

## Introduction to International Relations

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POLS 285-2, Fall 2009  
Northern Illinois University  
Department of Political Science  
Instructor: Vlad Kravtsov

Class time: M, W, F 11:00-11:50 in DU 461  
Office hours: T & Th 12:00—1:45 in Zulauf 113  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

**POLS 285** provides a survey of International Relations theories and select issues of contemporary world politics. The course covers the major contending theories (including realism, neorealism, neoliberalism, and constructivism), mid-range theories of decision-making (rational actor, bureaucratic politics, and leadership models), as well as basic concepts and terms of international relations (such as sovereignty, nation-state, levels of analysis, security dilemma, etc). The empirical component of the course focuses on select substantive problems of contemporary international relations, often united under the rubric of “globalization.” Students will reach an informed personal judgment about structure and actors, issue-areas and problems of international relations. These goals will be achieved by engaging in experiential learning via practicums, in-class discussions, and watching documentaries and films. The course will also provide ample opportunities to get acquainted with multiple resources on international relations.

### Course textbook

Chuck Kegley, Shannon Blanton, *World Politics: Trends and Transformations*, 2009-2010 Update Edition (Wadsworth, 2009)—noted as “K&B” in the course schedule below

### Course objectives

1. To develop an appreciation of international relations. This outcome will be measured by an evaluation of *participation* and *in-class discussions*.
2. To develop the knowledge of the key terms, definitions and concepts of International Relations as an academic field. To demonstrate this knowledge you should be able to identify, characterize and explain their significance. The outcome will be measured by an evaluation of your *midterm and final exams*.
3. To develop your skills in summarizing others’ arguments in your own words, and taking a clear position on an issue from IR perspective. This outcome will be measured by an evaluation of *the practitioner’s journal*.
4. To develop basic skills in interactive and collaborative learning, competence in individual and group presentation. This outcome will be measured by an evaluation of performance in *practicums*.

### COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

#### Class communication

Probably the easiest way to reach me with brief questions is via e-mail, or grabbing me before or after class. As a part of class feedback, I reserve the right to adjust readings schedule on this syllabus in order to keep the appropriate pace. You should always have the course syllabus on you and mark down the announced changes.

### ***Late dues***

Given the importance of the collaborative learning techniques, which emphasize interactive study and the joint performance of assignments, it is important that the class progresses at the steady pace. Assignments must be handed to me in class on the day they are due (or before that date if you wish). Late assignments, extensions or make-ups will **NOT** be allowed except for authorized extenuating circumstances. I will excuse any absences that result from religious observances, medical or family emergency, etc provided that you notify me in advance of the planned absence. For the missing grades without an appropriate excuse you should take the final **comprehensive** exam.

### ***Classroom decorum***

Regular attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. Arriving late to class after attendance is taken will be marked absent; there will be no exceptions; more than 3 absences will result in a reduction on final grade; a significant number of unexcused absences will result in a failing course grade. The lectures and the required readings are often matching, but the lectures do not simply go over the material from the readings. The examinations will include material both from the lectures and the textbook. Arrive at class on time, remain in class for the entire session, turn off cell phones etc, and abstain from talking with your classmates rather than the entire group. Discussion involving the entire group, of course, is welcomed and encouraged. Always be courteous and respectful of others.

### ***Plagiarism & Citation***

According to the NIU 2008—2009 Undergraduate Catalogue, “The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university” (p. 51). As NIU defines plagiarism as Academic Misconduct, you should familiarize yourselves what constitutes plagiarism before turning in any written work, especially if you are submitting your first research paper. Make sure you understand how to cite properly resources you use. For the further information, visit

[http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/courses/catalogs/08-09/ug\\_001to066.pdf](http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/courses/catalogs/08-09/ug_001to066.pdf)

<http://polisci.niu.edu/polisci/audience/plagiarism.shtml>

### ***Academic accommodations for students with disabilities***

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NIU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Those students with disabilities that may have some impact on their coursework and for which they may require accommodations should notify the Center for Access-Ability Resources (CAAR) on the fourth floor of the Health Services Building. CAAR will assist students in making appropriate accommodations with course instructors. It is important that CAAR and instructors be informed of any disability-related needs during the first two weeks of the semester.

