

Introduction to Global Issues

INTL 1100

University of Georgia • Fall 2026 • Tuesday & Thursday
School of Public and International Affairs

Section 42717: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:15–9:35 • Candler Hall 214
Section 61748: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:55–11:15 • Candler Hall 214
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Office: Candler Hall 216
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This course is an entry point to the study of world politics design for students with no prior background in political science or international relations. We begin by asking a deceptively simple question: what is the international system, and who are the actors within it? From there, we examine the major theoretical frameworks scholars use to explain why states cooperate, why they fight, and why some global problems prove so difficult to solve.

Two extended historical simulations anchor the course. In the first, students step into the Yalta Conference of 1945 and negotiate the postwar order at the moment of its creation. In the second, they inhabit the United Nations Security Council during the Rwandan genocide of 1994, debating intervention as events unfold in real time. These simulations are not exercises in nostalgia. They serve as laboratories for understanding the pressures, tradeoffs, and constraints that shape political decisions, both then and now.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Recall key concepts in international affairs, including the international system, sovereignty, anarchy, and the principal actors in world politics.
- Identify and compare the characteristics of major political systems and the theoretical frameworks used in international relations and comparative politics.
- Apply theoretical approaches — realism, liberalism, constructivism — to real-world cases and evaluate their explanatory power.
- Describe the causes and consequences of historical and contemporary global events, including WWII-era great-power diplomacy and the 1994 Rwandan genocide.
- Recognize and evaluate quality sources of evidence in the social sciences.
- Articulate and defend positions on global issues through formal writing and public argument.
- Identify the key components of social-scientific research and problem-solving.

Course Materials

There is no textbook required to purchase for this course. All readings are available at no cost and are listed in the Course Reading List section of this document. Readings are also posted to eLC before each session. Students are expected to complete assigned readings before class on the day they are listed.

Reacting to the Past Game Books

This course includes two Reacting to the Past (RTTP) historical simulations. Game books will be distributed in class at no cost. Students are responsible for bringing their game book to every session of the relevant simulation.

- Yalta, 1945: Restoring the World: Security and Empire at Yalta
- Rwanda 1994: The Needs of Others: Human Rights, International Organizations, and Intervention in Rwanda

Technology

A laptop or tablet capable of accessing eLC is recommended. Guidance on technology use during class is provided in the Policies section below.

Assessments and Grading

Component	Weight	Description
Participation and Attendance	30%	<i>Active, prepared engagement in discussion and RTTP gameplay; attendance recorded daily.</i>
Reading Quizzes (4)	20%	<i>Short in-class quizzes; lowest score dropped. Quizzes 1–4 are noted in the schedule.</i>
Short Papers / Reaction Papers (2)	20%	<i>750–1,000 words each; analytical response to a prompt drawing on readings. Due Sessions 4 and 18.</i>
RTTP Game Papers (2)	30%	<i>In-role persuasive writing for Yalta and Rwanda; prompts distributed at Setup Session 1 of each game.</i>
Total	100%	

Grading Scale

A (93–100)	A– (90–92)	B+ (87–89)	B (83–86)	B– (80–82)	C+ (77–79)
C (73–76)	C– (70–72)	D (60–69)	F (< 60)		

Component Descriptions

Participation and Attendance. Attendance is recorded at every class meeting. More than four unexcused absences will reduce the participation grade. Participation is evaluated on the quality of preparation and engagement — asking questions, contributing to discussions, and fulfilling role obligations during the RTTP simulations.

Reading Quizzes (4). Short quizzes administered at the start of designated class meetings, covering the assigned reading for that day. The lowest quiz score will be dropped. No make-ups except for documented excused absences notified in advance or within 24 hours.

Short Papers / Reaction Papers (2). Each paper is 750–1,000 words and responds to a prompt distributed on eLC one week before the due date. Papers should engage directly with assigned course readings; no outside research is required. Submissions are due by 11:59 PM on the date indicated and must be uploaded to eLC as a Word document.

RTTP Game Papers (2). One paper per simulation (Yalta and Rwanda). These are in-role persuasive documents — position papers, speeches, or formal briefs — written from the perspective of your assigned character. Prompts and length requirements are distributed at Setup Session 1 of each game.

