

PSCN 315: International Relations

Class Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45 a.m.
Estelle Siebens Science Center, room 123

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and
Tues/Thurs 1:00-2:00 p.m. (other days/times by appointment)

Course Description:

PSCN 315 is dedicated to a close examination of the puzzles of international conflicts since, generally, the emergence of the modern state system in 1648. In addition, PSCN 315 attempts to develop in students a curiosity about social, economic, and political problems of global scale.

During the first ten weeks of the term, students undertake a close reading of Joseph Nye's *Understanding International Relations*. The initial few weeks are dedicated to mastering a new set of terms, concepts, analytical frameworks, and theoretical perspectives useful in the studying the phenomena of war. Thereafter, students examine contours of world politics in 19th century and the circumstances underlying World War I, the subsequent failure of collective security, and World Wars II. Several weeks are dedicated to discussions of the Cold War, regional and ethnic conflicts, globalization, interdependence, and the role transnational actors. In the final weeks of the term, the focus of the course shifts to a key problem in world politics – the persistent failure of state actors to redress human rights violations impacting women and girls in, primarily, Asia, Africa, and the Indian subcontinent.

Among the chief purposes of PSCN 315 is the development of analytical and critical thinking skills. Moreover, students are asked, repeatedly, to test the usefulness of various theoretical perspectives on international conflict and relate in essays, quiz questions, and class discussions their own independent evaluations of political science's capacities to account for instances of war.

Required Text:

Nye, Joseph S., Jr. and David Welch. 2013. *Understanding International Conflicts*. Ninth Edition. New York: Longman Publishers. ISBN: 978-0-205-85163-8

Note: Additional assigned readings and other materials materials are noted on the Course Calendar and are available on the Internet at no charge to the student.

Course Objectives:

Substantive goals

Students will distinguish and evaluate the merits of several key theoretical perspectives used by scholars in the study of international relations.

Students will describe the chief claims made by historians regarding the origins of the twentieth century's two major armed conflicts – World War I and World War II.

Students will identify and describe several theoretical frameworks for understanding regional and ethnic conflicts, and the evaluate arguments for and against U.S. intervention in troubled regions.

Students will describe two key concepts in the study of international politics – globalization and complex interdependence – and appraise the impact of globalization and complex interdependence on the course of world politics.

Students will assess the impact of innovations in information and communication technology on the course of world politics and conflict.

Students will assess the role of non-state actors in shaping patterns of conflict among states and non-state entities.

Students will evaluate possible solutions to complex problems in global society.

Skill-Enhancement Goals

Students will demonstrate in the context of class discussions, quizzes, and responses to essay assignments critical thinking and written communication skills.

Student Responsibilities:

Faithful attendance at lectures is required. Students are permitted three (3) absences during the term. For each additional absence, the student's class participation/preparation score will be lowered by two (2) points. In rare circumstances (e.g., prolonged illness, physical injury, family exigency) the instructor will excuse absences and relax the attendance policy. Determinations of this type are made on a case-by-case basis. Dr. Best will function as the sole and exclusive arbiter of requests for excused absences. Finally, students may not enter the lecture room after the commencement of the day's instruction.

Students enrolled in PSCN 315 are expected to complete all assigned readings and writing exercises in a manner consistent with the course calendar (translation: assigned

readings are to be completed **prior** to the scheduled discussion date). Moreover, students are reminded that there is nothing more harmful to one's grade than failing to prepare for each class meeting. At the very least, failure to complete assigned readings and writing exercises will result in a lowered class participation/preparation score.

Students are expected to be present for examinations on the days indicated on the course calendar. Make-up exams are given in only the most extraordinary of circumstances (e.g., profound illness, injury, or family exigency). Advanced notification of an impending absence on exam day increases the probability that a make-up exam will be granted. Dr. Best will function as the sole arbiter of when and whether to grant make-up exams.

In the absence of an instruction from the professor, laptops cases are to remain closed during all class meetings. Moreover, students should expect to bring to each class meeting the required texts, a notebook, and appropriate writing instruments.

Consistent with University policy, evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty on any graded elements of the course will result in a failing grade in PSCN 315. Furthermore, in instances where evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty is detected, the instructor reserves the right to pursue additional remedies through University administrative channels.

Basis and Methods of Grading:

Three (3) **quizzes** are scheduled in PSCN 315. Each quiz is worth a maximum of 30 points. Quizzes consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions.

Early in the term students will complete a written **problem analysis exercise** worth a maximum of 10 pts.

Two (2) **essay assignments** are scheduled in PSCN 315. Written essays should be approximately four (4) pages in length, reflecting the principles of sound English composition and demonstrating skill in the application of citation practices common to the social sciences. Moreover, each essay should reflect a growing awareness of the concepts, analytical frameworks, and theoretical perspectives used by social scientists in the study of international conflict. A full, complete description of each assignment will be provided long prior to each due date. Essays are worth a maximum of 30 possible points.

A **final examination** is required of all students and is worth a maximum of 50 points. Questions appearing on the final examination may multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, or essay in format.

At the conclusion of the term, each student will be assigned a **class participation / preparation** score. Class participation/preparation is worth a maximum of 30 points. The number of points earned on the class participation/preparation portion of the final grade will be determined solely and finally by the instructor. Students are encouraged to

remember that effective and useful class participation take many forms, not the least of which is asking insightful questions and proposing interpretations and analyses apart from those provided in the assigned readings.

