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York University
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
Department of Politics

**AP/POLS2201 N - Introduction to International Politics
Fall 2024**

Schedule: Mondays @ 10:30AM

Location: CLH A

Office Hours: Mondays 1-2pm in Ross Building Room S658

Course Director: Dr. Gerald Bareebe

Email: gbareebe@yorku.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays 11-12pm in Ross Building Room S658

Course Overview

This course introduces students to the discipline of international relations and familiarizes them with its basic concepts and common themes. The goal is to help students understand important phenomena that occur in the international system. We shall explore basic concepts and theories that are useful for making sense of contemporary debates and challenges in international politics. Students will be introduced to IR literature to help them learn and understand main theoretical traditions in the field. We shall engage questions such as what causes states to behave in a certain way? What are the causes and conditions of international conflict and war? What is the role of international institutions, like the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and the World Trade Organization? What power do these institutions have? What drives foreign policy decision-making? How do non-state actors affect the world we live in? Why are terrorist groups prevalent in the world, and why do people join and participate in acts of terrorism?

We will study global events and history that has shaped how states and non-state actors interact with each other across national borders. We will engage major topics such as international cooperation, security and conflict, trade, great-power rivalry, international organisations, climate change and human rights. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with competing and complementary theoretical approaches to international politics, have the ability to critically assess these literatures and will have acquired the necessary tools to pursue more advanced courses in international relations. The course has four specific learning objectives:

- i. Acquire knowledge of the main theories of international relations.

- ii. Gain the ability to apply these theories to events in the world.
- iii. Have the ability to engage in reasoned discussion about key issues in world politics.
- iv. Be able to write a university level essay with clear argument, demonstrable evidence, correct citation, and syntax/grammar.

Course Requirements

The course relies on a textbook and academic journal articles related to the weekly topics. The journal articles are available online using your York login, and students are expected to search for these articles using the library system. Students are also required to stay on top of major world events by reading the news and following significant world events. The course is offered in-person. Students are required to attend weekly classes and tutorials. Attending lectures and tutorials is mandatory.

Course Evaluation

Course Requirement	Percentage of Total Grade	Due Date
Global challenge exercise #1	15%	October 3
Midterm Examination	25%	October 21
Global challenge exercise #2	15%	November 13
Final Examination	35%	TBA
Tutorial participation & attendance	10%	TBA

Required Textbook:

Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben H.E., *Essentials of International Relations*. Ninth edition., W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.

The book is available in the library, bookstore and on course reserves.

Students are also encouraged to read the recommended (but not required) textbook below.

Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake, and Kenneth Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013 (any available edition)

Assignment Policies

All assignments are expected to be submitted on eclass by midnight on the specified date. Late assignments will receive a 5% per day penalty, including weekends. All papers including late papers are to be submitted via eclass. Students are required to retain copies of all notes and materials used for research and study purposes and all course work. The instructor might ask

to see these materials in the normal course of promoting academic honesty. Lost or misplaced assignments are the sole responsibility of the student who will be required to submit a back-up copy of any missing materials for their work to be graded. In the event that the student has not kept a copy of missing course work, and therefore is unable to resubmit due to loss or misplacement, an automatic and firm grade of zero will be assigned.

Extensions on term work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances beyond your control (i.e., documented illness, injury, death of a family member etc.). Requests for extension should be made as soon as possible. This is a short course, which necessitates remaining on top of assignment deadlines. More information on extensions/missed exams due to circumstances beyond your control can be found here: <https://english.gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/policies>.

Two global challenge assignments (15% each): The instructor has proposed a list of global challenge areas for the class to explore. This will prepare and allow you to gain an in-depth knowledge of key global governance challenges. The project requires tracking the challenge, assessing the politics of the challenge from a theoretical and practical perspective, and linking the challenge to current developments in international relations.

