INTL 6200: Pre-Seminar in International Relations

Wednesdays, 9:10 to 12:10
Peabody Hall 105

Fall 2023

Dr. Amanda Murdie
IA Building, Room 327
Email: murdie@uga.edu
Office Hours: 10:00 am to noon Fridays and other times by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

International Relations (IR) is a rich academic subfield of political science with many practical applications for those interested in foreign affairs and international policy. This course serves as a baseline graduate-level introduction to the current state-of-the-art in IR and a somewhat abbreviated review of the history of the subfield. The Department of International Affairs at UGA offers two different versions of this course; you are taking the course designed for Master of International Policy students. As such, although you might eventually go into academia, your future is likely to include policy-relevant work in foreign affairs, perhaps working on issues of nuclear non-proliferation, export controls, international energy, foreign policy, human security, and/or human rights. The learning objectives of this course have been designed with your future career in mind. At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- understand the current landscape of IR,
- analyze state-of-the-art IR research,
- apply existing IR theory to new issues and situations,
- translate academic IR arguments into real-world situations in order to build practical solutions, and
- design policy based on IR research.

I’m excited to try something different this semester! Most IR syllabi go over a staple of old literature that doesn’t actually reflect the state-of-the-art research today. I’m going to privilege the “new” over the “old” this year, with the idea that I can sufficiently address the old literature in discussion while giving you the opportunity to better acquaint yourself with the state-of-the-art. As a result, this syllabus might look quite different than old syllabi for this course or syllabi from other institutions. Don’t worry, that’s by design. I’m convinced that I can better prepare you for your new careers if we focus on where the field is headed more than rehearsing where the field has been. As an added bonus, you’ll have a much better grasp on how to read today’s IR research.

1Colgan (2016), as you’ll read later, makes this point, albeit with a somewhat different conclusion than I am making.
Grading

Your course grade is calculated from the following components:

- **55%** - Extension and Application Essays - 3 times during semester
- **10%** - Group Discussion Leader Presentation
- **25%** - Analytical Literature Review
- **10%** - Active Participation

Extension and Application Essays

The overarching goal of this course is to give you experience with the current IR research such that you could apply IR research to current political events. In order to aid in achieving this goal, at three different times in the semester, I want you to find an outside news story within the past year that somehow relates to the topic of the reading. In a five to seven page double spaced (one-inch margins, 12-point font) paper, provide a brief overview of the story and then discuss how it relates to the current literature assigned for the week. In your essay, you must present at least one way that the current political event can draw on the lessons learned from the literature read for that week and at least one way where the news story presents an unanswered question for future research or further literature review. Essays must be turned in by **11:59 pm on the Tuesday night prior to the topic being discussed in class (in an assignment dropbox on eLC)**. At least one essay is due by October 10. Your second essay must be completed by November 7. Your final essay is due November 28. You can complete all essays earlier than these due dates. A rubric is attached to this syllabus.

Group Discussion Leader Presentation

Each week, two to three students will serve as discussion openers for the class, providing a joint 15 minute presentation on the key lessons from the readings and opening us up for discussion. The goal of this assignment is to help you learn to distill and present academic arguments to a broad audience. As the instructor, I might have my own presentation on key concepts each week, but your presentation will serve as our opening discussion. We will get a schedule of presenters together during the first class. Presentation slides must be turned in by **11:59 pm on the Tuesday night prior to the topic being discussed in class (in an assignment dropbox on eLC)**. A rubric is attached to this syllabus.

Analytical Literature Review

Your career will likely involve you collecting research on a specific topic and creating a summary of the state-of-the-art, also focusing on the questions or puzzles that remain for future work. To help you develop this skill, I would like you to pick an IR topic of your choice and review the current academic literature on the topic. What do we know about this topic? What does current research in this area look like? What themes emerged in the literature you have read? What questions remain for future work? At the end of the literature review, you must include a section where you address unanswered questions for future research. The full paper should be short, ideally no longer than ten to twelve pages (double spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font). Your analytical literature review could be useful for a briefing to a policy official or could be used as a launching point for future research.

Conflict Resolution, Foreign Policy Analysis, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Journal of Global Security Studies, International Studies Review, British Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, and Political Research Quarterly. There are more journals than just this short list that will work for the assignment, but the work you review must be from peer-reviewed journals or books in political science, ideally in journals or books that specialize in international relations.

