Contact Information

Professor: Timothy M. Peterson  
Email: Timothy.M.Peterson@asu.edu  
Office hours: email for an appointment

About the Course

This course introduces students to the field of International Relations. This field is large and diverse, so no course could cover everything. Keeping this limitation in mind, I have designed this course to introduce students to major approaches to the study of international relations, as well as important research topics. The readings skew towards more recent contributions over the canonical classics. In particular, I have de-emphasized the major IR “paradigms” in favor of applied social science. We will begin the semester with meta-level readings that describe the approaches and methods that IR scholars use. Later readings will emphasize contributions to the broadly scientific study of IR, developing and/or testing theories to explain phenomena of interest.

As a graduate seminar, the course is demanding: it requires significant investments of time for reading, thinking, and synthesizing; and it requires a commitment to embrace different ideas and arguments for the purpose of understanding them. The primary learning outcome is synthesis of prior work towards the end of developing new research questions—arguably the single most important skill for aspiring social scientists.

Course Requirements

Readings

Mastery of the readings is an important requirement for a good grade in the course. Expect to read a substantial body of material each week. Complete the required readings before coming to the class for which they are assigned. A good strategy is to keep notes in which you both describe the main arguments, evidence, research design, etc. of each article, while also recording your questions and making connections with other readings. As you read, consider the following (keeping in mind not all will apply to every reading):

- What is the research question or puzzle?
- How does this reading synthesize prior studies?
- What is the argument: what are the cause(s) and effect(s) and what logic links them?
- What hypotheses are being tested?
- What research design is used?
- How are theoretical concepts operationalized? Does the measure reflect the concept well?
- What evidence is provided in support of the argument or to test the hypotheses?
- To what degree does the researcher answer the research question?
- Where does the study fit into the theoretical landscape of IR?
All required readings are available through online from web sources free to ASU students, or will be uploaded to the course Canvas site. Any changes to the schedule listed below will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas in advance.

Reaction Papers

For each week with readings, students will submit a reaction paper (uploaded to Canvas) due at the start of class. Reaction papers should synthesize the readings, critically evaluate contributions, and/or point to ideas for future research. Reaction papers should not be mere summaries of the readings. I know what the readings say; I instead want to see evidence of critical thinking, interpretation, and application of the arguments and empirical evidence presented. Note that reaction papers can be no longer than 500 words (approximately one page, single-spaced when using 12-point font). This word limit requires revision to present ideas as concisely as possible. I recommend writing a preliminary draft taking as much space as you need (which is likely to be much more than 500 words), and then editing that document down to fit the guidelines.

Attendance and Participation

I list attendance and participation after readings and reaction papers because we cannot have a good discussion unless students first read closely and think careful about the readings. Class provides the opportunity to discuss the ideas you wrote about, debate interpretations, and generally bounce ideas off other students and myself. I expect students to attend our meeting each week prepared to take an active role in the conversation. My role is primarily to facilitate discussion and answer questions, e.g., about advanced methods and related research beyond the material covered in class.

This course meets via ASU Sync. You can find out more information about ASU Sync for students here and here. To access live sessions of this class go to myASU and click the Attend via Sync button next to this class on your schedule.

Technology requirements

I encourage students to use a PC or Apple laptop or desktop equipped with a webcam. You will need an internet connection that can effectively stream live broadcasts. A download speed of at least 5 mbps is recommended. You can test your speed here. For students without their own equipment and/or internet service, ASU has a laptop and WiFi hotspot checkout program available through the library.

Course Paper

Each student will write a seminar paper to be turned in during finals week via Canvas. There are two options for course papers.

1. **Complete research paper**: This paper includes all components of a research paper: literature review, theory, research design, and analysis — along with an introduction and conclusion. The paper must be an original contribution to IR, although primarily empirical papers are allowed. This option should be chosen only if data is available via existing sources; ambitious coding projects are discouraged.

