

## POL 161 Introduction to International Relations Spring 2018

**Instructor:** Dr. Kevin Funk

**Contact:** [kfunk@shc.edu](mailto:kfunk@shc.edu)

**Website:** Google Classroom

**Office hours:** T 1:15-4:15; W 2:30-4:30 (QH 314) – or by appointment

**Class schedule/location:** TR 8:00-9:15 / 9:25-10:40 (QH 327)

### Summary and objectives:

This course will introduce you to major topics, issues, and debates in international politics, as well as diverse theoretical approaches that seek to aid our understanding of how the world works (or *does not* work). In light of current events, we will pay particular attention to globalization, nationalism, immigration, the “refugee crisis,” and the growing desire to build walls (literal or otherwise) along borders. In turn, we will analyze numerous theories, paradigms, and approaches that thinkers have utilized to attempt to explain (and perhaps inspire action in response to) these and other key phenomena, but without falling into the intellectual trap of internalizing the notion that these are the “best” or “only” ways of thinking about international politics. In other words, you are highly encouraged, as always, to take into consideration the thoughts of others (ranging from leading scholars in the discipline to your classmates), but also to think on your own. Lastly, after dissecting and discussing a number of important, contemporary questions in international politics, we will consider how *you* – and *we*, and *others* – may seek to be agents of change in the global arena.

Specifically, through this course you will work toward the following program/departmental objectives and student learning outcomes:

- Increase your familiarity with global current events and explore theoretical tools for deepening your understanding of them. [International Relations/Studies objectives A-E & G; Political Science objectives I & V]
- Develop/hone the ability to read, engage with, and discuss higher-level and challenging texts. [Political Science objectives I-II]
- Make substantive contributions to complex and nuanced conversations about difficult and at times contentious ideas and issues. [Political Science objective II]
- Learn to write powerfully yet concisely by producing relatively short yet comprehensive texts that synthesize and analyze numerous and complex ideas, make a clear but nuanced argument, and demonstrate strong writing and communication skills. [Political Science objective III]

### Course format:

As an introduction to the study of international politics, this course will naturally feature a significant lecture component. However, to the greatest possible extent, it will also ideally function as a discussion-oriented seminar. That is, your comments and reactions to readings and other materials are to play a fundamental role in guiding the trajectory of the class. As such, participation and deep engagement are *expected* and will factor heavily into your final grade. We will also take several opportunities over the course of the semester to discuss and analyze what makes for successful writing, including through in-class writing exercises.

**Books & readings:**

I have selected the readings with great care. Your ability to digest, critically engage with, and react to them will be of great importance for both your grade and our collective experience in this class. The (below) required books may be purchased from the campus bookstore or obtained elsewhere. The other readings are available online or through the course webpage (details below).

**Required texts:**

- Brown, Wendy. 2014. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Drezner, Daniel. 2014. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies: Revived Edition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Edkins, Jenny and Maja Zehfuss, eds. 2014. *Global Politics: A New Introduction* (second edition). New York: Routledge.

**News & current events:**

You are *required* to follow current events relating to international politics on your own. Throughout the semester, we will discuss news stories and relate them to course materials. Prominent news stories will also be “fair game” for the quizzes (details below). Given the international focus of this course, you are (not so gently) encouraged to peruse both U.S. and non-U.S. news sources (as we will discuss in this class, one’s context, background, and position influence how s/he understands the world!). You may consider signing up for daily email updates to facilitate the process. Palatable and relatively serious options include, but are certainly not limited to:

- U.S.-based
  - *New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/index.html>)
  - *Los Angeles Times* (<http://www.latimes.com/world/>)
  - *Washington Post* (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/>)
  - *Wall Street Journal* (<http://www.wsj.com/news/world>)
- International
  - *BBC* [UK] (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world>)
  - *Al Jazeera* [Qatar] (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/>)
  - *Agence France-Presse* (<https://www.afp.com/en/news-hub>)
  - *The Guardian* [UK] (<https://www.theguardian.com/international>)
  - *The Economist* [UK] (<http://www.economist.com/>)

