

POLS 285: Intro to IR - Honors Section

Dr. Ches Thurber

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Office Hours: Tue 2:00-3:30 | Wed 9:30-11:00

Class Hours: T/Th 9:30 - 10:45

Office: 414 Zulauf Hall

Class Room: Campus Life Building 110

Course Description

Russia appears on the brink of invading Ukraine. North Korea continues to develop its nuclear arsenal, while Iran may be headed toward developing its own. Meanwhile, global climate change poses a catastrophic threat to the planet, while global actors seem unable to do anything in response. This class seeks to address why global cooperation can be so difficult even if most of the world shares similar goals of peace and prosperity. To do so, we will try to use the tools of social “science” to analyze both historical events and contemporary challenges. We will discuss issues ranging from war and peace to economic development, and from transnational migration to global health. You will come away from the course with a set of analytic frameworks and a depth of historical knowledge that will enable you to better understand current issues in global politics and empower you to participate in the process of crafting solutions, whether that be as a future policymaker, an issue-advocate, or an engaged global citizen.

Honors Section

As an honors course, this section will cover the same content as all 285 sections, but will be different in a few ways. First, while we will still use a textbook, there will be greater engagement with scholarly articles and book chapters. Second, we will cover content at a quicker pace and use the extra time to engage in project-based learning. This includes a series of case studies and crisis simulations. Finally, class sessions will generally spend less time summarizing what you have already read, and more time dedicated to discussion and debate. The expectation is that you come to class having completed the readings and prepared to critically discuss them.

Course Format

We will be meeting twice a week for 75 minute sessions. While some material will be presented in lecture, we will spend much of our time openly discussing the readings and topics assigned for each day. As such, it is essential that students come to class having completed the readings and participate in discussion every class period. Throughout the semester there will also be in-class exercises and role-plays.

A Note on Learning Amidst Pandemic

I was hoping to be able to delete this section this semester. But the Omicron had other ideas. These are still crazy times. We will be proceeding with this class the best we can and to some degree I hope the process of reading, writing, and talking about topics we are all passionate about helps provide you with some sense of normalcy. But sometimes that can feel like absurdity. Please know that you are not alone in feeling it and that we are all in this together. I will be as accommodating as I can this semester in light of these circumstances and I hope that we can all agree to engage each other in a spirit of mutual patience, empathy, and understanding. If you or somebody you know is struggling with anxiety or other issues, do not hesitate to reach out. Resources available include the DRC, Student Counseling Services or call 815-306-2777.

As per the university's recent decision, we will not hold in-person class the first week. Instead I will be assigning you work to do at your own pace. My hope is to begin in-person learning as soon as it is possible to do so. If health concerns or issues prevent you from being able to come to class, I will work hard to accommodate your situation and make class materials available to you. I will not, however, be able to simulcast class sessions online.

Office Hours

I will be holding office hours on Tuesdays from 2-3:30 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9:30-11 a.m. Office hours appointments are available either in-person in my office or online. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this. Sign up for an appointment at [this link](#). The system will send you a Zoom link that we can use for our meeting. Or you can just show up at my office at that time.

Course Materials

There is one required textbook for this course:

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ninth Edition. Norton 2021.

There is both a paperback as well as electronic version. Both are fine. There are also numerous previous versions of the text. Unfortunately, I cannot recommend these. The current version features a lot of discussion about Russia and Ukraine, which I am going to rely on a lot since it's so relevant right now. Additionally, it rightly designates an entire chapter to global environmental politics. I hope that the \$40 price for the Ebook rental version makes this not too onerous a financial burden.

In addition, I am asking students to find a way to watch the animated Disney movie *Raya and the Last Dragon* during our "virtual weekk." It can be rented for \$4 from most online services like Amazon Prime Video or YouTube, and is available for free for Disney+ subscribers. If you are unable to watch it, you will not be adversely affected in this course.

Evaluation

Class attendance, preparation and participation (20%): The time we spend in class is for me the most important of any course I teach, and even more so in an honors section. As such, punctual attendance is mandatory. But more important than just being present at a desk is that you are actively engaged. I expect that you have done the readings and that you try to participate in discussion

each and every class section. You may miss up to 2 classes during the course of the semester without penalty. Beyond that, I ask that you write a brief 1-page summary of the readings assigned for the missed day as make-up work to receive attendance credit. Generally, make-up reading summaries are due by the beginning of the next class, but I will be more flexible on this in pandemic times.

Mid-term Examination: (20%) There will be a midterm exam the week before spring break. I will provide a list of possible exam questions one week before the exam. I encourage you to work with others to plan your answers in advance, but your work on exam day must be your own, produced without the assistance of books or notes.

Memos, Presentations, and Simulations (3 x 20%) The majority of your assessment for this course will come from project-based assignments. After Spring Break, we will have a case study project followed by two UN Security Council simulations. For each of these projects, there will be a short paper (about 1,000 words) followed by a presentation of role-play simulation. The papers will count as 15% of the grade for the project, while the in-class component will count for 5%.