2. **Analytical essay**: This paper engages and synthesizes prior work on a research question of the student’s choice, towards the end of identifying worthwhile avenues for future research. Journals such as *Annual Review of Political Science* and *International Studies Review* publish these kinds of essays. As stated by *International Studies Review*, the goal of analytical essays is to “integrate scholarship, clarify debates, provide new perspectives on research, and identify new directions for the
field.” Keep in mind that analytical essays are **not** mere summaries of prior studies. You can think of the analytical essay as an expanded reaction paper with a central thesis.

All papers will be graded on substantive merit as well as on spelling, grammar, and style. Proposals are due at the beginning of class on week 8. Students will briefly present their idea to the class for discussion. Students will also give a short (8-10 minute) presentation of their paper during the final class meeting (week 15). Additional information about paper requirements and deadlines will be made available in class and on Canvas.

**Grading**

Grades are tabulated as a weighted sum of: reaction papers (30%), attendance and participation in class (10%), and the course paper (60%). Final grades are recorded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>≥ 98%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-97%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
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</tbody>
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Grades as calculated are final. There will be no extra credit. Additionally, I do not raise grades due to job or scholarship requirements, or simply because a student was close to receiving a higher grade. I will typically not respond to emails asking for this type of preferential treatment. Of course, I am willing to double-check for errors in grade calculations. Finally, I typically do not accept late assignments without (1) a credible excuse for delay and (2) advance notice that an extension is needed.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the ASU Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy. Should I determine that a violation has occurred, I will determine whether the seriousness of the situation warrants (1) a penalty to the assignment, up to assigning a score of 0 for the work, (2) a penalty to the course, up to assigning an ‘F,’ or (3) a more severe penalty in accordance with the approved university procedure.

**Accommodating Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to participate fully in this class, contact Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services.

**Class Behavior**

This course will, at times, involve the discussion of controversial and sensitive ideas. Students should treat everyone with respect. Try to extend the benefit of the doubt to those who hold opinions contrary to your own. The instructor is expected to facilitate learning, to answer questions appropriately, to be fair and objective in grading, to provide timely and useful feedback on assignments, and to treat students as he would like to be treated in their place. Given the unusual circumstances of our current pandemic, I ask that everyone be understanding if some students face occasional interruptions from, e.g., children or pets. Please let me know if you face any difficulties participating in the course.
Title IX Statement

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources here.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services here.

Schedule

Note: In addition to the required material, you will find supplemental readings that flesh out each topic for those who want to learn more. I browsed through the CVs of SPGS faculty and listed studies that are related to our course material, indicating SPGS authors with square ■ bullets. For students pursuing or considering a PhD at ASU, I recommend checking out research by faculty with whom you might like to work. I also list a number of seminal works from the IR canon at the end of the syllabus.

Week 1 (January 12): Course introduction

No required reading

Week 2 (January 19): The field of IR

Required


Supplemental


**Week 3 (January 26): The scientific approach to IR**

**Required**


• Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14 (3): 227-249.

**Supplemental**


**Week 4 (February 2): Constructivism and critical approaches to IR**

**Required**


**Supplemental**


**Week 5 (February 9): International conflict processes**

**Required**


**Supplemental**


**Week 6 (February 16): International cooperation**

**Required**


**Supplemental**


**Week 7 (February 23): Bargaining and information**

**Required**


**Supplemental**
Week 8 (March 2): Research proposal presentations

No required reading

Project proposal due (uploaded to Canvas) by 1 PM

Week 9 (March 9): Past actions and reputation

Required


Supplemental

Week 10 (March 16): Regime type

Required


Supplemental


Week 11 (March 23): Domestic preferences

Required


Supplemental


Week 12 (March 30): The domestic consequences of international economics

Required


Supplemental


Week 13 (April 6): International economics and international politics

Required


Supplemental


Week 14 (April 13): Civil conflict

Required


Supplemental


Week 15 (April 20): Research project presentations
No required reading

Final paper due (uploaded to Canvas) on Tuesday, April 27 at 1 PM

Classics to Know
Note: some of these are repeats from the supplemental readings