**Course requirements & grades:**

<b>A</b>	93-100	<b>B+</b>	87-89.9	<b>B-</b>	80-82.9	<b>C</b>	73-76.9	<b>D+</b>	67-69.9	<b>D-</b>	60-62.9
<b>A-</b>	90-92.9	<b>B</b>	83-86.9	<b>C+</b>	77-79.9	<b>C-</b>	70-72.9	<b>D</b>	63-66.9	<b>F</b>	<60

**20 percent: attendance, participation & engagement**

In addition to attending class, you are expected to make substantive contributions to discussions, particularly in such a way that shows you have grappled with course materials. You will be graded on the consistency and quality of these contributions. Your regular attendance is thus assumed as opposed to “graded” per se. As part of this grade, you are *required* to see me during office hours at least once during the semester (in other words, if you do not come to office hours during the semester, you will automatically receive a “0” for “attendance, participation, & engagement”).

**25 percent: reading & current event quizzes**

In the spirit of “trust but verify,” I will randomly administer quizzes throughout the semester to determine how faithfully you are keeping up with the reading assignments as well as the news. I will grade them on a “pass/fail” basis. While the incidence of quizzes will be (somewhat) random in nature, you can expect an average of about one per week.

**55 percent: midterm exam & final paper**

After the second unit, there will be a cumulative written midterm exam. I will provide additional information as the date draws near. At the conclusion of the last unit, you will write a final paper responding to a prompt that will ask you to synthesize and think critically about the *entirety* of this semester’s course material. Again, I will provide more information closer to the date. These assignments, respectively, have maximum lengths of 750 and 1000 words, and are worth 25 and 30 percent of your overall grade.

Assignment	Due date
Midterm exam	March 6
Final	April 28, 2 pm

**Course policies:**

- The contents of this syllabus are subject to change, revision, and/or update.
- All assignments must be turned in via the course website (Google Classroom).
- Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 10 percent (e.g. from 95 to 85) every 12 hours. Thus, an assignment that was due at 11:59 pm on September 21 will automatically lose 10 points if turned in at any point between 12:00 am – 11:59 am on September 22, and so on.
- You can format assignments as you wish so long as the output is easy on my eyes.
- You may use your preferred citation style, provided it is applied consistently. Political science majors are encouraged to adopt APSA style (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>).
- In all of your writing assignments, style, syntax, grammar, etc. all count. As sagely observed by the writer William Raspberry, “Good English, well spoken and well written, will open more doors than a college degree. Bad English will slam doors you didn't even know existed.”
- IMPORTANT! Based on a growing mountain of research, as well as my own (also growing) frustration with watching you watch your various screens during class, there is a strict, no-computer/phone/tablet/etc. policy for this course. If you must take a call, then you may leave the room to do so. Otherwise, my expectation is that you will be fully mentally present for the conversation that is occurring in the physical space that surrounds you, not one that exists in cyberspace. This rule is for your own good! In addition to eliminating distractions that may keep you from engaging in the course and classroom discussions, studies have demonstrated that screen-less students achieve better grades. Violations of this policy may be pointed out during class in a manner that will be embarrassing for you and, further, will have severely negative consequences for your “attendance, participation, & engagement” grade. The one (and only) exception to this rule is if I ask you to search for information for class-related purposes.
- I reserve the right to ignore emails that A) ask for information available on the syllabus and/or B) do not adhere to basic norms of etiquette. Regarding the latter, you are *required* to follow these guidelines: <https://static01.nyt.com/section/opinion/WorthenEtiquetteHandout.pdf>.
- Absolutely *no* in-class recording is permitted in any format unless I grant you prior, written authorization.

**College policies:***Academic accommodations*

Students with a documented disability wishing to utilize academic accommodations should contact the Office of Academic Support by calling 251-380-3470 or emailing [casa@shc.edu](mailto:casa@shc.edu) as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be arranged.

*Academic dishonesty*

Students who engage in any act of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the College's Bulletin of Information. Possible sanctions include receiving a failing grade for the course and dismissal from the College. You are encouraged to review the Bulletin for further information.

*Academic support services*

The Center for Academic Support and Advising provides academic support services for all students. For more information on academic support services including academic accommodations and course specific tutoring, visit [www.shc.edu/casa](http://www.shc.edu/casa). For writing and math tutoring, visit the Center for Academic Excellence, [www.shc.edu/cae](http://www.shc.edu/cae).