Final grades are determined solely by the components listed above. No extra credit is offered. Grades are not rounded up. Re-grade requests must be submitted in writing within one week of the grade being posted.

Course Policies

Attendance

Regular attendance is required and is a component of the course grade. Excused absences include documented illness, university-sponsored activities, religious observances, and family emergencies. Please notify me by email before the session when possible. Because this is a Tuesday/Thursday course, each missed class represents a larger proportion of contact time than in an MWF course — make-up opportunities are limited. RTTP game sessions are particularly difficult to recover from; students who anticipate a conflict should contact me as early as possible.

Late Work

Papers submitted after the deadline will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day (e.g., B+ becomes B). Work submitted more than one week late will not be accepted without prior approval. Extensions may be granted for documented emergencies if requested before the deadline.

Make-Up Procedures

Reading quizzes may not be made up except in cases of documented excused absence communicated in advance or within 24 hours. RTTP game papers have fixed due dates tied to game progression; extensions require advance arrangement.

Classroom Expectations and Technology

This is a discussion-driven, Socratic course. Students are expected to arrive prepared to contribute. Laptops and tablets are permitted for note-taking and accessing course materials. Phones should be silenced. During RTTP game sessions, in-character behavior is expected; session norms will be explained during each game's setup period.

Reacting to the Past — Student Discomfort

The RTTP simulations require students to advocate for positions they may not personally hold. This is pedagogically intentional: understanding how historical actors reasoned is analytically distinct from endorsing those actors or their positions. Students who have a sincere objection to a specific assigned role should speak with me privately before the game begins. During debate, criticisms must be directed at roles and arguments, not at fellow students as individuals.

Email Policy

I receive a high volume of emails each day and will do my best to respond within 24 hours on weekdays. Emails sent after 5:00 PM may not be seen until the following day, so please plan accordingly and try to contact me before 5:00 PM whenever possible. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please send a polite follow-up email. When emailing me, you must include your course name and section number; emails without this information may experience delays.

Generative AI Policy

Students may use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) for brainstorming, outlining, and generating preliminary feedback on their own drafts. Students may not submit AI-generated text as their own writing.

Any use of an AI tool in preparing a graded assignment must be disclosed at the end of the submission: specify which tool was used and how. Undisclosed AI use will be treated as a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy.

A practical note: the RTTP game papers require writing in the specific voice of a historical character at a particular moment in a complex negotiation. AI tools perform poorly at this task. Effective game papers depend on close engagement with the game book and assigned readings.

Required University Policies and Statements

Academic Honesty

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 can be found at honesty.uga.edu. Academic dishonesty in this course includes plagiarism, fabricating sources, submitting work completed for another course without prior approval, and undisclosed use of generative AI.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations should contact the Disability Resource Center (drc.uga.edu) and provide documentation to me within the first two weeks of class, or as soon as the need arises.

Disclaimer

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

FERPA Notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain rights with respect to their educational records. See reg.uga.edu for details. Grade information will not be shared with any third party without your written consent.

UGA Well-Being Resources

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach (SCO) at 706-542-8479 or sco.uga.edu.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): caps.uga.edu • 24/7 crisis line: 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion / Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Accessibility and Testing: accessibility.uga.edu

Student Success Resources

The Office for Student Success and Achievement (OSSA) offers free peer tutoring, academic coaching, and first-generation student support. Contact OSSA at ossa@uga.edu, 706-542-0163, or visit Milledge Hall.

Course Schedule

Complete all readings before the session for which they are assigned. Reading numbers correspond to the Course Reading List. **Paper 1 due: Session 4 (Aug. 27). Paper 2 due: Session 18 (Oct. 15). Withdrawal Deadline: Nov. 11. Last Day of Class: Dec. 1. Final Exams: Dec. 3–9.**