- Problem Analysis Exercise – 10 pts possible
- Quiz #1 – 30 pts possible
- Quiz #2 – 30 pts possible
- Quiz #3 – 30 pts possible
- Essay #1 – 30 pts possible
- Essay #2 – 30 pts possible
- Class participation – 30 points possible
- Final Exam – 50 pts possible

Total Points Possible = 240.

The following grade scale will be used in the assignment of final grades:

<u>% of 240 points earned in the course</u>	<u>Grade</u>
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
59 or less	F

Changes to the Course Calendar:

In the event that circumstances require changes in the content of the course calendar, the instructor will notify students, either in written or in oral form, regarding the necessary modifications to the schedule of assigned readings and case study exercises. Students are to remain aware of the ever-present possibility that such changes to the course calendar may occur on short notice.

Course Calendar- PSCN 315: International Relations

Part I. Theories of International Conflict

Week 1 (January 30): An Initial Commentary on War and Its Effects

- Video (about 27 minutes) from Houston, TX PBS affiliate, via YouTube. Chris Hedges, discussion of his work (and book), **War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning**. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fX5JIZDe0V0>

Week 2 (February 2 and 6): The Logic of International Conflict

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 1, “Are There Enduring Logics of Conflict and Cooperation in World Politics?”
- Visit Nobel Prize website: conflict map – war in the 20th century
<http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/peace/conflictmap/>

Week 3 (February 11 and 13): Key Concepts, Analytical Frameworks, and Theories Used to Analyze International Conflict

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 2, “Explaining Conflict and Cooperation: Tools and Techniques of the Trade”
- Two useful, short items on the Prisoner’s Dilemma game
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/PrisonersDilemma.html>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkXI-zPcDIM>
- **Problem Analysis Exercise (10 points - written response of approximately 1-2 pages):** “How does the prisoner’s dilemma game help us to understand the difficulty states encounter when seeking to cooperate with one another in an effort to achieve common purposes? As a tool for grasping the behavior of state in world politics, what do you see as the limitations of the prisoner’s dilemma game?”

Week 4 (February 18 and 20): Realism and Liberalism in Focus

Assigned Readings on Realism

- The Melian Dialogue [<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/melian.htm>] published on the website of Prof. Vincent Ferraro of Mount Holyoke College
- Political Realism by Alexander Mosely, published by *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [<http://www.iep.utm.edu/polreal/>]

Assigned Readings on Liberalism

- Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*
[go to the following web site and click on the 1891 edition of Kant's *Perpetual Peace*: [<http://oll.libertyfund.org/Intros/Kant.php>]
- Doyle, "Liberal Internationalism: Peace, War, and Democracy"
[find at: <http://nobelprize.org/peace/articles/doyle/index.html>]

Quiz #1 (30 pts) - February 20

Part II. The World Wars

Week 5 (February 25 and 27): The 19th Century and World War I

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 3, "From Westphalia to World War I"
- The Covenant of the League of Nations
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wilson/filmmore/fm_nations.html
- Wilson's League of Nation's speech
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wilsontheleagueofnations.htm>

Week 6 (March 4 and 6): The Second World War

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 4, "The Failure of Collective Security and World War II"
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's timeline of World War II
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007306>

Week 7 (March 11 and 13): U.S. – Soviet Conflict (and Proxy Wars)

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 5, “The Cold War”
- Useful link: Charter of the United Nations
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>
[Spend some time with this document! We will refer to it often!]
- PBS’s “Battlefield Vietnam” web materials (lots of useful things!)
<http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/index.html>
- Historian Ernest May’s brief account of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/kennedy_cuban_missile_01.shtml

Week 8 (March 18 and 20): Quiz #2 and Essay #1

- **Quiz #2 (30 pts) – March 18**
- **Essay #1 (30 pts) – due March 20 / class discussion**

Spring Break – March 25-29

Part III. The Cold War, It’s End, and New Patterns of Conflict

Week 9 (April 1 and 3): In the Wake of the Cold War -Part I

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 6, pp. 193-218, “Post-Cold War Cooperation, Conflicts”
- Timeline of Iraq War, provided by the BBC
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14546763>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry, “War” authored by Brian Orend. See especially Orend’s account of “Just War Theory” in section 2.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/war/>

Week 10 (April 8 and 10): In the Wake of the Cold War – Part II

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Chapter 6, pp. 218-253, “Post-Cold War Cooperation, Conflicts”
- PBS Frontline videos
 - “The Man Who Knew” examining the work of FBI Agent John O’Neil
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/knew/>
 - “The Interrogator” examining U.S. intelligence operations linked to the 911 attacks
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/the-interrogator/>

Week 11 (April 15 and 17): Globalization, Interdependence, and Transnational Actors

Assigned Readings

- Nye and Welch, Ch. 7, “Globalization and Interdependence”
- Nye and Welch, Ch. 8, “The Information Revolution and Transnational Actors”
- Video from Brandeis University, Thomas Friedman discusses his book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB-ViBEZ87k&list=PL500B1433C9CB7A0A>

Week 12 (April 22 and 24): Quiz #3 and Essay #2

- **Quiz #3 (30 pts) – April 22**
- **Essay #2 (30 pts) - due April 24 / class discussion**

Part IV. Topics in Global Society: Human Rights

Week 13 (April 29): Human Rights: Defining Problems and Pursuing Solutions in Global Society

Video Presentation

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

Week 14 (May 6 and 8): Human Rights: Defining Problems and Pursuing Solutions in Global Society

Video Presentation

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

Week 15 (May 13 and 15): Discussion of “Half the Sky” and Review for the Final Exam

Final examination (50 pts) is scheduled for:_____.