

## PS 160 Introduction to World Politics An Introduction

PS 160, Introduction to World Politics, is designed to help students understand the world around them by exploring how inter-state relations are organized, and how and why major events and structures in world politics occur. Introduction to World Politics, serves as a gateway course for first-year students and others into the field of political science and the subfield of world politics in particular. It is also suitable for meeting a distribution or general education requirement in the social sciences.

As a gateway course, it introduces students to the substantive matter of world politics as well as introducing them to the methodology of the social sciences and the means by which scholars study world politics. The course emphasizes that international relations is primarily strategic behavior: that states act in anticipation of both how others will react and what the consequences of that action-reaction sequence will be. It also has strong themes of the role of domestic politics in states' international behavior and of the increased blurring of boundaries created by globalization.

The course's objectives reflect its nature as a gateway course, including both substantive goals as well as procedural goals with broad applicability to future work in political science and related social science disciplines. The process goals emphasize information literacy and basic research skills, including the ability to identify main ideas in common forms of scholarly writing. These goals are integrated into class activities, mini-homeworks, and paper assignments to emphasize their importance to all forms of academic work.

We begin the course with an introduction to the substance of world politics – major themes and conflicts in modern history – and also to the method of political science as a social science. The textbook, Russett, Starr and Kinsella's *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*, is in its eighth edition (previously as Russett and Starr), and an early class period will have us comparing older editions of the text from my collection to see how its emphases have shifted over time. This activity allows us to see not only how the world has changed but how our *understanding* of that world has changed. The levels of analysis debate, so prominent in the period of the book's early editions, is no longer a major issue in the study of world politics. We progress through major theories of and approaches to world politics in order of their development to better relate these theories to changes in the world the theories try explain.

This orientation to the field then leads us to explore its substantive subfields by means of cross-cutting issues and themes. All of the theories have something to say about conflict, which allows us to draw inferences about the similarities and differences of the theories and about their relative explanatory power in different contexts. The first term paper asks students then to use two or more of the theories we have discussed to explain the outbreak – or non-outbreak – of a particular conflict (other than the World Wars, which serve as running examples). We also compare explanations for the democratic peace and the security dilemma.

After the first paper, we move from structural and domestic theories of war to a primary strand of post-structural theory, rational choice, with a two-day mini-simulation of the 1938 Munich Crisis, which I developed for earlier use in an introductory class. This mini-simulation uses small groups of students to represent the parties at the Munich conference. Each group receives declassified government documents, including diplomatic cables and internal memoranda, to establish their own state's knowledge, preferences, and perceptions of other parties. All groups receive contemporary newspaper accounts of the crisis to establish a set of

“common knowledge” that actual participants would have had. Armed with these two sources of information, the groups attempt to negotiate a settlement short of war – which, under most reasonable assumptions about the perceptions of others, is not possible. Consistent with the Fearon model, though, accurate information or different preferences (such as those held by the British) results in a situation where the parties are able to reach a negotiated solution. Debriefing of the simulation reinforces the importance of perceptions and strategic behavior by the parties.

The second major cross-cutting issue of the course is international political economy. We begin with the classical sense of political economy, with treatment of trade and international finance. The Great Depression serves as a running example for these class periods, which allows me to reinforce the connections between trade, finance, “globalization,” and international development. These topics lead us into the area of international cooperation, international institutions, and international law, which are part of the ‘new’ sense of international political economy. We spend several more class days exploring how states cooperate in particular issue areas, and the second paper asks students to consider the characteristics of an issue area and design an international institution to help states meet particular goals in that issue area.

At the end of the term, our second mini-simulation integrates these ideas of cooperation to produce international public goods with the potential for conflict should public goods provision fail or parties defect on agreements. The “Isle of Ted” simulation, developed by G. Dale Thomas, occurs in the space of a single class period and asks student teams to develop natural resources and transport networks on an imaginary island that is home to six countries. In the course of creating these public goods, countries have the opportunity to pursue unilateral action, to defect on agreements, to negotiate new agreements, and to take a variety of other actions that parallel actual state behavior in world politics.

By the end of this course, students are prepared to think, write, and research effectively about questions of international relations. They will understand both the modern state system and its origins, and be able to discuss competing explanations for major international phenomena. This course lays the foundation for future study in political science or other social sciences through its emphasis on the broad themes of conflict, economics, and public goods, as well as through its process-oriented objectives of information literacy and research skills. It equips students with a solid base of both substantive questions in world politics and sources of theoretical answers, such as they would need for a research methods course. More specifically, this course also prepares students for further work in world politics, such as PS 260 Patterns and Processes in World Politics, PS 363 International Cooperation, Organization, and Integration, or PS 374 US Foreign Policy.