Session	Topic / Reading	Due
Unit 1 — Foundations of Global Politics		
1 Aug 18 Tue	Course Introduction: What Are Global Issues?	
2 Aug 20 Thu	The International System: Sovereignty, Anarchy, and Actors [1] UN Charter, Preamble + Arts. 1–2	
3 Aug 25 Tue	Theoretical Frameworks I: Realism and Liberalism [2] Mearsheimer, “False Promise” [pp. 5–26]	Quiz 1
4 Aug 27 Thu	Theoretical Frameworks II: Constructivism and Research Methods [3] Wendt, “Anarchy” [pp. 391–410] + [4] Dahl	Paper 1 due
Reacting to the Past — Yalta, 1945: Restoring the World: Security and Empire at Yalta		
5 Sep 1 Tue	Yalta Setup Session 1: WWII Context; Introducing the Game Game book: Parts 1 and 2	Game books distributed; roles assigned
6 Sep 3 Thu	Yalta Setup Session 2: Factions, Victory Objectives, and Role Preparation Game book: role sheet + core texts	Game reading due
7 Sep 8 Tue	Yalta Game Session 1	Game begins
8 Sep 10 Thu	Yalta Game Session 2	
9 Sep 15 Tue	Yalta Game Session 3	
10 Sep 17 Thu	Yalta Game Session 4	
11 Sep 22 Tue	Yalta Game Session 5	
12 Sep 24 Thu	Yalta Debrief: What Happened vs. What Actually Happened?	Yalta game paper due
Unit 2 — The Post-WWII World: Order, Development, and Globalization		
13 Sep 29 Tue	The Post-WWII Order: The United Nations and the Cold War [5] UN Charter, Chs. VI–VII + [6] NSC-68 [Secs. I–III]	
14	Decolonization and Development	

Session	Topic / Reading	Due
Oct 1 Thu	[7] UNGA Res. 1514 (1960) + [8] UNDP HDR 1990, Ch. 1	
15 Oct 6 Tue	Globalization: Causes, Debates, and Consequences [9] Rodrik, “Has Globalization Gone Too Far?” + [10] World Bank, <i>Globalization Exec. Summary</i>	Quiz 2
Unit 3 — Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention		
16 Oct 8 Thu	What Are Human Rights? Origins, the UDHR, and Genocide [11] <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> + [12] <i>Genocide Convention, Arts. I–IX</i> + [13] Lemkin, “Genocide”	Quiz 3
17 Oct 13 Tue	Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect [14] <i>World Summit Outcome</i> , paras. 138–139 + [15] <i>ICISS R2P Executive Summary</i>	
18 Oct 15 Thu	UN Peacekeeping: Principles, History, and Limitations [16] Boutros-Ghali, “An Agenda for Peace” [paras. 1–45]	Paper 2 due
19 Oct 20 Tue	Africa After the Cold War: State Collapse and Genocide [17] Power, “Bystanders to Genocide”	Quiz 4
Reacting to the Past — Rwanda, 1994: The Needs of Others		
20 Oct 22 Thu	<i>Rwanda Setup Session 1: Game Introduction; UN Charter and Genocide Convention</i> <i>Game book: Parts 1, 3, and 4</i>	Game books distributed; roles assigned
21 Oct 27 Tue	<i>Rwanda Setup Session 2: History of the UN and Rwanda; Role Preparation</i> <i>Game book: Part 2 + UN core texts (pp. 82–87)</i>	Game reading due
22 Oct 29 Thu	<i>Rwanda Setup Session 3: Theories of Humanitarian Intervention; Final Role Prep</i> <i>Game book: core texts (pp. 87–145)</i>	
23 Nov 3 Tue	<i>Rwanda Game Session 1: Round 1 — April 7, 1994</i>	Game begins
24 Nov 5 Thu	<i>Rwanda Game Session 2: Round 2 — April 15, 1994</i>	
25 Nov 10 Tue	<i>Rwanda Game Session 3: Round 3 — April 30, 1994</i>	
26 Nov 12 Thu	<i>Rwanda Game Session 4: Round 4 — May 15, 1994</i>	Withdrawal Deadline (Nov. 11)
27 Nov 17 Tue	<i>Rwanda Game Session 5: Round 5 — May 30, 1994</i>	
28 Nov 19 Thu	<i>Rwanda Debrief: What Happened vs. What Actually Happened?</i>	
—	Nov 24 · Tue <i>NO CLASS — Thanksgiving Break</i>	
—	Nov 26 · Thu <i>NO CLASS — Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Unit 4 — Synthesis		
29 Dec 1 Tue	Course Synthesis <i>No new reading</i>	Rwanda game paper due