Tutorial Participation (10%)

Tutorials are your chance to discuss the issues we tackle in lecture in a small group setting and to augment and extend the material you receive in lecture. Attendance in tutorials is mandatory. Students should complete the weekly readings *before* their tutorials and come prepared to discuss the weekly discussion questions/issues from the syllabus. Your tutorial is the space where you will take the theories we have learned in class and apply them to real-world problems. Your TA is your first point of contact for the course and will hold office hours to help you understand the course material and design your own social scientific explanations of real-world events.

Tutorials will include significant skill building activities (reading, critical reflection, writing). These are for your benefit, and you have great TAs there to help guide you through the course. Take advantage of the tutorials. Come ready to discuss and ask questions and participate. You are being graded on participation and you receive zero points for days that you are not there. I realize that not everyone is comfortable talking in front of one's peers, but I expect some effort to be made. Please see me if this is a serious concern.

It might be helpful to keep the following questions in mind in preparing for class:

- I. What are the central points or arguments being made in the readings?
- II. What evidence and methods have they used to support their arguments?
- III. How does the week's reading relate to other material examined in the course?
- IV. How do you evaluate the authors' positions?

You are expected to be an active participant in class discussions and exercises. Active participation entails:

- initiating a topic or question
- providing information and examples to clarify a point
- trying to synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion
- seeking clarification where one is unsure

- adding to and amending what others have said.
- respectfully offering positive and negative reactions to others' points
- seeking the positions (or clarification of positions) from other students
- contributing to small group work in a constructive manner
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Mid-Term and Final Exams

- The course will have both midterm and final exam. Midterm exam will be held mid-semester during normal class time. Make-up exams may be available for students with documented reasons for missing midterm exam. Make-up exams will be held within three weeks after mid-term and may take the form of oral or written exam with the professor. Students with no documented reason for missing midterm exam will receive a zero grade.
- Final exam is scheduled during the University exam period. The final exam covers all the course materials covered during the semester. Both midterm and final exam may take the form of multiple-choice questions, short answer and/or essay questions. Any student who cannot write final exam, should consult York University guidelines on special considerations, appeals and petitions, found here: <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/decisions-petitions/academic-petitions/>

POLICY REGARDING LATE SUBMISSIONS, PENALTIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Part of professionalism is effective time management and respect for deadlines. **Except for reasons that the University recognizes as warranting consideration, extensions will not otherwise be granted.** Late papers will be docked on a *sliding scale per day* (weekends are included). The deductions will be as follows:

- The first two days late the penalty is 5% per day
- 3rd and 4th day late the penalty is 7% per day
- The 5th to 7th day late inclusive the penalty is 10% per day
- After one week the assignment receives a zero unless supported by accommodation documents.

Student Accommodations: Students with physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods, as outlined in Appendix A of the Senate Policy on Students with Special Needs. They should advise the Course Director during the first week of class so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Students who encounter extenuating circumstances during the term that might interfere with the successful completion of assignments should immediately notify the Course Director in writing via e-mail. Requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances will be weighed only if, upon the instructor's request, a medical certificate or relevant document are/is presented explaining the cause of course work interruption or impediment. For more guidance on this, visit <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/accommodations>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism: Familiarize yourself with York University's policies dealing with plagiarism: <https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/>. For additional information on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, refer to York University Senate Policy on Academic Honesty available here <https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on>.

Electronic Devices: Cell phones, audio and visual recording instruments, and all electronic devices other than computers being used for note taking or assignments are prohibited in the classroom. The making of recordings requires the express written permission of all individuals in the classroom. Any misuse of technology will result in an immediate grade of zero for class participation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created using generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). If you do not know whether an online resource or tool can be used in this course, please contact your instructor for guidance. For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

Skills Development: Students are strongly encouraged to take responsibility for their academic and intellectual growth by taking advantage of the services and resources provided by York University to assist students in developing reading, writing, studying, and speaking skills. An excellent resource on approaches to research and writing is Andre Martel's *A Student's guide for Writing in Political Science* (Toronto: Carleton University Press, 1997), available through York library's E-books.