You must get your topic approved by me by October 18, ideally following a brief meeting (during office hours or by appointment). In lieu of class on November 15th, we will have a class-period based check-in/check-up for all students. The final project is due December 11th by 11:59 pm (in an assignment dropbox on eLC). A rubric is attached to this syllabus.

Active Participation

I have also allotted 10% of your grade to participation. To receive full credit for the participation component of this grade, simply come to class after having completed all the readings for the week and offer your insights and questions during the class. You will receive full credit for this portion of your grade if it is clear that you actually read and reflected on the readings. Offering tangential or off-topic comments will harm your grade. Feel free to come see me as to your participation grade.

A note on participation:

Your active participation is very important. Always feel free to state your opinions in a way that invites discussion. No outside knowledge of international relations or political science scholarship, of history, or of current events will be necessary for effective class participation. Discussion of other scholarship, history, and current events will certainly be welcome when they are relevant, but careful reading of the materials assigned for this course and concentrated thinking about the ideas raised in class will be a sufficient basis from which to contribute profitably to class discussion. The first step toward participating in class is attending class.

Grading Scale:

Your final grade will be calculated on the following scale:

- 94 to 100 - A
- 90 to 93.9 - A-
- 87 to 89.9 - B+
- 84 to 86.9 - B
- 80 to 83.9 - B-
- 77 to 79.9 - C+
- 74 to 76.9 - C
- 70 to 73.9 - C-
- 60 to 69.9 - D
- 59 and below - F
Useful Information and University Policies

Attendance and Missing Class

I realize you are adults with rich and full lives outside of class. As such, I do not have an attendance policy, *per se*. You are solely responsible for getting any materials you miss. However, it’s **very** hard to get the participation points if you aren’t in class. Also, please refer to the UGA class attendance policy: [https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance/](https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance/)

Preferred Name and Pronouns

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance/)

“Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.”

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance/)

“In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.”

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://provost.uga.edu/policies/academic-affairs-policy-manual/4-06-class-attendance/)

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [www.uga.edu/ovpi](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi).

I expect that the Student Honor Code will guide your efforts in this course. A lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy does not explain a violation. Please email me with any questions.
Changes to the Syllabus Could Occur

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html):

“The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.”

FERPA Statement

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html):

“The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar’s explanation at [www.reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/](https://www.reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/). FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.”

Disability Services

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html):

“If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting [http://drc.uga.edu](http://drc.uga.edu)

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html):

“Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.”

I want to help all students succeed in this course!

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The following is taken verbatim from [LINK](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html):

“If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit [https://sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu). They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services ([https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga)) or crisis support ([https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies)). If you need help managing stress, anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA ([https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga)) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.”

Some material in this course contains references to violence. I urge you to take your mental health seriously. There are campus resources to [help](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html).

Useful Campus Resources

There are many campus resources that can help you with your academic performance and assist you during the semester. I urge you to check out the [Division of Academic Enhancement](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html) and the [Writing Center](https://www.reg.uga.edu/overview/syllabus.html).
Course Readings

No book purchases are necessary for this class. All of the readings come from academic journal articles and book chapters. If the readings cannot be easily downloaded from Google Scholar on campus, readings can be found on the eLearningCommons page for this course. I expect you to have completed the readings before coming to each week's class. When doing all of your readings, it works best to identify each reading's research question, theory, hypotheses, empirical analysis, and conclusion. Also, try to identify one or two problems or questions you have with the work. I remember readings best when I've actually taken the time to write out some notes; it might work for you, too.

Class Outline

Class 1 (August 16th): Introduction to Course and Course Set Up


Class 2 (August 24th): Practical Building Blocks for Understanding Current IR Research

- Strategic Choice and International Relations. 1999. Edited by David A. Lake and Robert Powell.

Class 3 (August 30th): History of IR and the Role of the “Isms”


Class 4 (September 6th): Recent Discussions on IR and Race, Gender, and Global Inequalities


Class 5 (September 13th): IR Puzzles - Interstate War


• Harden, John P. 2021. "All the world’s a stage: US presidential narcissism and international conflict." *International Studies Quarterly* 65(3): 825-837.

