences of a potential decline in US hegemony?

Tuesday 4/28: 2019 – The Return of Great Power Politics?

- FLS 14: Challenges to the Global Order

Thursday 4/30: Wrap-up and Exam Review