**Political Science 160**  
**Introduction to World Politics**  
**TERM YYYY**

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The world is comprised of 190-odd states and other territories. Some of them get along very well, like the United States and Canada; others fight frequently, like India and Pakistan. Some states are heavily integrated into the world's economic and political systems; others like North Korea actively withdraw from contact with the world. This course examines how states and other bodies interact in the modern world and draws attention to ways that scholars study world politics, in search of systematic explanations for the patterns we observe. We explore the nature of the international system and consider several explanations for why conflict occurs. Then, we study peaceful interaction: trade and financial relations, the formation of international institutions, and cooperation on issues such as human rights and the environment. The course uses two mini-simulations to allow you to experience the dynamics of world politics firsthand.

**Objectives**

Specifically, after the completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify strategic behavior in world politics and incentives that produce it in both conflict and cooperation contexts,.
- Generate and solve a basic extensive form game or other appropriate model to reflect a real-world example or concrete case to support your arguments.
- Identify similarities and differences in problem structure in both political economy and conflict contexts.
- Apply theory to explain the outbreak (or non-outbreak) of war, and compare the effectiveness of theoretical explanations across two or more wars.
- Explain how the logic of comparative advantage generates incentives for both free trade and protectionism, and how the world trade system responds to these incentives.
- Explain two reasons why states cooperate in world politics, and discuss ways in which they can create institutions to facilitate this cooperation.

In addition, this course has two process oriented goals. After this course, you will be able to:

- Identify key components of an empirical academic article, and, given an article, identify the independent and dependent variables and the hypotheses, and interpret and briefly explain the results.
- Locate and use online sources for world news and informational content, evaluate the credibility of online sources, and cite these sources correctly.

As an introductory course in political science, this course aims both to give you an orientation to the substantive matter of world politics, including key concepts, theories, and vocabulary, and also to provide you with critical skills needed for success in advanced political science courses and related social science fields.

## Assessment

Your grade in this course is based on a combination of term papers, in-class written exams, and participation in discussion and mini-simulations. In general, assignments later in the term are weighted more heavily in the term grade than earlier assessments. Extensive assistance is available for the papers from both me and the University Writing Center. Contact them at xxx-xxxx to make an appointment for a free consultation.

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Due</u>
In-class assignments, participation, and mini-homeworks	15%	Various dates
Mini-simulations (Fearon, Isle of Ted) - 5% each	10%	See schedule
Midterm examination (in class)	20%	Day 16
Term paper 1 (Explaining War) (5-7 pages)	15%	Day 11
Term paper 2 (Institutional Design) (5-7 pages)	15%	Day 26
Final examination (as scheduled)	25%	As scheduled

You are expected to come to class prepared, with any assigned reading or homework completed before the start of class. You are also expected to participate in in-class activities, including but not limited to discussion, paper workshopping, and the mini-simulations, and to schedule and complete at least one office hours consultation on your work during the term.

**Policies:** YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL INFORMATION IN THIS SYLLABUS.

**Required Materials:** The textbook for this course is:

Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr, and David Kinsella. *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Belmont [CA]: Thompson-Wadsworth, 2006.

The textbook and a course pack are both required; they are available at the Campus Bookstore. If you order the textbook online or elsewhere, please be sure to acquire the correct edition.

**Communication:** Email is by far the best way to reach me for brief questions and/or to arrange an appointment. I normally respond within one business day. I have regularly scheduled office hours, and I encourage you to make use of them. In addition to the hours listed above, I am *usually* around all day Monday and Wednesday after class time if you'd like to make an appointment. Check CTools Announcements for the most recent posting about office hours. I am also happy to make appointments for any time outside my scheduled classes.

**Academic Integrity, Citation, and Plagiarism:** As we will discuss on several occasions, academic honesty – giving credit where credit is due – is a key element in creating credible work. Always acknowledge ideas and text that are not your own. *Any presentation of others' ideas or words as your own constitutes plagiarism, and is grounds for referral to the Dean's Office and the Academic Board.* When in doubt, add a citation. There is no such thing as having 'too many cites,' but having too few cites is called plagiarism.<sup>1</sup> We will review citation styles

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<sup>1</sup> This statement originates with Prof. Cindy Bair van Dam at American University, I believe; at a minimum, she was the first to say it to me. A statement like this constitutes acknowledgement that the expression is not my own.

and methods in class, but you are responsible for citing throughout the term. Any standard method of citation (MLA, Chicago, APA) is acceptable. See our CTools site for style sheets.

