

POSC 1020 | INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Section 1
Online (Asynchronous)

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Office Hours: Send me an email to schedule

COURSE DESCRIPTION (CLEMSON CATALOG)

This course is an overview of both theory and practice in contemporary global politics. Topics include the structure of and primary actors in the international system; reasons conflict occurs; and roles of international institutions, law, and policy.

COURSE OVERVIEW

After an introduction of the main theoretical approaches to the study of international relations, the course will focus on three main sections: 1) **conflict and war**, 2) **international political economy**, and 3) **international law and human rights**. Finally, at the end of the semester we will conclude with a discussion of contemporary challenges to the liberal international order. In **Section 1**, we will answer questions like: What are the causes of war? What is the difference between interstate wars and civil wars? What are the causes of terrorism? What is the difference between "hard power" and "soft power"? What is the purpose of defense alliances like NATO? Do democracy and trade prevent war?

In **Section 2**, we will focus on the relation between international politics and economics and explore questions like: What is globalization? What are the benefits of free trade? Why do governments impose protectionist trade barriers such as tariffs and quotas? Who benefits with protectionism (and who pays for it)? What is the relationship between globalization, economic growth, and poverty? Has globalization increased inequality? What are the incentives for companies to become multinational corporations (MNCs)? Why do some people have negative opinions of MNCs? Why do some countries impose controls on the free movement of capital?

Finally, in **Section 3**, we will explore questions like: Why do sovereign states follow international law and cede sovereignty to international organizations? What are the consequences of violating international law? How can states stop violations of human rights abroad? Should the principle of "non-interference" trump the prevention of human rights violations? How are countries cooperating globally to address climate change? At the end of the semester, we will explore the contemporary challenges to the liberal international order and answer questions like: What explains the rise of populism? Why is there a backlash against globalization? What are the consequences of isolationism and protectionism for global security and economic growth? Has the rise of populism and isolationism reshaped U.S. foreign policy priorities?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the main actors and institutions in the international system.
- Compare and contrast the main theoretical approaches to the study of international relations.
- Identify the causes of conflict and cooperation in global politics.
- Understand the main characteristics of the liberal international order, its predecessors, and current challengers.
- Critically evaluate competing arguments in the current debate over globalization.

Global Challenge Learning Outcomes (GCLOs):

- Demonstrate critical thinking through analysis of global challenges.
- Evaluate how varying perspectives influence global challenges.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

This course fulfills the University's Crossings competency for Global Challenges. Students will be presented with a variety of global challenges through the lens of international relations, including war and conflict, globalization and development, international law, and human rights. Students will complete their own analyses of these global issues through different assignments.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

This course does not require any previous knowledge on the subject.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

All readings and materials will be posted by the instructor on **Canvas**, as specified in the class schedule below. Assigned readings should be done **before** the respective week.

GRADING SCALE

Letter grades will be determined in the following way:

A = 90-100 **B = 80-89.99** **C = 70-79.99** **D = 60-69.99** **F = <60**

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Your grade will consist of the following components:

1. Quizzes (3% each) **15%**
 2. Homework Assignments **15%**
 3. One-Pagers (10% each) **30%**
 4. Midterm Exam **20%**
 5. Final Exam **20%**
1. **Quizzes.** There will be 5 quizzes during the semester over the assigned articles and lecture material from that week. Quizzes will be delivered on Canvas (worth 15% of your final grade or 3% each quiz). See quiz deadlines on Canvas.
 2. **Homework Assignments.** There will be a series of homework assignments during the course on topics discussed during the respective week. These could take the form of a brief reading and/or video followed by a short quiz or a written response question. Assignments and deadlines will be posted and announced on Canvas. These assignments will be worth 15% of your final grade.
 3. **One-Pagers.** At the end of weeks 2 (war), 3 (trade), and 5 (human rights), you will write a one-page essay discussing an issue related to the content of that week provided by the instructor. The essay should contain an introduction summarizing your argument or thesis, a body of three paragraphs where you provide evidence in favor of your argument, and a conclusion. Each essay is worth 10% of your final grade. More detailed instructions will be provided on Canvas.

Note on plagiarism: Canvas uses software to identify plagiarism or the use of AI for writing. Please be aware that plagiarizing your report or using AI to write it will result in a **0 grade.**"

4. **Midterm Exam.** There will be a midterm exam covering the content from weeks 1-3. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-response, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions. The midterm exam will be on Canvas and contribute 20% towards your final grade. See date in the schedule below.
5. **Final Exam.** There will be a final exam covering the content from weeks 3-6. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, short-response, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions. The final exam will be on Canvas and contribute 20% towards your final grade. See date in the schedule below.

GRADING POLICIES

I do not round up grades. Regrade requests must be made within three days after your graded assignment has been returned and must be submitted with a written statement of at least 150 words via email. This statement should explain why you think the grade should be changed. Remember that, after re-evaluating your work, your grade may remain unchanged or be adjusted in either direction. There will be no grade changes after the final exam.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized with a 5% reduction in the grade per day unless you provide a documented medical excuse.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Additionally, students are expected not to engage on any behavior that may disrupt the learning process. Students are encouraged to actively participate in an environment of free and open intellectual exchange and mutual respect. Any kind of disrespect towards another individual will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

All infractions of academic dishonesty by undergraduates must be reported to Undergraduate Learning for resolution through that office. In cases of plagiarism instructors

may use the Plagiarism Resolution Form.

