

PSC/IR 106: Introduction to International Relations

William Spaniel
williamspaniel@gmail.com

University of Rochester
Spring 2015
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-9:50
Bausch and Lomb 106
Office Hours: Wednesdays, Harkness 320B, 2:15-4:15

International relations is the study of how states interact with each other. This course builds a working knowledge of our field, introducing the background, theoretical, and empirical tools necessary to understand international relations today. Students will learn about important findings in a variety of subfields, including war, international political economy, institutions, and nuclear proliferation. To do so, the course emphasizes readings from original research material rather than from a textbook. Further, students will solve problem sets and work with common international relations datasets to obtain a working understanding of the discipline's methodological foundations.

Course Materials

Blackboard is difficult to work with. Thus, I will post all course materials on my website: <http://williamspaniel.com/classes/pscir-106-2015/>. Most importantly, this includes links to required readings, PDFs of lecture slides, and recorded videos of lectures.

There are no required books for this course. However, students may find it useful to purchase *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions* as a reference textbook. Amazon has [rental copies](#) for under \$30.

Recitation

This class has weekly recitations in place of the scheduled Friday lecture. We will meet in class on the first Friday (9/5) to assign you to a teaching assistant. Recitations are mandatory and constitute a large portion of your grade. There will be no leniency for students attending lecture but not recitation.

Evaluation

Grades have four components: two problem sets, two data analyses, recitation, and two exams. The problem sets are worth 10% each and will test your ability to think strategically about basic problems in international relations. The two data analyses are worth 5% each and will ask you to become more familiar with IR's common datasets. Recitation is worth 20% and will be based on attendance and participation, as your teaching assistant will further detail. The exams are non-cumulative and each worth 25%.

After weighting each individual grade, final grades will be no worse than the following:

$94\% < x$	A
$90 \leq x \leq 94\%$	A-
$87\% < x < 90\%$	B+
$83\% < x \leq 87\%$	B
$80\% \leq x \leq 83\%$	B-
$77\% < x < 80\%$	C+
$73\% < x \leq 77\%$	C
$70\% < x \leq 73\%$	C-
$x < 70\%$	Non-passing grades

Late Work

Absent any university regulations that provide exceptions, no late work will be accepted under any circumstance. This is because I will go over the correct answers in class.

Teaching Assistant Recitation and Office Hours

Bradley C. Smith

Recitation: Friday 9:00-9:50, TBD

Office Hours: TBD, Harkness 315A

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. You alone are responsible for attending lecture and checking the website to stay up-to-date.

Readings and Schedule

The readings and schedule are subject to change, pending international crises and how fast we move through the material. Please see the website for links to the readings and an up-to-date schedule.

Topic 1: Introduction and IR Basics (1/14, 1/21)

No readings.

Topic 2: Basic Models of Conflict and Cooperation (1/26, 1/28)

[“The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War”](#)

The Evolution of Cooperation. [Chapter 1](#) and [Chapter 4](#).

Topic 3: The Bargaining Model of War (2/2, 2/4, 2/9)

[“Rationalist Explanations for War”](#)

[The Rationality of War](#). Chapter 2.

Topic 4: International Trade (2/11, 2/16)

Problem Set #1 due 2/16.

Topic 5: The Democratic Peace (2/18, 2/23)

[“The Capitalist Peace”](#)

[The Logic of Political Survival](#). Chapter 1.

Topic 6: Leader-Based Explanations (2/25, 3/2)

[“International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still *Ex Post* Inefficient?”](#)

[“Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War”](#)

Data Analysis #1 due 2/25.

Exam 1 (3/4)

No recitations on 3/6.

Topic 7: Economic Sanctions (3/16, 3/18)

[“Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?”](#)

[“The Microfoundations of Economic Sanctions”](#)

Topic 8: International Institutions (3/23, 3/25)

[“The Rational Design of International Institutions”](#)

Controlling Institutions. [Chapter 1.](#)

Topic 9: The United Nations (3/30, 4/1)

[“How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations”](#)

Problem Set #2 due 3/30.

Topic 10: Nuclear Proliferation (4/6, 4/8)

[“Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb”](#)

[“Winning with the Bomb”](#)

Topic 11: Terrorism (4/13, 4/15)

[“Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence”](#)

Data Analysis #2 due 4/13.

No recitation on 4/17.

Topic 12: International Intervention (4/20, 4/22)

[“The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement”](#)

[“Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Literature”](#)

Wrap Up (4/27)

Exam 2 (4/29)