**Special Needs:** If you have a medical or other condition or circumstance which could interfere with your ability to achieve your best performance in this class, including any which may entitle you to extended testing time or other accommodations, *please consult with me as soon as possible* to make appropriate arrangements. SSD documentation must be received *at least two weeks* prior to the exam to obtain accommodations.

**Attendance:** After two unexcused absences (absence without documentary evidence of family emergency or medical attention for illness), expect a grade penalty. I reserve the right of final determination of the excusability of an absence. Students with family responsibilities, athletic commitments, or religious conflicts should indicate these *as soon as possible*; without sufficiently prior notification from the student, University policy does not obligate instructors to accommodate these conflicts.

**Due Dates and Extensions:** Expect assignments to be due at the start of class on the indicated day. *Missing class on the day an assignment is due is NOT sufficient reason to presume an automatic extension. Late work will be penalized at least one grade.* Extensions are granted only in cases of medical or religious conflict or other major situation. Syllabus Addenda, which will be distributed regularly and posted on CTools, should be considered the final word on due dates.

**Schedule of Course Topics**

I will provide a detailed ‘Syllabus Addendum’ every two to three weeks containing details of reading assignments, due dates, and class material requirements. The Addenda always supersede any information here or on previous Addenda. I will distribute copies in class and also post the documents to our CTools site.

Day	Topic
1	Introduction and Orientation
2	Welcome to the World: Facts, Figures, and History
3	Choice and Constraint: 2 C’s, 3 P’s
4	Studying World Politics: What Are We Doing Here?
5	Structural Theories of World Politics
6	Domestic and Other Theories
7	States and Other Actors
8	The State System Making Arguments in World Politics - paper workshop
9	<b><i>Power and Conflict in World Politics</i></b> Power and Conflict
10	Non-Systemic Explanations for Conflict
11	Conflict, Continued <b>Explaining War paper due</b>
12	Other Explanations for Conflict: Fearon and the Führer

13	Fearon and the Führer, continued
14	The Security Dilemma
15	The Democratic Peace
16	<b>Midterm examination (in class)</b>
	<b><i>International Political Economy</i></b>
17	Introduction to International Political Economy
18	Trade
19	International Finance and Monetary Cooperation
20	Economic Globalization
21	Trade, Aid, and the “Third World”
22	International Cooperation
23	Designing Institutions
24	Cooperation in the Environment
25	Cooperation in Human Rights
26	International Law and Compliance <b>Institutional Design paper due</b>
27	<i>Simulation: The Isle of Ted</i>
28	Review and Wrap-up

**Final Examination:** The final exam will occur at the date and time specified by the University.

**PS 160 Intro to World Politics**  
**Reading Schedule and Instructor Planning**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Introduction and Orientation
2	Welcome to the World: Facts, Figures, and History RSK 1a
3	Choice and Constraint: 2 C's, 3 P's RSK 1b, BdM?
4	Studying World Politics: What Are We Doing Here? RSK 2b
5	Structural Theories of World Politics RSK 2a
6	Domestic and Other Theories Allison + bur pol game
7	States and Other Actors RSK 3
8	The State System RSK 4 Making Arguments in World Politics <i>paper workshop</i>
9	Power and Conflict RSK 5, BdM? Measuring power writing prompt
10	Non-systemic explanations for conflict The Individual Level RSK 6,7
11	Conflict, Continued <b>Explaining War paper due</b> RSK 8 Poker chips games?
12	Other Explanations for Conflict: Fearon and the Führer Fearon 1995 + Sim --- alternate classroom location
13	Fearon and the Führer, continued --- alternate classroom location
14	The Security Dilemma RSK 9, Jervis coop under SD
15	The Democratic Peace Doyle APSR, Ray ARPS?, bit RSK 11
16	<b>Midterm examination (in class)</b>
17	International Political Economy RSK 12, plus econ?
18	Trade RSK 13 + art?
19	International Finance and Monetary Cooperation (Art?)
20	Economic Globalization RSK 14
21	Trade, Aid, and the "Third World"

	RSK 15 (art?)
22	International Cooperation RSK 10; 13:384-403
23	Designing Institutions Koremenos et al. 2001
24	Cooperation in the Environment
25	Cooperation in Human Rights
26	International Law and Compliance <b>Institutional Design paper due</b>
27	<i>Simulation: The Isle of Ted</i> Class will meet in a different location today. Check the Addendum for details.
28	Review and Wrap-up RSK 16, 17