### ***Undergraduate Writing Awards:***

The Department of Political Science will recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing. Winners are expected to attend the Department’s spring graduation ceremony where they will receive a certificate and \$50.00. Papers, which can be submitted by

students or faculty, must be supplied in triplicate to a department secretary by February 28. All copies should have two cover pages – one with the student’s name and one without the student’s name. Only papers written in the previous *calendar* year can be considered for the award. However, papers completed in the current spring semester are eligible for the following year’s competition even if the student has graduated.

***Department of Political Science:***

Undergraduates are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to <http://polisci.niu.edu>

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

***Examination***

Examinations will consist of both multiple choice questions and short answer identifications. The multiple-choice questions will be straightforward, with four answers to choose from. For the short answer portion of the exam, you will be expected to identify several key terms and explain, in **one** sentence, why they are significant. The study guide will be provided prior to the exam. If you expect to miss an exam, it is your responsibility to let me know immediately (via e-mail). Makeup exams will be given only in **extreme** extenuating circumstances. I shall be the final arbiters of what meets the definition of “extreme.” For the missing grade you should take the final **comprehensive** exam, if you wish.

***Practicum***

*Purpose:* Practicum is normally given to practice a supervised application of a previously studied theory. In other words, this training allows you to take stock how abstract theories and frameworks can (and should be) used to analyze select international problems & issues. Amidst the flurry of often conflicting commentaries on fast-changing international politics, the ability to apply the conceptual lenses of IR theories is truly pivotal. During ten practicums you will be trained to *identify theories* as presented in academic writings, policy documents, and simply in a set of incompatible claims; *apply theories* to analyze a particular problem or issue-area; *choose between theories* offering diverging explanations of processes, problems and actors in IR; and, finally, *stipulate the empirical expectations* following from a particular theory.

*Conducting a practicum:* A typical practicum will consist of 0) home preparation (reading the assigned policy briefs), retaining some information about contemporary problems in IR via pre-screened films and documentaries, etc; 1) in-class formulating a question about a substantive problem within contemporary international relations, 2) the subsequent in-class small group discussions, monitored by me and/or by my assistant, 3) **occasional** supplements in the form of focused exercises, including answering quizzes, writing brief policy statements, and giving brief presentations. The specific instructions for each practicum will be announced prior to the scheduled discussion. Topics for practicums include various substantive problems within contemporary international relations (tentative topics are indicated below).

*An outcome of each practicum:* is a brief and carefully focused essay (approximately 540 words) in which the designated member of your group summarizes the outcomes of your discussion. Note that each memo (although submitted as a group project) should be authored by different member of your group. For instance, the class can be divided into 10 small groups with 5 members (but generally it may depend upon enrollment

and your personal preferences). Thus, each member of the group will be responsible for summarizing two practicum sessions discussions in writing. Memos should be submitted prior to next practicum (typically by next Friday), unless noted otherwise. (The first class session will be devoted, besides introduction to each other and logistics, to an open exchange of students' interests and assisting students to self-select into small groups for the purposes of practicums).

*Sources for practicum:* For the purposes of conducting practicums I assign some brief additional readings. These may include journalistic opinion pieces, columns, and editorials, as well as policy briefs, working and white papers. There is no reason to panic about the overwhelming burden of the reading load. These sources are more policy-oriented sources, and can be easily and quickly digested. You may get acquainted with these sources before the class starts. Visit, for instance, <http://www.cigionline.org/>; <http://www.cgdev.org/>; <http://www.cris.unu.edu/>; and <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/>.

