

INTL 3200 (CRN: 25983 / Spring 2026)

Introduction to International Relations

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Format: face-to-face.

Meetings: MW, 8:15 a.m.–9:35 a.m. in Baldwin Hall 0322.

Office hours: MW, 9:35 a.m.–11:00 a.m. in Rm. 614 of 110 East Clayton St.

Consistent with University of Georgia policy, this course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Course Description

Practices and problems of international politics in a global context, e.g., power, ideology, diplomacy, war, international organization and law, international economics, and the nature of independence in an interdependent world.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Student Learning Outcomes are as follows:

- By the end of this course, students will be able to recall and apply key concepts in international affairs (e.g., the international system, actors in the international system, the principles of sovereignty and anarchy).

- By the end of this course, students will be able to compare and contrast various political systems and consider their advantages and disadvantages from the perspective of different societal actors.
- By the end of this course, students will be able to explain, critique, and apply the major theoretical approaches and models used within international relations and comparative politics.
- By the end of this course, students will have practice evaluating the causes and effects of historical and contemporary global events, by choosing and applying appropriate theoretical models, interpreting and contextualizing past research findings, and/or analyzing empirical data (qualitative or quantitative).
- By the end of this course, students will be able to locate sources of data and evaluate their credibility and their appropriateness for testing a given theory or hypothesis.
- By the end of this course, students will be able to articulate opinions on certain global issues, informed by the application of theoretical models, research findings, and/or empirical data (qualitative or quantitative).
- By the end of this course, students will be able to express their opinions on certain global issues through formal writing assignments and have the opportunity to revise and refine their writing in response to feedback from the instructor.
- By the end of this course, students will be able to identify the key components of social science research.
- By the end of this course, students will be able to appreciate and analyze policy interdependence—that is, how the choices that one actor or group of actors make (e.g., citizens, firms, countries) affect the lives and decisions of other actors or groups of actors.

Topical Outline

- Foundations of international relations
- States and Nations
- Anarchy
- Conflict
- Cooperation
- Trade
- Interdependence

- International Law
- International Institutions
- Domestic Politics
- Human Rights and Environmental Politics

Course Materials

There is one required textbook for this course: *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions* (Fifth Edition) by Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. I have not requested the campus bookstore to stock it because the book is almost always less costly used, online, or as an ebook. You could also get by with the fourth edition if you find that for a good price. All other readings will be posted to the course website.

Grading and Expectations

Grades

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation (via TopHat): 20%
- Op-ed: 25%
- Midterm: 25%
- Final exam: 30%

Attendance

Attendance is vital to your success this semester. You should come to lecture having read the assigned work closely enough to actively participate in a detailed and critical discussion of the arguments and evidence presented by the authors. I also expect you to come to class already familiar with the major international news stories of the day. You get access to both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* as part of your student activities fees. Other great international affairs coverage is available from *The Economist*, *The Financial Times*, and *BBC World News*.

Note that brown M&M's are strictly prohibited from all class meetings. Send me an email by January 19, 2026 explaining why both Van Halen and I have such particular tastes when it comes to M&M's and you will receive a 5 point bonus on your participation grade (Hint: <https://goo.gl/ThqEAm>).

All noise-making electronics should be silenced and, where possible, set to "Do Not Disturb" for the duration of our class meetings.

Assignments

Assignments should be submitted online to the eLearning Commons. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of one-half letter grade per day. Exams will be completed on ELC.

- **Participation.** We will have TopHat activities throughout the semester to record attendance and participation.
- **Op-ed.** You will write an op-ed making the best argument you can muster for a particular foreign or international policy choice *that you disagree with*. The argument needs to be logical and based in evidence. You will write an initial draft that you will receive feedback on from me and your fellow students. For example, if you believe that eliminating nuclear weapons is a bad policy choice, you could write an op-ed making the best case for their elimination. The op-ed should be between 700 and 1000 words. For this assignment, generative AI may be used to help with research but should not be used to draft prose.
- **Midterm exam.** There will be one midterm exam. It will be administered during our normal class meetings. I expect them to take the entire class meeting. The exams will be multiple choice and graded via scantron. The first exam will cover all material between the first class meeting and the first exam, while the second exam will cover all material covered since the first exam. I will grade the first exam and return it to you prior to the withdrawal deadline.
- **Final exam.** The final exam will be cumulative, but will emphasize material covered since the second midterm. It will be administered during our university-assigned final exam period: **8:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. on May 4** in our normal classroom.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be calculated on the following scale:

- 94–100: A
- 90–93: A-
- 87–89: B+
- 84–87: B
- 80–83: B-
- 77–79: C+
- 74–77: C

- 70–73: C-
- 67–69: D+
- 64–67: D
- 60–63: D-
- Less than 59: F

Course Policies

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.