Student Code of Conduct: York University's Student Code of Conduct requires that students "conduct themselves in a way that supports research, teaching and learning, and that promotes an atmosphere of civility, diversity, equity and respect in their interactions with one another. They should strive to make the campus safe, to support the dignity of individuals and groups, and to uphold essential freedoms."

E-mail Policy: The subject line for all email communications is POLS followed by the course number (e.g., POLS 2201). Students are encouraged to use e-mail to arrange a special appointment with the Course Director or to alert the Course Director to urgent matters. E-mails will be responded to within 48 university office hours Monday-Friday. E-mails regarding course content cannot be engaged. All such questions must be taken up during regularly office hours, or by special appointment. Anonymous e-mails and notes will not be read or responded to as they conflict with basic principles of fairness, privacy, transparency, and accountability.

Course Feedback Mechanisms: Course development is an on-going process and student input is an integral part of it. Official course evaluations are administered at the end of the term so that students can provide comments to the Course Director in a confidential manner. The Course Director is provided with these comments only after all grades have been submitted. In addition, students are encouraged to offer comments directly to the Course Director at any time during regular office hours or by special appointment. Such observations can be constructive and demonstrative of collegiality. The Course Director is open to hearing

feedback on course content, design, and teaching, and all comments will be assessed objectively.

Course Outline

Week 1: September 9 **Introduction to International Relations**

The first week provides a foundation upon which the entire course is built. We shall engage important questions: What is the study of International Relations? What are the “big questions” in the sub-field? This first lecture is key for understanding the material that will be covered throughout the semester.

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 1

Week 2: September 16 **Actors and Interests in International Relations**

In week 2, we shall examine the major actors in international politics. We shall scrutinize how their interests are formed; how interactions take place; and how institutions shape international politics. We shall scrutinize the explanatory power of all three levels of analysis and assess the level that better explains international relations.

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 4; page 103-128.
- Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake, and Kenneth Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. Second Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013 (Introduction and Chapter 1 (13, 36) and Chapter 2.

Week 3: September 23 **IR Theory: Realism**

Over the next three weeks, we shall focus on the major theories that are used to make sense of the world. We shall focus on the core assumptions of each theory. For many decades, realism was the main theory of IR. We shall explain how it conceptualises international politics and how it predicts vital outcomes in the international system. We shall engage major questions; Who are the main actors? What is their nature? What is their context? How do these actors interact? What is the level of analysis? How do realists explain international conflict and crises? Why is power central to the realism theory of international relations?

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 3; page 71-77.

- Stephen Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories” *Foreign Policy* (Issue 110, Spring 1998), pp. 29-4.

Week 4: September 30

IR Theory: Liberalism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism

In week 4, we shall cover two different theories that are often confused: Neo-Liberal Institutionalism (NLI) and Liberalism. We shall engage questions such as what the liberalism theory of international politics is? How has this theory evolved over time? What influence has liberal internationalism had on the American-led world order?

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 3; page 77-81.
- Andrew Moravcsik and Jeffrey Legro, “Is Anybody Still a Realist?” *International Security* (Vol. 24, No. 2, Fall 199), pp. 5-55
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Week 5: October 7

IR Theory: Marxism

In our 6th week, we shall look at a fundamentally different theoretical approach to world politics: Marxism. Unlike other theories, Marxism seeks to examine conditions and social relations, and how capitalism and the state merge or reinforce each other. We shall engage questions such as how Marxists view the state and international relations; how Marxist prescience capitalism and globalisation; how/why a class-based analysis of a state is relevant for our understanding of international politics; and how Marxism differs from mainstream IR theories?

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 3; page 89-92.