### ***Practitioners' Journal***

Practitioner's Journal is helpful to become a confident analyst and a thoughtful consumer of political news. It gives you an opportunity to take stock of substantive issues of your interest and keep up with current events. As noted below, 20% of your grade will be based on your Journal. To maintain the journal you must enter an entry a week. Your Journal should include 0) date when entry taken, source of the article/editorial; 1) a concise and focused summary of the article, 2) a laconic explanation how this article is relevant to the theoretical frameworks and broad issues we study in this course, 3) your overall assessment of the article (whether it is insightful, conclusive, etc), and 4) your alternative rendition of the event in focus, if applicable. This is **not** a group assignment; you should not submit this work as a group project. However, you may discuss articles among each other, if you wish. Be prepared to talk about your entries in class, regardless of the scheduled topic for the week. I shall try to give opportunity to everybody to share the thoughts from your journal. This also may factor in your participation grade. Remember, active participation is always rewarding. The first submission is **Oct 9** (for the purposes of the midterm progress evaluation). The final submission is **Nov 18**.

### *Sources for the Journal*

You may follow the cover stories *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Washington Post*, *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and so on. Reading all IR-relevant op-eds/columns/news is not required, but skimming the frontpages will give you much better sense of the context of our class and will prepare you to select an article of your interest. In case if some news draws your attention, even if not chosen for your Journal, you may still suggest them for the in-class discussions. I will sometimes distribute news articles in class, which you may select for your Journal's entry.

### ***Grade determination***

Your grade in this class will be based on two exams, the quality of your work in practicum sections, and your participation in discussions. The breakdown is as follows:

- Exam —40% (20% each)
- Practicum—30% (3% each)
- Practitioners' Journal—20% (2 submissions)
- Participation—10% (both in regular classes and practicums)

## SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READINGS, AND IMPORTANT DATES

### PART I: THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- August 24                    Introduction to the course and each other
- August 26                    IR as an academic and policy-relevant discipline  
K&B—Chapter 1, entire
- Aug 28, 31, Sep 2            Grand Theories of IR  
K&B—Chapter 2, entire
- September 4**                ***Practicum I: Grand Theories***  
*Ascertain what kind of information theories of IR require in order to be utilized.*  
[Purpose: appreciate theories as analytical tools. Case: Latvia]  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lg.html>
- September 9, 11            International decision-making  
K&B—Chapter 3, entire
- September 14, 16            *Screening I: **The Fog of War** (dir. Errol Morris, 2004), resources:*  
<http://www.sonyclassics.com/fogofwar/>  
<http://www.errolmorris.com/film/fow.html>
- September 18**                ***Practicum II: International decision-making***  
*Profile policy-making behavior in relation to IR theories and decision models.*  
[Purpose: identification of basic concepts & theories. Case: McNamara]

### PART II: FROM POWER POLITICS TO GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

- September 21, 23            States, Power Politics, and Causes of War  
K&B—Chapter 4, entire  
<http://www.aei.org/outlook/100055>
- September 25**                ***Practicum III: New Regionalism***  
*Ascertain how small states can overcome their vulnerabilities in the international arena.* [Purpose: critical issue discussion. Focus: LAC region]  
[http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/Policy\\_Brief%2015%20web.pdf](http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/Policy_Brief%2015%20web.pdf)
- September 28, 30            Transnational Actors I: IGOs  
K&B—Chapter 6, entire  
[www.un.org/](http://www.un.org/); <http://www.who.int/>; [www.g8italia2009.it/](http://www.g8italia2009.it/); [www.g20.org/](http://www.g20.org/);  
<http://www.opec.org/home/>; <http://www.aseansec.org/>;
- October 2, 5                    Transnational Actors II: NGOs  
K&B—Chapter 7, entire  
[www.charitynavigator.org/](http://www.charitynavigator.org/); [www.msf.org/](http://www.msf.org/); <http://www.oxfam.org/>;  
<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/>; <http://www.worldwildlife.org/>
- October 7**                    ***Practicum IV: Transnational actors***  
*Ascertain the role of transnational actors in contemporary transnational relations.*  
[Purpose: critical issue discussion. Focus: Celebrity diplomacy]  
<http://www.cigionline.org/articles/2007/12/celebrity-efforts-will-redefine-diplomacy>

<http://www.cigionline.org/articles/2009/01/lister-aid-worker-does-celebrity-diplomacy-really-work>  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX\\_DEs9Ro4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX_DEs9Ro4k)