The language above was drafted by SPIA Dean Matt Auer.

University Policies

UGA Well-Bring Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit <http://sco.uga.edu>. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by

connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

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.

- 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.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Accessibility and Testing: accessibility.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Accommodations

In accordance with UGA policy, “[s]tudents 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.” More information about accommodations that are available to students with disabilities is available from the [Disability Resource Center](#).

Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct

I expect you to do your own work and to abide by all university policies on academic integrity and professional conduct. In part, these policies state:

“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 honesty.uga.edu. Every course syllabus should include the instructor’s expectations related to academic honesty.

Generative AI

I encourage you to use generative AI in this course *except when I indicate otherwise*. It can be useful, for example, in expanding on ideas we discuss in class and preparing study materials. Note that the textbook and lecture will

be the authoritative source for all concepts and definitions you are tested on in the exams.

Course Outline

Required reading, if any, is listed in parentheses. **FLS = Frieden, Lake, and Schultz.** The UGA Course Syllabus Policy states: “The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviation announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.” **Reading should be completed prior to the class meeting for which it is assigned.**

1. Preliminaries

- Monday, January 12, 2026: Introduction and Summary of Expectations
- Wednesday, January 14, 2026: International Relations as a Social Science (FLS Introduction)
- Monday, January 19, 2026: **No Class — Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- Wednesday, January 21, 2026: A Brief History of International Relations (FLS Chapter 1)
- Monday, January 26, 2026: Actors, Interests, and Strategy in World Politics (FLS Chapter 2)

2. Political Violence

- Wednesday, January 28, 2026: Inter-state War: Why States Fight Each Other – Part I (FLS Chapter 3)
- Monday, February 02, 2026: Inter-state War: Why States Fight Each Other – Part II
- Wednesday, February 04, 2026: Domestic Politics and War (FLS Chapter 4)
- Monday, February 09, 2026: Alliances: Why States Fight *for* Each Other (FLS Chapter 5)
- Wednesday, February 11, 2026: Alliances: Collective Security
- Monday, February 16, 2026: Civil War: Why Wars Occur Within States (FLS Chapter 6)
- Wednesday, February 18, 2026: Civil War: International Politics of Rebellion
- Monday, February 23, 2026: Terrorism
- Wednesday, February 25, 2026: Counter Terrorism and COIN
- Monday, March 02, 2026: Final Thoughts on Political Violence and Midterm Review

- Wednesday, March 04, 2026: **Midterm Exam**

3. Economic Integration

- Monday, March 09, 2026: **No Class — Spring Break**
- Wednesday, March 11, 2026: **No Class — Spring Break**
- Monday, March 16, 2026: **Op-ed Workshop**
- Wednesday, March 18, 2026: International Trade I (FLS Chapter 7)
- Monday, March 23, 2026: International Trade II
- Wednesday, March 25, 2026: International Finance I (FLS Chapter 8)
- Monday, March 30, 2026: International Finance II
- Wednesday, April 01, 2026: Money (FLS Chapter 9)
- Monday, April 06, 2026: Development (FLS Chapter 10)
- Wednesday, April 08, 2026: **Op-ed Workshop**

4. Selected Issues in International Politics

- Monday, April 13, 2026: International Law (FLS Chapter 11)
- Wednesday, April 15, 2026: Human Rights (FLS Chapter 12)
- Monday, April 20, 2026: Global Environment (FLS Chapter 13)
- Wednesday, April 22, 2026: Weapons of Mass Destruction (FLS Chapter 14)
- Monday, April 27, 2026: Final Exam Review
- Monday, May 4 2026: **Final Exam** (8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)