

Introduction to World Politics

PSC 10400-L

Fall 2019

Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45

NAC 1/203

Instructor

Nicholas Rush Smith

nsmith3@ccny.cuny.edu

212-650-5238

Office Hours

Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:00

NAC 4/143B

Other Times by Appointment

Course Overview: Where do states come from? What is a state anyway? Why would some people want membership in a state while others try to avoid it? To what extent do states shape the use of violence? How can we understand states' interactions with one another in the international system? This course uses questions like these to introduce students to the study of world politics. In doing so, it serves as a foundational course for further study in two subfields of political science: comparative politics and international relations. The course is divided into two sections that tell the story of the broad evolution of international politics. The first section examines where states come from and how they are organized. The second section explores theories of international politics that help us understand why states interact with one another as they do, along with contemporary issues in international politics.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course students will gain:

- A stronger understanding of world politics
- Insight on foundational questions in comparative politics about the growth and development of states
- An introductory understanding of the major theoretical schools in international relations
- Critical thinking skills that enable the application of these theoretical schools to contemporary issues in world politics

Course Assignments: The primary assignments for the course are two in-class exams and 10 blog entries. Exams will be based on both the in-class lectures and the course readings. Students are, therefore, responsible for both sources of information. Blog entries are designed to be responses to ten specific prompts that engage the readings (see separate guide for instructions).

Grading and Evaluation: The course will be graded on a 100-point scale. Each exam is worth 30 points. Blog completion is worth 30 points (10 blog entries x 3 points per blog). Class attendance and participation will be worth an additional 10 points.

- Exam 1: Oct. 17 (Section I)
- Exam 2: Per CCNY Final Exam Schedule (Section II)

- Blog Entries: 10 Entries on dates specified below

Attendance Policy: Participation in class discussions is crucial to the success of the course. **As such, students will lose five points from the participation portion of their grade for each class missed (i.e. 5% off the final course grade for each class missed up to a maximum of 10% off the final grade).** I will allow one unexcused absence without penalty. However, each subsequent unexcused absence will incur this penalty. I will have a sign-in sheet available at the beginning of class for students to sign showing they are present. If students are there on time, they should sign-in upon entering class. If a student is late and I have already picked up the sign in sheet, it is a student's responsibility to let me know that they are present after class. Otherwise, they will be counted as absent. I start class promptly and it is a student's responsibility to be there on time.

If a student writes me *before* class letting me know about an emergency that requires them missing class (e.g. sickness, death in the family), I will generally excuse the absence if a student acts in good faith. I will not accept excuses after the fact, though. **If a student misses an exam, a note from a relevant authority attesting to the emergency (e.g. doctor) is required.** I will not allow students to take an exam if such a note is not provided and if the reason for missing the exam is not legitimate (e.g. illness; family emergency). Late work hours or a delayed train are not legitimate excuses for missing a class or exam. **To encourage frequent attendance, there will be occasional unannounced in-class extra-credit activities, the points for which will only be available to students who were present in class that day.**

Current Events Reading: As this is a course on World Politics, students are expected to keep abreast of the news happening in the world. We will begin most classes with a brief discussion of the news for that week and try to apply conceptual tools learned in class to help us understand the event better. To facilitate these discussions, students are required to sign up for an electronic subscription to either the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* and to read its world coverage. Free electronic subscriptions are available to both newspapers to all students using a CUNY email address.

You can sign up for free access to the Times website and mobile apps here:
<https://myaccount.nytimes.com/verification/edupass>

You can sign up for free access to the Wall Street Journal website and mobile apps here:
<http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cunyufs/2018/03/09/wall-street-journal-access-for-cuny-faculty-and-students/>

Books to Purchase: Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics*, 5th Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). ISBN 9780190299798.

Either the paperback, loose-leaf, or electronic version is acceptable. Each is available from the CCNY online bookstore here:
<https://ccny.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php?action=browse#books/1510406/>

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

Course Outline

Section I: Understanding the Evolution of the State

Week 1 – Course Introduction

Class 1 Aug. 27 – No Class
Professor Presenting at Conference

Class 2 – Aug. 29 – Course Introduction
No reading

Week 2 – The Emergence of Political Power

Class 1 Sept. 3 – In the beginning...
James C. Scott. 2017. *Against the Grain: A Deep History of Early States*.
New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 1.

Class 2 Sept. 5 – No Class
CUNY Cancellation

Week 3 – Fragile States

Class 1 Sept. 10 – Caging and the Origins of States
Michael Mann. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume 1, A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. New York: Cambridge University Press: 73-104.

Class 2 Sept. 12 – The Fragility of Early States
James C. Scott. 2017. *Against the Grain: A Deep History of Early States*.
New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 6.

DUE Blog 1

Week 4 – Avoiding Early States

Class 1 Sept. 17 – No Class
CUNY Cancellation

Class 2 Sept. 19 – Escaping the State in SE Asia
James Scott. 2010. *The Art of Not Being Governed*. New Haven: Yale University Press: 127-177.

DUE Blog 2

Week 5 – War Making and State Making

Class 1 Sept. 24 – States as Protection Rackets
Tilly, Charles. 1985. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Class 2 Sept. 26 –The Challenges of Extending Institutions across Space
Jeffrey Herbst. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 35-57

DUE Blog 3

Week 6 – States and Violence in the Long-Run

Class 1 Oct. 1 – No Class
CUNY Cancellation

Class 2 Oct. 3 – Violence before States
Steven Pinker. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. New York: Penguin: 31-58.