Plagiarism, which includes the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts. Graded works generated by artificial intelligence or ghostwritten (either paid or free) are expressly forbidden.

See the Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy website for additional information and the current catalog ("Academic Regulations" section) for the policy. Send questions to UGSintegrity@clemsont.edu.

ACCESSIBILITY

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the instructor know and are encouraged to request accommodations through SAS (Student Accessibility Services) as soon as possible. To request accommodations through SAS, please see this [link](#). You can also reach out to SAS with questions by calling 864-656-6848, email CUSAS@clemsont.edu or visiting SAS at the ASC Suite 239. Contact the office for the most updated drop-in schedule if you would prefer not to schedule an appointment.

THE CLEMSON UNIVERSITY TITLE IX STATEMENT REGARDING NON-DISCRIMINATION

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy or related conditions (including pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, recovery from the foregoing, or medical conditions related to the foregoing), national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sex discrimination (including sex-based harassment and sexual violence) as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This Title IX policy is located on the Access Compliance and Education website. Ms. Alesia Smith is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator, and the Assistant Vice President of Equity Compliance. Her office is located at 223 Brackett Hall, 864-656-3181 and her email address is alesias@clemsont.edu. Remember, email is not a fully secured method of communication and should not be used to discuss Title IX issues.

Clemson University aspires to create a diverse community that welcomes people of different races, cultures, ages, genders, sexual orientation, religions, socioeconomic levels, political perspectives, abilities, opinions, values and experiences.

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

Emergency procedures have been posted in all buildings and on all elevators. Students should be reminded to review these procedures for their own safety. All students and employees should be familiar with guidelines from [Clemson University Public Safety](#).

Clemson University is committed to providing a safe campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. As members of the community, we encourage you to take the following actions to be better prepared in case of an emergency:

1. Familiarize yourself with all possible exits, safer locations, and other key information on the emergency evacuation maps in this building, and those that you visit regularly.
2. Make a plan for how you would Run, Hide, and Fight in case of an active threat in this building, and those that you visit regularly. For example:
 - (a) Run – what are all the possible exits in this building, and the routes to them?
 - (b) Hide – what are the potential hiding locations in this room and building that are out of sight of doors and windows, how do you lock the door(s), how would you barricade the door(s) and windows, where do you turn off the lights?
 - (c) Fight – What tools are available in this room and building, should you have to fight?
3. Ensure you are signed up for emergency alerts. Alerts are only sent when there is a potential threat to safety, a major disruption to campus services, and once-monthly tests.
4. Download the [Rave Guardian](#) app to your phone.
5. Learn what you can do to prepare yourself for the hazards that affect our locations (<http://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/EmergencyManagement/>).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 | May 13-16

- **Topics:** Theories of international relations. Actors, cooperation, and bargaining.
 - **Readings:**
 1. Textbook, pp. 449-457
 2. Wohlforth (1999). "The Stability of a Unipolar World." *International Security*.
 3. Brooks & Wohlforth (2023). "The Myth of Multipolarity: American Power's Staying Power." *Foreign Affairs*.
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Week 2 | May 19-23

- **Topics:** War, collective security, and terrorism.
 - **Readings:**
 1. World Politics, pp. 95-135.
 2. Hedgecock & Person (2022). "Bargaining with Blood: Russia's War in Ukraine" *CSDS, Brussels School of Governance*.
 3. Gartzke (2007). "The Capitalist Peace". *American Journal of Political Science*.
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Week 3 | May 26-30

- **Topics:** International trade, capital and labor mobility, and multinational corporations.
- **Readings:**
 1. Textbook, pp. 507-511, Section 16.5 until p. 526.
 2. The Economist (2018). "A healthy re-examination of free trade's benefits and shocks."
 3. York (2024). "Separating Tariff Facts from Tariff Fictions" *Cato Institute*. [Link](#).
- **One-Pager #1:** Monday, May 26

Week 4 | Jun 2-6

- **Topics:** International monetary system
 - **Readings:**
 1. Textbook: pp. 526-527; Section 16.3 (pp. 511-519).
 2. Siripurapu & Berman (2023). "The Dollar: The World's Reserve Currency." *Council on Foreign Relations*. [Link](#).
 3. Ghosh & Ostry (2009). "Choosing an Exchange Rate Regime." *Finance and Development*.
 - **One-Pager #2:** Monday, June 2
 - **Midterm Exam:** Friday, June 6
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Week 5 | Jun 9-13

- **Topics:** International law and human rights.
 - **Readings:**
 1. Textbook, pp. 467-473.
 2. United Nations (1948). "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." [Link](#).
 3. Anderson (2015). "The Danger of Dehumanizing Others." *Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University*.
 4. Stanton (2025). "The Ten Stages of Genocide." *Genocide Watch*.
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Week 6 | Jun 16-20

- **Topics:** The Liberal International Order: Achievements and Challenges.
- **Readings:**
 1. Council on Foreign Relations (2020). "What is the Liberal World Order?" [Link](#).
 2. Lake et al. (2021). "Challenges to the Liberal Order." *International Organization*.
 3. BBC News (2015). "How To End Poverty in 15 years." [Link](#).
- **One-Pager #3:** Monday, June 16
- **Final Exam:** June 20