• McManus, Roseanne W. 2021 "Crazy like a fox? Are leaders with reputations for madness more successful at international coercion?" *British Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 275-293.
Class 6 (September 20th): IR Puzzles - Intrastate Conflict and Terrorism


Class 7 (September 27th): IR Puzzles - Rise of International Organizations and Treaties


Class 8 (October 4th): IR Puzzles - International Norms, Human Rights, and Human Security


Class 9 (October 11th): IR Puzzles - Nuclear Weapons


Class 10 (October 18th): IR Puzzles - International Trade, Investment, and Migration


No Class October 25th: Dr. Murdie in Brussels for Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO) Research Panels

Class 11 (November 1st): IR Puzzles - Environment


Class 12 (November 8th): IR Puzzles - Global Health


- A selection from a special issue of *International Organization*:


Class 13 (November 15th): Research Paper Check-Up/Check-In

No Class November 22nd: UGA Holiday - Thanksgiving

Class 14 (November 29th): Wrapping It All Up: Rigor and/or Relevance?


Extension and Application Essays Instructions and Rubric

**Instructions:** Find an outside news story within the past year that somehow relates to the topic of the readings for the week. In a five to seven page double spaced (one-inch margins, 12-point font) paper, provide a brief overview of the new story and then discuss how it relates to all of the readings assigned for the week. In your essay, you must present at least one way that the current political event can draw on the lessons learned from the literature read for that week and at least one way where the news story presents an unanswered question for future research or further literature review. **Essays must be turned in by 11:59 pm on the Tuesday night prior to the topic being discussed in class (in an assignment dropbox on eLC). At least one essay is due by October 10. Your second essay must be completed by November 7. Your final essay is due November 28. You can complete all essays earlier than these due dates.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Unacceptable (0 Points)</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent Full Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and Outline a News Story Related to the Week's Readings (5 points)</td>
<td>fails to provide a news story related to the week's readings 0 POINTS</td>
<td>a news story is provided, but not outlined or outlined incorrectly 2 POINTS</td>
<td>a news story is provided and outlined, some small errors in outline 4 POINTS</td>
<td>a news story is provided and outlined sufficiently 5 POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis - Connections to Week's Readings (5 points)</td>
<td>the essay shows a limited understanding of the week's readings 0 POINTS</td>
<td>weak connections to the week's readings, at least one of the readings is missed 2 POINTS</td>
<td>the essay provides connections to each of the week's readings in a somewhat superficial or unconnected way 4 POINTS</td>
<td>the essay connects the news story to each of the week's readings in a way that illustrates that the readings were sufficiently understood and synthesized 5 POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application - Discussion of at Least One Way Current Political Event Could Draw on Lessons Learned from the Readings (5 points)</td>
<td>no application of lessons learned provided in the essay 0 POINTS</td>
<td>an application of lessons learned is attempted but incomplete 2 POINTS</td>
<td>the essay provides a concrete application of the readings to the current political event, application may be weak or underspecified 4 POINTS</td>
<td>the essay provides a concrete application of the readings to the current political event, application shows deep understanding and ability to apply the lessons from the scholarly literature 5 POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application - Discussion of at Least One Unanswered Question from the Current Political Event for Future Research/Literature Review (5 points)</td>
<td>no question for future research is provided 0 POINTS</td>
<td>a question is attempted but incomplete 2 POINTS</td>
<td>the essay provides a question for future research, although the question may be underdeveloped 4 POINTS</td>
<td>the essay provides a thoughtful and thorough question for future research that draws on the news story and week's readings 5 POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content &amp; Vocabulary (3 points)</td>
<td>vocabulary for course missing 0 POINTS</td>
<td>vocabulary for course only &quot;name-dropped&quot; 1 POINT</td>
<td>vocabulary presented but not discussed sufficiently 2 POINTS</td>
<td>vocabulary presented in a coherent manner 3 POINTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanics (2 points)</td>
<td>distracting errors and/or completely too long or too short 0 POINTS</td>
<td>a few overlooked errors 0.33 POINTS</td>
<td>writing style could improve and/or slightly too long or too short 0.66 POINTS</td>
<td>well-written and correct length 1 POINT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Group Discussion Leader Presentation Instructions and Rubric