Course Policies

- Successful completion of this course consistent, punctual attendance, completing the readings prior to the start of class, and active participation. If you must miss class due to a conflicting responsibility or an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact me to discuss the situation. I will generally require a short written assignment to be submitted in lieu of class attendance. Any more than 2 absences without prior notification and make-up work will affect your final grade.
- If you think you need to delay taking an exam or submitting a written assignment, you should talk to me, generally at least two weeks before the exam/due date. Such extensions are never guaranteed, but will be based on university policy, exigency of the circumstances, and timeliness of the request (the earlier the better). Any missed exam or written assignment submitted after the deadline without prior authorization will incur a penalty.
- All students are expected to adhere to the highest levels of academic integrity. Violations of university, departmental, and disciplinary standards will not be tolerated and will lead to an F for the course. Information on University-wide definitions and policies regarding academic integrity can be found [here](#).
- Consistent with university policy, all written work must be original to this course. The re-use of papers previously submitted for a prior or concurrent class is not permitted unless discussed in advance with me.
- If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu. Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
- I ask that my undergraduate students refer to me as either Dr. or Professor Thurber. I'm just old-school that way. I use the pronoun "he" and its variants, but am equally comfortable

with the singular “they.” Please let me know how you prefer to be addressed, both in name and pronoun, especially if it differs from what is in the college directory. I will make every effort to address you in the way you wish to be addressed. Please try and do the same for your fellow classmates, as well as for other faculty in the department.

- I am committed to your success in this class – if you feel that you are not performing to your expectations, please come and see me. I am available to answer any questions you may have about course assignments, requirements or content. I generally answer e-mails within 24 hrs on weekdays, and would be happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you if you are unavailable during my posted office hours.

Letter Grade Distribution

You will receive a percentage score for each assignment above that can be translated into a letter grade according to the scale below:

Percentage	Letter Grade
> 93.00	A
90.00 - 92.99	A-
87.00-89.99	B+
83.00 - 86.99	B
80.00 - 82.99	B-
77.00-79.99	C+
70.00 - 76.99	C
60.00 - 69.99	D
< 60.00	F

Class Schedule

All readings should be completed before the class for which they are listed..

Week 1: Introduction – Virtual Week

Tuesday 01/18 and Thursday 01/20: No In-Person Class

- Read Syllabus and watch Syllabus Video
- Read, Schelling, “Confidence in Crisis” pp. 55-58
- Watch *Raya and the Last Dragon*

Week 2: Understanding Global Politics

Tuesday 01/25: Simulation Activity

Thursday 01/27: Approaches to the Study of IR

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Chs. 1 - 2
- James Mattis on Reading

Week 3: Analytic Frameworks of IR

Tuesday 02/01: The Paradigms

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 3
- Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories”

Thursday 02/03: The Levels of Analysis

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 4

Week 4: War and Security

Tuesday 02/08: Causes of War

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 6

Thursday 02/10: Explaining World War 1

- Nau, “World War 1: World on Fire”

Week 5: Collective Security?

Tuesday 02/15: International Institutions and Law

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 7

Thursday 02/17: The League of Nations and WWII

- Nye and Welch, “The Failure of Collective Security and WWII”

Week 6: Statecraft and Foreign Policy

Tuesday 02/22: The State and the Tools of Statecraft

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 5

Thursday 02/24: Cuban Missile Crisis Simulation

- Simulation Prep Materials

Week 7: A More Global IR

Tuesday 03/01: Gender and IR Theory

- Pevehouse and Goldstein, "Gender Theories of IR"
- Tickner, "Man, the State, and War"
- Cohn, "Gender and National Security"

Thursday 03/03: Race and IR

- Grice, "Towards Non-Western Histories in IR Textbooks"
- Zvobgo and Loken, "Why Race Matters in International Relations"
- Bhambra et al, "Why is Mainstream IR Blind to Racism?"
- Henderson, "DuBois, Locke, and the Howard School's Challenge to White Supremacist IR Theory"

Week 8: MIDTERM WEEK

Tuesday 03/08: Review Day

- Midterm exam available online at 11AM

Thursday 03/10: MIDTERM EXAM (in class or at home)

- Midterm exam due Thursday at midnight

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Political Economy I

Tuesday 03/22: Finance and Monetary Policy

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 8, pp. 257-274
- CFR, World 101, "Monetary Policy and Currencies"

Thursday 03/24: Trade and Development

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 8, pp. 275-293
- CFR, World 101, "Trade"

Week 10: Globalization

Tuesday 03/29: Contemporary Economic Challenges

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 8, pp. 294 - End
- Begin Prep for Case Study Presentations

Thursday 03/31: Case Study: The 2009 Financial Crisis

- Case Study Presentations

Week 11: Global Governance

Tuesday 04/05: Intergovernmental Organizations

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 9, pp. 307-342
- Glas, "Long-term Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia"

Thursday 04/07: Nongovernmental Organizations

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 9, pp. 342-End
- Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, Excerpt
- Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Excerpt

Week 12: Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention

Thursday 04/14: Human Rights

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 10

Tuesday 04/12: Humanitarian Intervention

- Pape, "A Pragmatic Standard for Humanitarian Intervention"
- Tierney, "The Legacy of Obama's 'Worst Mistake' "

Week 13: UNSC Simulation: Protests in Bahrain

Tuesday 04/19: Simulation Day 1

- Simulation Prep Memo Due

Thursday 04/21: Simulation Day 2

Week 14: Global Environmental Politics

Tuesday 04/26: Common Pool Resources

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 11

Thursday 04/28: Global Climate Change

- CFR, World 101, "Climate Change"
- COP 26 Agreement

Week 15: Human Security

Tuesday 05/03: Global Migration

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 12, pp. 425-442
- CFR, World101, "Migration"
- Boehler and Pecanha, "The Global Refugee Crisis: Region by Region"

Thursday 05/05: Global Health

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Ch. 12, pp. 442–End
- CFR, World101, "Covid-19"

Final Simulation : *Infectious Disease Outbreak in Colombia*

- Simulation Prep Memo Due Tuesday May 10 at midnight.
- Simulation: Thursday 05/12: 10:00am-11:50am