Why We’re Here

Why do some states use violence to settle their differences while others stick to diplomacy? Why are some countries ruled by authoritarians and others by their citizens, and why is it that democratic governments tend to get along so well? What determines when international trade is liberalized (commonly referred to as “economic globalization”), and who wins and who loses as a result? And why is achieving international cooperation even on some of the most important issues of our time incredibly difficult?

These are just some of the questions that are presumably of interest to you as a new student of world politics. However, we may not answer all of these questions to your satisfaction over the course of the semester. We definitely have some ideas about why certain things happen in the international arena, some more “scientific” than others, but authoritative conclusions in political science are relatively rare. Our emphasis in this course will be the development of your ability to think about international issues and critique them, rather than rote memorization of facts and figures.

There are a few roles I’d like our time together to fulfill over the course of the semester:

- To clarify and elaborate on topics covered by Professor Morrow in lecture. Both lecture and discussion meet twice a week. They are not substitutes for one another—both are necessary in order to understand the material, which can be difficult to break down into 50 minute blocks.

- To develop the skills necessary to not only understand and comprehend reading assignments, but also to analyze them critically and relate them to current international events.

- To create an interactive, respectful learning environment in which we will learn from one another. Active and informed discussion is a fundamental part of this. Students will be respect to complete all assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss. In-class participation is critical to succeeding in the course and vital to your grade. The instructor (me) reserves the right to randomly select (“cold-call”) volunteers (you) if necessary. If you’re uncomfortable with this system, please talk to me outside of class.

Rules, regulations, suggestions:

*Attendance is Mandatory!* You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. Any additional absences will result in a half-letter deduction to your attendance grade *each*. If you have 4 unexcused absences, then, you will receive a full letter grade in penalties. Absences due to illness, religious
observances or athletic commitments will require advance notice and documentation when appropriate.

**Participation:** Discussion section is named this for a reason: you are expected to discuss. This is not a mini-lecture and I am not here to simply give you the answers. One of the best ways to build your understanding of new material is to actively discuss and work out the answers yourselves. I expect everyone to contribute to discussion on a regular basis. With this forewarning, I reserve the right to “cold call” (i.e. randomly call on students to answer questions). If you are uncomfortable with this system and feel that you cannot actively participate for any reason, see me as soon as possible.

I expect – and encourage – disagreement and rigorous discussion, but also insist that all participation is respectful to me and to your classmates. Remember, this is new material for everyone and we are all bound to make a few mistakes – this is an integral part of the learning process. Your participation grade will reflect your level of effort, not the number of “right” answers. I plan to ask challenging questions that require critical thought; there are often no right or wrong answers. I anticipate that there may often be some silence while students ponder the question – this is okay and it shouldn’t make any of us uncomfortable.

**Course requirements:** As noted on Professor Morrow’s syllabus, students will be required to complete two exams and two paper assignments. An additional twenty percent of your grade, however, is based on “section assignments.” In my class, you will be asked to write two additional shorter papers, complete an in-class quiz near the midterm, and also hand in your theses and a short outline for each of the larger research papers in advance of it being due. I also reserve the right to assign additional reading selections to supplement Morrow’s lectures as I see fit.

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<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (in-class activities, discussion, etc)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Midterm quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response papers</td>
<td>30% (15% each)</td>
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<td>Research theses / outlines</td>
<td>10% (5% each)</td>
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**Honors Note:** I am modifying the grading system for the lecture portion of the course, meaning that your two research papers will be equally weighted at 15%. The 5% weight from the second paper will be reassigned to an honors project and presentation, the specific of which I am still working on.

