

# **PSC/IR 106: Introduction to International Relations**

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Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-9:50

Office Hours: Wednesdays, Harkness TBD , 2:15-4:15

International relations is the study of how states interact with each other. This course builds a working knowledge of our field, introducing the background, theoretical, and empirical tools necessary to understand international relations today. Students will learn about important findings in a variety of subfields, including war, international political economy, institutions, and nuclear proliferation. To do so, the course emphasizes readings from original research material rather than from a textbook. Further, students will solve problem sets and work with common international relations datasets to obtain a working understanding of the discipline's methodological foundations.

## **Course Materials**

Blackboard is difficult to work with. Thus, I will post all course materials on my website: [scottfabramson.com](http://scottfabramson.com). Most importantly, this includes links to required readings and PDFs of lecture slides

There are no required books for this course. However, students may find it useful to purchase *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions* as a reference textbook. Amazon has [rental copies](#) for under \$30.

## **Recitation**

This class has weekly recitations in place of the scheduled Friday lecture. We will meet in class on the first Friday (9/4) to assign you to a teaching assistant. Recitations are mandatory and constitute a large portion of your grade. There will be no leniency for students attending lecture but not recitation.

## **Evaluation**

Grades have three components: six problem sets, recitation, and a final exam. The problem sets are worth 10%. Each will test your ability to think strategically about basic problems in international relations and will ask you to become familiar with IR's common datasets. Recitation is worth 15% and will be based on attendance and participation, as your teaching assistant will further detail. The final exam is cumulative and worth 25%.

### **Late Work**

Absent any university regulations that provide exceptions, no late work will be accepted under any circumstance. This is because I will go over the correct answers in class.

### **Teaching Assistant Recitation and Office Hours**

*TBD*

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. You alone are responsible for attending lecture and checking the website to stay up-to-date.

## Readings and Schedule

The readings and schedule are subject to change, pending international crises and how fast we move through the material. Please see the website for links to the readings and an up-to-date schedule. All reading should be completed before lecture.

### Topic 1: Introduction & Goals of the Course

(8/31)

["Questions about Questions" \(Intro to Mostly Harmless\)](#)

["A Game Theory of International Politics"](#)

And for fun (e.g. not mandatory):

[THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL: The Origins of Positive Political Theory](#)

### Topic 2: Anarchy, Hierarchy and the State

(9/2, 9/7)

*The Theory of International Politics*. Chapter 6 (skim)

*Power and Prosperity*. Chapter 1

[A Theory of the Origins of the State](#)

[Sovereignty](#)

[War Making and State Making as Organized Crime](#)

[Why Africa's Weak States Persist](#)

### Topic 2: Basic Models of Conflict and Cooperation

(9/9, 9/14)

["The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War"](#)

*The Evolution of Cooperation*. [Chapter 1](#) and [Chapter 4](#).

[Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation](#)

**9/16 - Pset 1 is Due**

**Topic 3: The Bargaining Model of War**

**(9/16, 9/21, 9/23)**

[“Rationalist Explanations for War”](#)

[The Rationality of War](#). Chapter 2.

[Exploring the Bargaining Model of War](#)

[Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy](#)

**(9/28) - Pset 2 is Due**

**Topic 4: International Trade (9/28, 9/30)**

Principles of Economics Chapter 3. INTERDEPENDENCE AND THE GAINS FROM TRADE

[Political Cleavages and Changing Exposure to Trade](#)

[Trading in Illusions](#)

[Transforming Nations: How the WTO Boosts Economies and Opens Societies](#)

**For the Empirically Adventurous:**

[Does Trade Cause Growth?](#)

**Topic 5: The Democratic Peace (10/7, 10/12)**

[“The Capitalist Peace”](#)

[An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace](#)

[Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach](#)

**(10/14)- Pset 3 is Due**

**Topic 6: Leader-Based Explanations (10/14, 10/19)**

[“International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still Ex Post Inefficient?”](#)

[“Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War”](#)

**Topic 7: Economic Sanctions (10/21, 10/26)**

[“Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?”](#)

[“The Microfoundations of Economic Sanctions”](#)

**(10/28) - Pset 4 is Due**

**Topic 8: Foreign Aid (10/28, 11/2)**

[“The Political Economy of IMF Lending in Africa”](#)

[“Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?”](#)

[“The Politics of Effective Foreign Aid.”](#)

[“Effective Foreign Aid Following Civil War: The Nonstrategic-Desperation Hypothesis”](#)

**Topic 9: International Intervention (11/4, 11/9)**

[“The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement”](#)

[“Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature”](#)

[“Interstate Peacekeeping: Causal Mechanisms and Empirical Effects.”](#)

**(11/11) Pset 5 Due**

**Topic 10: International Institutions (11/11,11/16)**

["The Rational Design of International Institutions"](#)

*Controlling Institutions. Chapter 1.*

[International Institutions and Compliance with Agreements](#)

**Topic 11: The United Nations (11/18, 11/23)**

["How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations"](#)

**Topic 12: Terrorism (11/30, 12/2)**

["Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence"](#)

["An Analytical History of Terrorism"](#)

["The Strategies of Terrorism"](#)

["The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism"](#)

**(12/9) - Pset 6 Due**

**Wrap Up & Review (12/9)**

**Final Exam: Date TBD**