**Instructions:** Each week, two to three students will serve as discussion openers for the class, providing a joint 15 minute presentation on the key lessons from the readings and opening us up for discussion. The goal of this assignment is to help you learn to distill and present academic arguments to a broad audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent Full Credit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review of Readings and Identification of Lessons Learned</strong> (10 points)</td>
<td>Significant failure to identify or understand reading 0 POINTS</td>
<td>Attempts to outline readings, but serious issues/inaccuracies identified 4 POINTS</td>
<td>Presents the readings; some minor issues with understanding 8 POINTS</td>
<td>Students shows advanced understanding of readings for the week 10 POINTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Questions and Answers to Any Questions from Professor and Class</strong> (3 points)</td>
<td>Unable to answer basic questions from professor and/or class as to the readings; discussion questions either not provided or completely off topic 0 POINTS</td>
<td>Discussion questions or answers to questions from professor and/or class show some serious issues with understanding the reading 1 POINT</td>
<td>Discussion questions provided, answers to questions from professor and/or class show some minor issues with the reading 2 POINTS</td>
<td>Provides thoughtful discussion questions for the class and clear, answers to any questions asked 3 POINTS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation Skills</strong> (2 points)</td>
<td>Presentation seriously distracts from content 0 POINTS</td>
<td>Presenters have major presentation issues to work on 1 POINT</td>
<td>Professional presentation is attempted but minor issues remain 1.5 POINTS</td>
<td>Professional presentation, all group members involved, does not go over 15 minutes and is not under 13 minutes 2 POINTS</td>
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Analytical Literature Review Instructions and Rubric

**Instructions:** Pick an IR topic or research question of your choice and review the current academic literature on the topic. Your literature review should discuss the current state of understanding related to the question or topic. What do we know about this topic? What does current research in this area look like? What themes emerged in the literature you have read? You must include references to at least 20 academic peer-reviewed pieces. At the end of the literature review, you must include a section where you outline unanswered questions for future research. The full paper should be short, ideally no longer than ten to twelve pages (double spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font), not including references or work cited page.

**Note:** By academic literature, I’m referring to literature published in peer-reviewed journals like *International Studies Quarterly, International Organization, Journal of Peace Research, International Security, Security Studies, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Foreign Policy Analysis, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Journal of Global Security Studies, International Studies Review, British Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, and Political Research Quarterly*. There are more journals than just this short list that will work for the assignment, but the work you review must be from peer-reviewed journals or books in political science, ideally in journals or books that specialize in international relations. You must get your topic approved by me by October 18, ideally following a brief meeting (during office hours or by appointment). The final project is due December 11th by 11:59 pm (in an assignment dropbox on eLC).

A helpful how-to guide to literature reviews is included online. Also check out: [http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/literature-reviews/](http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/literature-reviews/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Performance Description</th>
<th>Performance Level</th>
<th>Comments on Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Research Question or Topic</td>
<td>5 = clearly identifies a research question or topic, research question or topic is presented in a concise and insightful manner</td>
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<td>4 = acceptably identifies a research question consistent with topic</td>
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<td>3 = somewhat difficult to identify what the research question is and/or how it relates to the identified topic</td>
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<td>2 = significant failure to state a research question or identify a topic</td>
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<td>1 = complete failure to state a research question or identify a topic</td>
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<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>20 = outlines the existing social scientific literature on the topic, using at least 20 different academic sources, shows how question/topic has or has not been addressed in the existing literature, discusses the literature in a coherent, integrated, and connected manner, identifying themes from the literature</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16 = uses the required source materials but treatment somewhat lacks connection and integration [ie literature review could be provided only in a chronological way, major connections are inadequately addressed]</td>
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<td>12 = does not use the required number of academic sources but does attempt to connect the literature</td>
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<td>8 = uses the required source materials but complete lack of connection and integration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0 = complete failure to provide a coherent literature review with the required number of sources</td>
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<td>Discussion of What Questions Remain / Where Future Work Needs to Focus</td>
<td>10 = provides a clear and logical argument about the state of the literature and questions that remain, discusses approaches or difficulties with future research</td>
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<td>8 = argument presented but underdeveloped</td>
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<td>6 = argument is provided but justifications are weak and unclear</td>
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<td>4 = significant failure to discuss what questions remain for future work</td>
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<tr>
<td>0 = complete failure to discuss future work</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>5 = writing style adds to the overall quality of the paper, citation style is consistent, between 10-12 pages (not including reference/work cited page)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 = minor problems with citation, spelling, grammar, or sentence structure, between 10-12 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 = writing mechanics detract from the quality of the paper, between 10-12 pages</td>
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<td>2 = serious writing and citation errors</td>
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<td>1 = writing and citation errors too numerous for graduate work</td>
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<tr>
<th>Followed all steps for feedback during semester &amp; Assignment turned in on time</th>
<th>5 = Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = No</td>
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<tr>
<th>Additional Comments:</th>
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| Final Grade: | 15 |