*Early alert system*

Purple Alert is the College's official early alert system. Faculty and staff are able to send an alert to a Student Success Coach about a student's level of engagement and/or performance inside and outside of the classroom. Students who receive alerts should respond to the Student Success Coach in a timely manner so that they can be matched with appropriate resources. For more information, call 380-3472 or email [purplealert@shc.edu](mailto:purplealert@shc.edu).

**COURSE SCHEDULE***Availability of readings:*

\*- located on the course site (Google Classroom)

*Note:*

*To maximize comprehension, readings are to be completed in the order they are listed.*

1/9 (T) Course introduction  
Prose. "Humanities teach students to think. Where would we be without them?"  
<https://goo.gl/h5BEyr>.

## I. IR &amp; "THE REAL WORLD": A CONTEMPORARY PREDICAMENT

1/11 (H) Making international politics great again (part I)  
Brown. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Ch. 1.  
Stein. "We need a border fence, and more." <https://goo.gl/MscwwF>.  
Yee et al. "Here's the Reality about Illegal Immigrants in the United States."  
<https://goo.gl/UnGTfi>.  
NPR. "Borderland." <https://goo.gl/znSzVq>.  
Granados et al. "Raising Barriers: A New Age of Walls" (ep. 1). <https://goo.gl/9UFpNi>.

- 1/16 (T) Making international politics great again (part II)  
Brown. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Ch. 2.  
McCann & McSorley. "The Hardest Border." <https://goo.gl/geHpj>.  
Luckhurst. "What Walls Mean from Hadrian to Trump." <https://goo.gl/sLf6wu>.
- 1/18 (H) Making international politics great again (part III)  
Brown. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Ch. 3.  
"Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE)" homepage.  
<https://goo.gl/18oWWb>.  
Vargas. "My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant." <https://goo.gl/PP585K>.  
Fernández. "These asylum-seekers are being forced to raise their kids in immigration 'jails.'" <https://goo.gl/5xNNL8>.
- 1/23 (T) Making international politics great again (part IV)  
Brown. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Ch. 4.  
"President Donald J. Trump Taking Action Against Illegal Immigration."  
<https://goo.gl/5G9tPM>.  
BBC. "The key things that could topple the US president's border barrier."  
<https://goo.gl/TQfTuS>.  
García. "America has never actually welcomed the world's huddled masses."  
<https://goo.gl/bCgslI>.  
Dukhan. "Dear Donald Trump: A letter from a Syrian refugee." <https://goo.gl/J7qbyJ>.
- 1/25 (H) Making international politics great again (part V): review, critique, solutions  
To be determined
- 1/30 (T) Why is the world divided territorially?  
Elden. *Global Politics*. Ch. 11.
- 2/1 (H) Nationalism & its discontents: "us" &/vs. "them"  
\*Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations?"  
Appiah. "There is No Such Thing as Western Civilization." <https://goo.gl/77877K>.  
"Trump in Poland: Transcript of Warsaw remarks." <https://goo.gl/smELJv>.  
Beinart. "The Racial and Religious Paranoia of Trump's Warsaw Speech."  
<https://goo.gl/sEGVgs>.

## II. IR THEORIES/PARADIGMS/APPROACHES

- 2/6 (T) Why think theoretically, our zombie interlocutors, & theory/paradigm/approach #1: realism  
Drezner. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Pp. ix-50.  
\*Morgenthau. *Politics Among Nations*. Pp. 49-53.
- 2/8 (H) Theory/paradigm/approach #2: liberalism  
Drezner. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Pp. 51-64.  
\*Keohane. "Twenty Years of Institutional Liberalism." Pp. 73-78.
- 2/13 (T) **NO CLASS**  
Mardi Gras Break

- 2/15 (H) Writing exercise
- 2/20 (T) Theories/paradigms/approaches #3 & #4: constructivism & feminism  
Drezner. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Pp. 65-86.  
\*Wendt. "Constructing International Politics." Pp. 85-87.  
\*Tickner. "The Growth and Future of Feminist Theories in International Relations." Pp. 87-93.  
Rainsford. "What the Nureyev story tells us about today's Russia."  
<https://goo.gl/Kx2XW2>.
- 2/22 (H) Theory/paradigm/approach #5: Marxism  
\*Marx & Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party."
- 2/27 (T) Theories/paradigms/approaches #6 & #7: poststructuralism & postcolonialism  
\*Campbell. "Poststructuralism." Pp. 223-244.  
Collins. "The West's obsession with itself." <https://goo.gl/kBscYZ>.
- 3/1 (H) Theories/paradigms/approaches: summary, analysis, & thinking about thinking  
Pin-Fat. *Global Politics*. Ch. 2.
- 3/6 (T) Writing exercise
- 3/8 (H) **MIDTERM EXAM**