**Communication:** I strongly encourage everybody to make it to office hours, whether to ask clarifying questions about material, prepare for exams and paper assignments, or to discuss weighty issues of the day. It’ll help me get a better read on how everyone’s processing class material, it’ll help your understanding of the material (and, by extension, your grade), and it’ll also help you get a better letter of recommendation should you need one. I try to respond to email in a timely fashion, within 24 hours when possible. All class correspondence must have “PS160” in the subject line, or it will be lost! Students are also responsible for all material that is uploaded to the section Ctools site. Please check your own e-mail regularly for updates.
**Reading questions/critical comments:** To help engage you in participation and in actively reading the required reading, you are required to come to class prepared with at least one question or critical comment on the assigned reading every section. **This should be written down ahead of time.** These questions will be used to form the basis of discussion of every section, and may periodically be collected. You are expected to be willing to share a question or comment in every section. **It is necessary to cite any reference to the readings.** Citing the readings enables the class to go directly to the passage.

**Academic Integrity:** is very important to the operation of a successful university. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any instances of plagiarism will be subject to all appropriate university procedures. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, please ask! On how to recognize and avoid plagiarism, see: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html).

**Late Papers:** Late papers will receive a deduction of at least one letter grade. Extensions will be granted rarely and only in exceptional circumstances. As with excused absences, a note from a doctor or other person of authority will be necessary. Please discuss the situation with me as soon as possible after it arises. Note that computer malfunctions are not legitimate excuses. Every UM student is allotted several GB of online file storage. Please visit [http://afs.umich.edu](http://afs.umich.edu) for details, and take advantage of this service.

**Cell Phones:** Please turn your cell phone to silent (or turn it off) during section, as they are distracting. To offer an incentive to remember to turn it off, if your cell phone rings during class, you must bring treats for everyone the following section. If my phone rings, I will bring treats for everyone.

**Swine Flu:** The University has decided that, per CDC recommendations, that anyone exhibiting swine flu (H1N1) symptoms stay at home until symptoms pass. Doctor’s notes will not be given by UHS for the purposes of excused absences. This means that I will have to rely on all of you to not abuse this system. If I am given reason to suspect that people are taking advantage of this situation – swine flu outbreaks immediately before assignment due dates, for example – I will have to become less moderate on the topic. Also note that the University has asked instructors to pass along the names of anyone reporting swine flu or flu-related illness so that they can track the spread of the disease and provide follow-up care.

**Other Accommodations:** If there’s anything you feel I need to know about things that are relevant to your performance in class—be it fear of speaking in class, a need for extra time on exams, and so on—please let me know as soon as possible. UM’s policy on religious observances dictates that you alert me within the first two weeks of the term if you are going to miss class for any holidays.

**Grade Appeals:** Per Professor Morrow’s syllabus, grade complaints must be made in writing and then given to me along with the original copy of your work. This shall take the form of a detailed explanation for why you believe your answer is correct, including citations from the textbook or other sources (e.g. the lecture slides) supporting your answer. Please return both
your paper/exam and your written grade dispute to me **no earlier than 48 hours** and **no later than 1 week** after the assignments have been returned.

**Response Papers:** There will be five extra readings throughout the semester. You will write response papers on your choice of **two**—which will be due the day we discuss that reading in section (please note that even if you do not write a response paper in a given week, you are still responsible for reading the article and should be prepared to discuss it).

These papers should be critiques of the readings, not simply summaries. I am looking for you to actively engage the article—tell me whether you agree with the author’s point of view (and why or why not). Extra research to support your point of view is not required. Instead, focus your efforts on producing a well-written critique of the author’s ideas. There is no right or wrong answer. An “A” paper will be one that is well-written (including a clear thesis, introduction, and conclusion and with few, if any, grammatical or spelling mistakes) and that makes a strong and interesting argument critiquing the author’s point of view (demonstrating an understanding of the reading and drawing connections to the course materials). I will distribute a handout of writing tips for papers—you should consult this for all your papers for this course.

**Revision:** You will need to write at least one response paper on one of the first three dates. In return, you may write up to three responses, and then drop your lowest grade of the three.

**Tentative Schedule for Response Papers and Paper Outlines**


September 24th: **First paper thesis and outline due**


October 8th: **First paper due**


**November 19th: Second paper thesis and outline due**

December 3\textsuperscript{rd}: Second paper due


December 8\textsuperscript{th}, 10\textsuperscript{th}: Reserved for Honors presentations