

# **PSC/IR 106: Introduction to International Relations**

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University of Rochester  
Fall 2021

Class:  
MW 10:25 – 11:15  
Dewey 2162

- a.) M 11:50 – 12:40 Hutchinson Hall 473
- b.) F 10:25 – 11:15 Dewey 2162
- c.) F 12:30-1:20 Dewey 2110D

Professor Abramson's Office Hours:  
Wednesdays, <https://rochester.zoom.us/j/97661547987>, 1:30-3:30

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**

I will post all course materials on blackboard. Most importantly, this includes links to required readings and PDFs of lecture slides

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. 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 three components: six problem sets, recitation, and a final exam. The problem sets are worth 10%. Each will test your ability to think strategically about basic problems in international relations and will ask you to become familiar with IR's common datasets. Recitation is worth 15% and will be based on attendance and participation, as your teaching assistant will further detail. The final exam is cumulative and worth 25%.

All problem sets and exams will be graded blind. That is, to be assured you are evaluated fairly, instead of submitting assignments with your name attached, you will submit them with your student ID#. If you want to challenge your grade you can but the grade may go down if new mistakes are uncovered.

If you are entitled to examination accommodations, please coordinate these with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in advance of examination. Information is available at: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/index.html>. Students will not be able to obtain special examination accommodations directly from the professor

### **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 Office Hours**

Maggie (szheng14@ur.rochester.edu)  
Monday 2:00 – 3:00 pm  
<https://rochester.zoom.us/j/96865191391>

Sangmin (slee240@ur.rochester.edu) :  
Thursday 2:00-3:00 pm  
308B Harkness Hall

Mei (ymeis6@ur.rochester.edu)  
Tuesday 11:00-12:00 am  
Zoom ID: 8522073441

### **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.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. The College Board on Academic Honesty provides further information on our policies and procedures: [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty).

In this course the following additional requirements are in effect: You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all work and examinations must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. All written work must properly format quotations, use citations, and include a bibliography where necessary. Cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Honesty Board.

**Anything else** If any of this is unclear or if there are other relevant details for your situation, please contact me sooner rather than later. I hope this course will be an enjoyable experience for everyone, which I suppose makes me a benevolent authoritarian ruler.

## **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. All reading should be completed before lecture.

### **Topic 1: Introduction & Goals of the Course**

["Questions about Questions" \(Intro to Mostly Harmless\)](#)

["A Game Theory of International Politics"](#)

And for fun (e.g. not mandatory):

[THE ROCHESTER SCHOOL: The Origins of Positive Political Theory](#)

### **Topic 2: Anarchy, Hierarchy and the State**

*The Theory of International Politics*. Chapter 6 (skim)

*Power and Prosperity*. Chapter 1

[A Theory of the Origins of the State](#)

[Sovereignty](#)

[War Making and State Making as Organized Crime](#)

[Why Africa's Weak States Persist](#)

### **Topic 3: Basic Models of Conflict and Cooperation**

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

*The Evolution of Cooperation*. Chapter 1 and Chapter 4.

[Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation](#)

### **Topic 4: The Bargaining Model of War**

["Rationalist Explanations for War"](#)

*The Rationality of War*. Chapter 2.

[Exploring the Bargaining Model of War](#)

[Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy](#)

### **Topic 5: International Trade (9/28, 9/30)**

Principles of Economics Chapter 3. INTERDEPENDENCE AND THE GAINS FROM TRADE

[Political Cleavages and Changing Exposure to Trade](#)

[Trading in Illusions](#)

[Transforming Nations: How the WTO Boosts Economies and Opens Societies](#)

**For the Empirically Adventurous:**

[Does Trade Cause Growth?](#)

**Topic 6: The Democratic Peace**

[“The Capitalist Peace”](#)

[An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace](#)

[Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach](#)

**Topic 7: Leader-Based Explanations**

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

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

**Topic 8: Economic Sanctions**

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

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

**Topic 9: Foreign Aid**

[“The Political Economy of IMF Lending in Africa”](#)

[“Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?”](#)

[“The Politics of Effective Foreign Aid.”](#)

[“Effective Foreign Aid Following Civil War: The Nonstrategic-Desperation Hypothesis”](#)

**Topic 10: International Intervention**

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

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

["Interstate Peacekeeping: Causal Mechanisms and Empirical Effects."](#)

## **Topic 11: International Institutions**

["The Rational Design of International Institutions"](#)

*Controlling Institutions. Chapter 1.*

[International Institutions and Compliance with Agreements](#)

## **Topic 12: The United Nations**

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

## **Topic 13: Terrorism**

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

["An Analytical History of Terrorism"](#)

["The Strategies of Terrorism"](#)

["The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism"](#)

## **Wrap Up & Review**