### III. IR: THEORY, PRACTICE, & PRAXIS

- 3/13 (T) Climate change: the world's (and your) "biggest long-term security threat" (part I)  
Film showing  
Goodell. "The year is 2037. This is what happens when the hurricane hits Miami."  
<https://goo.gl/TzbSQQ>.  
Johnston. "US Defence Secretary James Mattis says climate change is already destabilising the world." <https://goo.gl/UuBALB>.
- 3/15 (H) Climate change: the world's (and your) "biggest long-term security threat" (part II)  
Film discussion  
"An America First Energy Plan." <https://goo.gl/ui3LAH>.  
Nuccitelli. "The Republican Party stands alone in climate denial." <https://goo.gl/7nAdeR>.  
Botstein. "American Universities Must Take a Stand." <https://goo.gl/Jr4STU>.  
Hickel. "Clean energy won't save us – only a new economic system can."  
<https://goo.gl/2RPLcQ>.
- 3/20 (T) How do we find out what's going on in the world?  
Lisle. *Global Politics*. Ch. 8.  
Naughton. "How a half-educated tech elite delivered us into chaos."  
<https://goo.gl/7u4xAJ>.

- 3/22 (H) Why are some people better off than others?  
Cammack. *Global Politics*. Ch. 19.  
Sheets. "UN poverty official touring Alabama's Black Belt: 'I haven't seen this' in the First World." <https://goo.gl/19LV1P>.  
Alvaredo et al. "Inequality is not inevitable – but the US 'experiment' is a recipe for divergence." <https://goo.gl/FAcPHo>.
- 3/27 (T) **NO CLASS**  
Spring Break
- 3/29 (H) **NO CLASS**  
Spring Break
- 4/3 (T) **NO CLASS**  
Attending annual convention of the International Studies Association
- 4/5 (H) **NO CLASS**  
Attending annual convention of the International Studies Association
- 4/10 (T) Do colonialism and slavery belong to the past?  
Manzo. *Global Politics*. Ch. 15.  
Kelly. "Modern-day slavery: an explainer." <https://goo.gl/7zLhnG>.  
Kelly & Hodal. "'I slept on the floor in a flat near Harrods': stories of modern slavery." <https://goo.gl/FzLFEem>.  
Graham-Harrison. "Africa's new slave trade: how migrants flee poverty to get sucked into a world of violent crime." <https://goo.gl/aXNFsP>.
- 4/12 (H) Why does politics turn to violence?  
Bourke. *Global Politics*. Ch. 22.

## IV. IR &amp; YOU

- 4/17 (T) The "Global War on Terror": U.S. foreign policy & world order(s) (part I)  
Film showing  
BBC. "The US Air Force's commuter drone warriors." <https://goo.gl/1dXMbn>.  
De Luce. "Obama's Drone Policy Gets an 'F.'" <https://goo.gl/izGd3Q>.  
Stone. "Should we be scared of Trump's drone reforms?" <https://goo.gl/nWQRt6>.
- 4/19 (H) The "Global War on Terror": U.S. foreign policy & world order(s) (part II)  
Film discussion  
Ackerman et al. "Eight-year-old American girl 'killed in Yemen raid approved by Trump.'" <https://goo.gl/B3JKso>.  
"America First Foreign Policy." <https://goo.gl/9NB5mf>.  
Cook. "Giving succour to the far right, Trump breaks with American ideals." <https://goo.gl/Zd3hV1>.

4/24 (T) On "saving" the world  
"Kony 2012" video. <https://vimeo.com/37119711>.  
Cole. "The White-Savior Industrial Complex." <http://goo.gl/YaoAH>.  
Cauterucci. "The Lessons of *Kony 2012*." <https://goo.gl/VmSLku>.

4/28 (Sat) **Final exam due, 2 pm**