

INTL 3200E: Introduction to International Relations

University of Georgia, Department of International Affairs, Summer 2025

Course Instructor: Dr. William Acosta

Contact Info: williamacosta@uga.edu

Office Hours: Appointment via Zoom

Course Overview

This course explores foundational questions in international relations, including: When do states go to war? When do states choose to cooperate? By examining scientific approaches to topics such as war, terrorism, political economy, human rights, and environmental protection, students will develop a broad understanding of the forces that shape global politics. Given the current global environment, where interstate conflict has become a central concern in international affairs, this version of the course places added emphasis on the causes, expansion, and resolution of armed conflict. This adjustment reflects the urgent relevance of these issues and prepares students for further study and engagement in the field.

Sections:

1. Foundations of International Relations
2. Understanding Conflict
3. International Political Economy

Required Text and Materials

- All necessary materials will be distributed for free via eLC.
- Current Events: Regularly follow global news for class discussions.

Grading Breakdown

Over the course of the semester, you will complete four short papers, each focused on the topic assigned for that week. Detailed descriptions and instructions for each assignment are available on eLC. Each paper will be worth 25 percent of your final grade, for a total of 100 percent across all four papers.

Each week, you will also have the opportunity to complete an optional extra credit assignment. These assignments involve reporting on a current event related to international affairs and connecting it to course concepts. Each extra credit assignment is worth up to 2 points, which will be added to your grade for that week's paper. You may only apply one extra credit assignment per paper. Extra credit points do not carry over or stack across multiple weeks.

Grade Scale

- A = 95-100
- A- = 90-94
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 80-86
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 70-76
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 60-66
- F = 0-59

Online Course Format

This course is completely online. All materials are online and available through eLC. This course is asynchronous, and you can work on the materials on your own schedule throughout the week, but each assignment has a deadline.

The course consists of four modules, one for each week of the four-week long course. Each module follows a specific theme.

1. Foundations of International Relations
2. Understanding War and Conflict Part 1
3. Understanding War and Conflict Part 2
4. Introduction to International Political Economy

Each week will include a set of assigned readings. Please note that this is a reading-intensive course, and consistent engagement with the material is essential for success. In addition to the readings, I will provide a recorded lecture that explains the central concepts for the week. Each module will conclude with a documentary that introduces a case study or issue related to that week's topic. This documentary will serve as the foundation for your weekly essay assignment.

Discussion Board

Because we will not be meeting in person, I will create a discussion board each week where you can post questions related to the course material or current events. Think of this as the online equivalent of raising your hand in class. This is also a good place to ask general questions about the weekly paper. If your question is something that could benefit other students as well, please post it on the discussion board. If your question is specific to your situation or involves personal academic concerns, please contact me directly by email.

Course Guidelines

1. Check eLC regularly for updates on the course.

2. Assignments are due on the dates and times given. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is late. After 5 days, the work will be maxed out at 50%.
3. If you need extensions, please inform me via email. If you tell me in person I will forget.
4. Be respectful to one another. I will not tolerate students being disrespectful or making others uncomfortable. We will discuss controversial topics in this class. Passion is fine but respect is necessary. Furthermore, only one person speaks at a time. Do not interrupt or speak over each other.
5. As a University of Georgia student, you are expected to adhere to the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must comply with the standards outlined in "A Culture of Honesty," which can be found at: [UGA Academic Honesty Policy](#). Ignorance of the academic honesty policy is not an acceptable excuse for violations. If you have questions related to course assignments or the academic honesty policy, please direct them to the instructor. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be referred to Judicial Affairs, as mandated by university policy.
6. Avoid using generative AI. While AI has its uses, particularly in creating reference pages, it creates sloppy work.
7. It is the policy and practice of the University of Georgia to create an inclusive learning environment. Students requiring accommodations should discuss such matters with the me at the outset of the course. Students requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center on campus (706-542-8719, <http://www.drc.uga.edu>).

8. UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.
9. Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
10. Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
11. University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
12. Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
13. Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
14. Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu
15. Any exceptions to or modifications to these rules or the syllabus are given at my discretion.
16. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Weekly Schedule

Module 1 Foundations of International Relations

- Topic 1: What is Science
 - Quackenbush (2015), pages 1-16
- Topic 2: Introduction to Realism
 - Waltz (2018), Chapter 3: “The Third Image”
 - Mearsheimer (2019): “Bound to Fail”
- Topic 3: Introduction to Liberalism
 - Fukuyama (1989): “The End of History?”

- Nye (2016): “Will the Liberal Order Survive?”
- Topic 4: Gulf War Documentary
 - Final Paper due July 11th at 11:59pm via eLC.

Module 2: How Wars Start

- Quackenbush Chapters, 3, 4, 5, & 7
- Outbreak of WW1 Documentary
- Essay due July 18th at 11:59pm.

Module 3: The Process of War

- Quackenbush Chapters 10, 11, & 12
- Iraq-Iran War Documentary
- Essay due July 25th at 11:59pm.

Module 4: Introduction to International Political Economy

- Frieden and Lake (2000) Chapters 1, 2, 14, 28
- Trump’s Trade War (2016)
- Essay due August 1st at 11:59pm.