

POLS Y219: INTRO TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Course Description

In this course, we will study international relations by examining the interactions between actors with different interests, ideas, constraints, and motivations. We will conduct a historical overview of international politics, examine the causes and consequences of armed conflict, consider economic development and global finance, review the roles of international institutions, and explore how and why decisions are made. We will critically engage with a wide array of topics through lectures, readings, discussions, and different assignments that will allow us to analyze global politics through different perspectives.

Course Objectives

- Examine international developments using analytic tools, historical context, and competing theories.
- Explain dynamic tensions between different actors within global politics
- Practically apply critical thinking skills by engaging in simulations of real-world events.
- Develop an understanding of the forces that influence nations, organizations, and individuals politically, economically, professionally, and personally.

Textbook

Essentials of International Relations (8th Ed) by Mingst, McKibben, Arreguin-Toft

Statecraft Simulation

This semester, we will be engaging in an interactive simulation. Students both collaborate and compete to execute their country's strategy, balancing both domestic and international factors to care for their citizens and navigate global issues.

Assignment	Points
Statecraft Memos	
Memo #1	25
Memo #2	25
Memo #3	25
Memo #4	25
Memo #5	50
Statecraft Performance Score	150
Diplomacy Dossiers	
Dossier #1	200
Dossier #2	200
UN Policy Presentation	100
UN Policy Brief	100
Attendance & Participation	100
TOTAL	1000

WEEK 1

Wednesday	
Topic	Welcome!
Readings	Syllabus and Canvas
Assignment	None
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please introduce yourself in our “introduction” thread.• Familiarize yourself with the syllabus, announcements, and Canvas.• Rent a copy of our textbook, if you have not already done so.• Register an account for our Statecraft Simulation

WEEK 2

Monday	
Topic	Introduction to IR
Readings	Essentials 3-17

Wednesday	
Topic	Historical Context of Contemporary IR
Readings	Essentials 19-64

WEEK 3

Monday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making IR Decisions• Looking ahead to diplomacy simulations in POLS Y219
Readings	Essentials 157-184
Notes	Supplemental Reading: IR Theories - Essentials 73-89, 92-98 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Realism/Neorealism: 73-80• Liberalism/Neoliberalism: 81-86• Constructivism: 86-89, 92• Marxism: 93-94• Feminist critique: 96-98

Wednesday	
Topic	Statecraft Prep Session
Notes	Statecraft Simulation Begins next week. Name your country, choose your government type, choose your attributes, take your first manual quiz, etc.

WEEK 4

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #1 (Pop-Up Case - 2025: Preparing for the Next Pandemic)
Readings	Essentials 409-417
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Security: Migration, Global Health, and the Environment • Statecraft: Turn 0 Check-In
Readings	Essentials 403-408, 417-441

WEEK 5

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #2 (Pop-Up Case – 2021: Uighur Repression in Xinjiang)
Readings	Essentials 367-375, 377-390
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights • Statecraft: Turn 1 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 390-398

WEEK 6

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #3 (UNSC: Global Climate Change Policy)
Assignment	Statecraft Memo #1
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	Statecraft: Turn 2 Strategy Session

WEEK 7

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #4 (UNSC: Humanitarian Intervention in South Sudan)
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Cooperation and International Law • Statecraft: Turn 3 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 233-238, 246-260

WEEK 8

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #5 (UNSC: Cyber Clash with China)
Assignment	Statecraft Memo #2
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	Statecraft: Turn 4 Strategy Session

WEEK 9

Monday	
Topic	Mid-Semester Check-Up and Q&A
Assignment	Diplomacy Dossier #1

Wednesday	
Topic	Statecraft: Turn 5 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 269-279

WEEK 10

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #6 (UNSC: Collapse in Venezuela)
Assignment	Statecraft Memo #3
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalization and International Political Economy • Statecraft: Turn 6 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 301-314

WEEK 11

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #7 (UNSC: Unrest in Bahrain)
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of War • Statecraft: Turn 7 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 187-205

WEEK 12

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #8 (UNSC: Boko Haram in Nigeria)
Assignment	Statecraft Memo #4
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes of War • Statecraft: Turn 8 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 206-212

WEEK 13

Monday	
Topic	Diplomacy Simulation #9 (UNSC: Dispute in the East China Sea)
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventing War• Statecraft: Turn 9 Strategy Session
Readings	Essentials 212-224
Notes	Statecraft Simulation Ends Friday

WEEK 14

Monday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statecraft Debriefing/Discussion• Diplomacy Simulation #10 (UNSC: North Korean Nuclear Threat)
Assignment	Statecraft Memo #5
Notes	Review simulation prep materials before class

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting on War & Depictions of War in Hollywood• Hold for UN Policy Presentations
Readings	Video: The Art of (Anti) War Video: How Being a War Reporter Got Me Kidnapped... Twice

WEEK 15

Monday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID and Lessons for IR• Hold for UN Policy Presentations
Readings	Video: COVID 2025: Changing the Rules of International Relations
Assignment	Diplomacy Dossier #2

Wednesday	
Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System Change• Course wrap-up• Hold for Issue Presentations
Readings	Article: Applied Empathy – The Secret to System Change
Assignment	UN Policy Presentations & UN Policy Briefs (Last day to present and submit)
Notes	End of Course