Week 6: October 14. (READING WEEK. NO CLASS)

Week 7: October 21 *IN-CLASS MID-TERM EXAM*****

Week 8: October 28
IR Theory: Constructivism

Finally, in our 7th week, we shall examine constructivism theory of IR. Constructivism is the most modern of all International Relations theories and provides a fundamentally different way of looking at the world than Realism, NLI, Liberalism, and Marxism. The main questions to consider: are state motivated by power or ideas? Are states social constructs? What conditions facilitate social conflicts and cooperation among states. Do norms, rules, ideas, and history matter in international relations?

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 3; page 83-89
- Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics” *International Organization* (Vol. 46, No. 2, 1992), pp. 391-425

Week 9: November 4

International Security

Why do states go to war with each other? Different theoretical models lead us to different conclusions about the reasons why war occur in some cases, but not in others. This week we will take the theories we learned in the first half of the course and apply them to the causes of inter-state wars.

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 6
- Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser, “Assessing the Islamic State’s Commitment to Attacking the West,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (July 21, 2015).

Week 10: November 11
Terrorism and Transnational Crime

In week 10, we shall apply IR theories to major international security threats such as transnational terrorism, cross-border insurgencies, and transnational crime.

Required readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 6, page 187-192

Alex Peter Schmid, “Terrorism: The Definitional Problem,” *Case Western Journal of International Law*, 36, 2, 2004, pp. 375-419.

Richard Jackson, “The Ghost of State Terror: Knowledge, Politics and Terrorism Studies,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1, 3, December 2008, pp. 377-392.

Read about the Origins and Context of Terrorism here

<https://www.nap.edu/read/10570/chapter/4>.

****SKIM:** US Institute of Peace, *Beyond the Homeland: Protecting America from Extremism in Fragile States*, Interim Report of the Task Force on Extremism in Fragile States, September 2018, Sections III, and V. [Available online: <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Taskforce-Extremism-Fragile-States-Interim-Report.pdf>].

Week 11: November 18

Climate Change

Why have states thus far failed to reach an effective global agreement on the climate change crisis? Given how extreme the consequences of climate change are to human life, what is stopping states from coming to a resolution? In week 11, we shall examine how different theoretical approaches explain the politics of climate change and climate justice. We will also examine the concepts of “collective action problems” and “tragedy of the commons” to explain why it has been difficult for nations to collectively find solutions to the complex problem of climate change.

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 11, page 399-423
- Jon Barnett and W. Neil Adger, “Climate Change, Human Security, and Violent Conflict” in *Political Geography* Vol. 26, No. 6 (Aug 2007), pp. 639-655
- Dupont, Alan (2008) “The Strategic Implications of Climate Change” *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*. Vol. 40. Issue 3. 50 (3), 29–54.

Week 12: November 25

International organisations & Human Rights

We shall examine key global institutions such as the UN and its predecessor, the League of Nations. We shall focus on understanding how different theoretical approaches perceive the role of these organizations. Key discussion questions: Why do states create international institutions to regulate their behaviour? What do different IR theories say about the value and effectiveness of international institutions? We will also explore the role of international law in governing state behaviour, looking at the sources of law, the evolution of legal doctrine, and human rights as an emerging international responsibility.

Readings:

- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 9.
- Mingst, Karen A., and McKibben. E H., Chapter 10.
- Tom Farer, “The Prospect of International Law and Order in the Wake of Iraq” in *The American Journal of International Law* Vol. 97, No.3, pp. 621-628

- Carsten Stahn, (2003) “Responsibility to Protect: Political Rhetoric or Emerging Legal Norm?” in *The American Journal of International Law*, (Vol. 101, No. 1, Jan. 2007), pp. 99-120.
- Theodor Meron, “Rape as a Crime under International Humanitarian Law” in *The American Journal of International Law* (Vol. 87, No. 3, Jul. 1993), pp. 424-428.

Week 13: December 1
Final Exam Review: Online Session

The professor will hold an interactive online exam review session designed to help students prepare for their final exam. During the session, students are free to ask questions, seek clarifications and critically engage with course material.

The End