**October 9** *Practitioner's Journal due (1<sup>st</sup> submission)/Review for Midterm*

**October 12** **MIDTERM**

**PART III: SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY IR**

October 14, 16 Global South  
K&B—Chapter 5, entire

**October 16** **End of the first half of the semester**  
Midterm evaluations/Deadline for withdrawal

October 19, 21 Managing the global economy in the highly globalized world  
K&B—Chapter 9 & 10 entire  
[www.worldbank.org/](http://www.worldbank.org/); [www.imf.org/](http://www.imf.org/); [www.wto.org/](http://www.wto.org/); [www.weforum.org/](http://www.weforum.org/);

**October 23** **Practicum V: Emergent powers in GPE**  
*Under what conditions the rules of the global economy can be changed?*  
[Purpose: critical issue discussion. Focus: BRICSAM]  
[http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/Policy\\_Brief\\_no1.pdf](http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/Policy_Brief_no1.pdf)  
<http://www2.goldmansachs.com/ideas/brics/BRICs-and-Beyond.html> (optional)  
[http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/WTO\\_reform.pdf](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/WTO_reform.pdf)

October 26, 28 Promoting Human Rights  
K&B—Chapter 8 entire

**October 30** **Practicum VI: R2P**  
*What arguments can be leveled for and against humanitarian interventions?*  
[Purpose: critical issue discussion. Focus: UN]  
<http://www.unu.edu/publications/briefs/policy-briefs/2008/pb05-08.pdf>  
<http://www.unu.edu/publications/briefs/policy-briefs/2008/pb03-08.pdf>

November 2, 4 Promoting Human Security  
K&B—Chapter 11 & 12, entire

**November 6** **Practicum VII: Political determinants of Human Security**  
*"Why do some health issues attract all the attention and money?"*  
[Purpose: appreciate explanatory power of theories]  
<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/8/08-060749.pdf>  
[http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/Paper\\_35-Final.pdf](http://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/Paper_35-Final.pdf) (optional)

November 9, 11 Legalization and coercive diplomacy  
K&B—Chapters 14 & 16, entire

**November 13** **Practicum VIII: Revisionist states**  
*What are the prospects and limits of enforcing non-proliferation regime?*  
[Purpose: appreciate prescriptive power of IR theories and concepts. Focus: Iran]  
[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/07/07/080707fa\\_fact\\_hersh](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/07/07/080707fa_fact_hersh);  
<http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/gmbonham/Iran.pdf>

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|---|---|
| November 16   | <u>Civil Wars and New Global Terrorism</u><br>K&B—Chapter 13, entire  |
| November 18, 20                                     | Screening II: <b>Ghosts of Rwanda</b> , resources:<br><a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/</a><br><a href="http://globalfilm.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2009/03/13/ghosts-of-rwanda-2004/">http://globalfilm.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2009/03/13/ghosts-of-rwanda-2004/</a>  |
| <b>November 18</b>                                  | <b>Practitioner's Journal due (2<sup>nd</sup> submission)</b>   |
| <b>November 23</b>                                  | <b>Practicum IX: Failure of governance?</b><br>Why did the international community (including the UN) fail to respond?<br>[Purpose: appreciate the strength of IR concepts/theories]  |
| <b><u>PART IV: GLOBAL AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE</u></b> |   |
| November 25, 27                                     | Thanksgiving break<br><a href="http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/">http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/</a>   |
| November 30   | <b>Practicum X: New World Order</b><br>What do basic IR theories tell us about the coming of the new global architecture?<br>[Purpose: stipulate empirical expectations from theories. Focus: Grand Strategy]<br><a href="http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62636/barack-obama/renewing-american-leadership">http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62636/barack-obama/renewing-american-leadership</a><br><a href="http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63722/anne-marie-slaughter/americas-edge">http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63722/anne-marie-slaughter/americas-edge</a> |
| December 2  | <b>Guest lecture: Ethics in Interstate War</b><br>K&B—Chapter 15 & 17, entire   |
| <b>December 4</b>                                   | <b>Review for the final, evaluations</b>  |
| <b>TBA</b>  | <b>Final examination</b>  |