Week 7 – States, Discipline, and Violence

Class 1 Oct. 8 – No Class
CUNY Cancellation

Class 2 Oct. 10 – States and the Shaping of Habits and Violence
Robert Muchembled. 2012. *A History of Violence*. Malden, MA: Polity: Chapter 7.

DUE Blog 4

Week 8 – The Failures of State Discipline

Class 1 Oct. 15 – Avoiding the State Today
James Scott. 1998. *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven: Yale University Press: 103-147.

Class 2 Oct. 17 – Exam 1
EXAM 1

Section II: Understanding States in the International System

Week 9 – Introducing the Study of International Relations

Class 1 Oct. 22 - The Evolution of International Politics
Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapter 2.

Class 2 Oct. 24 – Introducing Human Security
Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapter 7.

DUE Blog 5

Week 10 – The Realist Perspective

Class 1 Oct. 29 – Realism

Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 75-87.

Thucydides. “Melian Dialogue.” In *The Peloponnesian War*.

John Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 1-36.

Class 2 Oct. 31 – Realist Perspectives on Transitional Justice and Humanitarian Intervention

Jack Goldsmith and Steven Krasner. 2003. “The Limits of Idealism.” *Daedalus* 132 (1): 47-63.

Rajan Menon. 2016. *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*. New York: Oxford University Press: Chapter 2.

DUE Blog 6

Week 11 – The Liberal Perspective

Class 1 Nov. 5 – Liberalism

Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 87-102.

Immanuel Kant. “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” in *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1795), pp. 117-128.

Class 2 Nov. 7 – A Liberal Perspective on Transitional Justice and Humanitarian Intervention

Nsongurua J. Udombana, “When Neutrality Is a Sin: The Darfur Crisis and the Crisis of Humanitarian Intervention in Sudan,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (4), 2005: 1149-1199.

DUE Blog 7

Week 12 – The Constructivist Perspective

Class 1 Nov. 12 – Constructivism

Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 112-116.

Ted Hopf. 1998. “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory.” *International Security* 23 (1): 171-200.

Alex Wendt. 1992. "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46 (2): 391-425.

Class 2 Nov. 14 – A Constructivist Perspective on Transitional Justice
Mahmood Mamdani. 2007. "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency." *The London Review of Books* 29 (5), 8 March.

DUE Blog 8

Week 13 – Perspectives on the Intervention in Syria

Class 1 Nov. 19 – A Case Study in the Politics of Intervention: America and The Syrian Civil War

Realist Perspectives

Kissinger, Henry A. 2012. "Syrian Intervention Risks Upsetting Global Order." *Washington Post*. June 1.

Walt, Stephen M. 2015. "Could We Have Stopped This Tragedy?" *Foreign Policy*. September 21.

Liberal Perspectives

Cassidy, John. 2015. "America's Vital Interest in Syria." *New Yorker*. November 3.

Cohen, Nick. 2015. "Future Generations Will Despise Our 'Realism' on Syria." *Guardian*. September 12.

Constructivist Perspectives

Savage, Dan. 2013. "Part 1: Idealism or Realism When it Comes to Syria?" *New York Times*. September 25.

Heydemann, Steven. 2016. "Why the United States Hasn't Intervened in Syria." *Washington Post*. March 14.

Filkins, Dexter. 2016. "Assad Speaks." *New Yorker*. November 1

Class 2 Nov. 21 – No Class
Professor Presenting at Conference

DUE Blog 9

Week 14 – Debating Intervention

Class 1 Nov. 26 – In Class Debate: After Barak Obama laid down a "red line" against Assad's use of chemical weapons in Syria, should he have authorized militarily intervention when Assad subsequently used such weapons?

Rhodes, Ben. 2018. *The World as It is: A Memoir of the Obama White House* (New York: Random House): Chapter 18.

DUE Blog 10

Class 2 Nov. 28 – Class Canceled
Thanksgiving

Week 15 – How can we make the world more prosperous?

Class 1 Dec. 3 – An Overview of Challenges
Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Chap. 8.

Class 2 Dec. 5 – Debates in World Politics: Does unfettered international trade help or harm workers?

Posen, Adam S. 2018. "The Post-American World Economy: Globalization in the Trump Era." *Foreign Affairs*, March-April.

Rodrik, Dani. 2017. "Rescuing Economics from Neoliberalism." *Boston Review*. November 7.

Week 16 – How can we make the world more economically just?

Class 1 Dec. 10 – An Overview of Challenges
Steven Lamy et al. *Introduction to Global Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Chap. 9.

Class 2 Dec. 12 - Debates in World Politics: Does democracy help or harm economic development?

Amartya Sen. 2005. "Human Rights and Capabilities." *Journal of Human Development* 6 (2): 151-66.

Amartya Sen, 2000. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Random House: Chapter 7.

Ashish Thakkar. 2015. *The Lion Awakes: Adventures in Africa's Economic Miracle*. New York: St. Martin's University Press. Chapter 9.

Anonymous. 2017. "Faking It: The Rwandan GDP Growth Myth." *Review of African Political Economy Blog*. <http://roape.net/2017/07/26/faking-rwandan-gdp-growth-myth/>

FINAL EXAM – Per CCNY Final Exam Schedule