



POLI 2520: World Politics

Fall 2021

Professor Leah Sarson

Schedule:	Live lectures will occur during our course timeslot of Tuesdays/Thursdays 10:05-11:25. Lectures will be recorded and made available online. Once per unit we will have mandatory live discussion sessions during our scheduled timeslot.
Location:	Online
Office Hours:	Online, by appointment (N.B. Office hours are opportunities to meet with your professor or TA to discuss the course material. Please don't hesitate to make use of them.)
Email:	Leah.Sarson@dal.ca
Course Website:	Brightspace
TAs:	TBD

A note for fall 2021: Although there is a bright spot on the horizon, we remain engulfed in a global pandemic. Many of us are confronting extraordinary and very difficult circumstances. My focus is your academic success. If you are unable to complete course work or encounter other obstacles this term, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Course Description

POLI 2520 is a general introduction to the basic concepts and theories of world politics and power in a global context. The study of world politics or International Relations (IR) is about alternatively seeking to understand, explain, or predict events in world politics. As a subfield of political science, IR offers theoretical, conceptual, and methodological tools to help us analyze why states and other actors in the international system behave the way that they do. We ask key questions like why some states choose to cooperate while others engage in conflict? What is power and how do actors pursue it? How does international law constrain behaviour in an anarchic world? This course introduces students to these essential questions of world politics.

The term is divided into three units, beginning with an overview of modern international relations and the state system. From there, we look at the fundamental theories and approaches of International Relations, including realism, liberalism, constructivism, and critical approaches. The second half of the course applies these theories to central themes in global politics with a focus on conflict and cooperation, including terrorism, non-state actors, international law, human rights, and international institutions. We conclude with a look at the challenges facing IR in both theory and practice.

Course objectives include:

- Identifying the key concepts and theories in IR and applying them to the world around us and to scholarly ideas;

- Recognizing and describing power structures in global politics;
- Constructing and communicating compelling analytical arguments and a broader analytical perspective in response to the course material;
- Critically assessing world events and global politics;
- Encouraging curiosity about the world around us and our place in it.

Required Readings

Steven L. Lamy, John S. Masker, John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, *Introduction to Global Politics*, 6th ed. OUP 2020. (Available for purchase online.)

Please note that the contributors to this text are insufficiently diverse. Textbook readings will be supplemented with journal articles, book chapters, and occasional news media. Some readings will be available on the Brightspace page as PDFs and others are available on the library website. Please note that where available, I expect you to find the articles/book chapters yourselves on the library website or Google Scholar; the ability to find appropriate articles online is essential to your academic success. The librarians and TAs are available if you have trouble sourcing articles. Additionally, while there are weeks dedicated to the study of gender and race, those questions of power will suffuse all our discussions.

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

At university we advance knowledge by building on the work of other people. Academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic products. Acknowledgement of other people's work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information. It is the student's responsibility to seek assistance to ensure that these standards are met. We will be using Urkund in this class as a tool to avoid academic integrity issues.

In your work, please be sure to:

- Make sure you understand Dalhousie's policies on academic integrity. Please visit http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity/academic-policies.html
- Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else.
- Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work (including diagrams, videos, etc.).
- Do not use the work of another from the Internet or any other source and submit it as your own.
- When you use the ideas of other people (paraphrasing), make sure to acknowledge the source.

- Do not submit work that has been completed through collaboration or previously submitted for another assignment without permission from all instructors involved.
- This is not a comprehensive list. If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, please contact me or a TA. The library also offers services to help you ensure your academic integrity.
- Academia can be incredibly stressful. Whatever you do, do not be tempted to plagiarize or otherwise cheat. It is not worth it. Instructors are required to report every suspected offence.

Classroom Etiquette

The classroom (both online and in-person) must be a safe, equitable, and professional learning environment in which students are encouraged to express their views in a collegial and respectful manner. To maintain a healthy learning environment, there is a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination and harassment of any sort.

Please familiarize yourself with the Dalhousie University rules and regulations on student rights and responsibilities, which can be found here: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities.html

Communication with the Professor

In all email communications with me, please include **POLI 2520** in the subject line and proper greetings and salutations. Always sign-off with your full name. During the work week, I will do my best to respond in 24 hours.

Office hours are by appointment only and will be conducted online via Collaborate Ultra.

Course content will be posted on Brightspace. Please check it twice weekly for announcements, assignments, discussions, and other resources.

Assessment (full details below)

1. Discussion Groups (15%)
2. Midterm (20%)
3. Term Paper (40%)
4. Final (25%)

Letter grades have a grade point assigned that is used to calculate your GPA (Grade Point Average). The following table explains and defines Dalhousie’s grading system and shows the GPA value that corresponds with each letter grade.

Grade	Grade Point Value		Definition	Notes
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.00	85-89		
A-	3.70	80-84		

B+	3.30	77-79	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
B	3.00	73-76		
B-	2.70	70-72		
C+	2.30	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
C	2.00	60-64		
C-	1.70	55-59		
D	1.00	50-54	Marginal Pass	Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of 'C' is required).
F	0.00	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.
INC	0.00		Incomplete	
W	Neutral and no credit obtained		Withdrew after deadline	
ILL	Neutral and no credit obtained		Compassionate reasons, illness	
P	Neutral		Pass	
TR	Neutral		Transfer credit on admission	
Pending	Neutral		Grade not reported	

Accessibility

I have attempted to offer multiple representations of our course content (e.g. providing information through both video and text). If you encounter any content that is not accessible or perceptible for you, please do not hesitate to inform me. Our course should be equally accessible to all students.

For students experiencing or anticipating barriers to their learning environments or other issues, please see the Accommodations Office. Accommodation levels the playing field to support your success. It reduces or removes barriers to your learning to ensure fair and equitable access to your classroom, testing or co-op/fieldwork environments. Accommodations can be introduced when a protected characteristic (as defined by provincial human rights legislation) may place you at a disadvantage compared to other students who are not affected by a protected characteristic. I encourage these students to work with the office to ensure that their needs are met.

If you face a serious unexpected challenge during the course for which you require special accommodations, please notify me as far in advance as possible.

Structure of the Course

All course content will be available on Brightspace. This course is organized by units, with each unit comprising several modules. Some weeks will be heavier than others, but you can expect to read around 50 pages per week, view short videos, listen to podcasts, review lecture slides, and participate in discussion groups. The term paper is a scaffolded assignment with a series of deadlines. The university mandates a final exam for this course, which will occur during the exam period.

Please note that while I have done my best to finalize the syllabus, it may be subject to changes as required.

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

UNIT 1 – DEFINE AND DISCOVER

During these first few weeks, we will provide an overview of the subfield of International Relations. What is the study of International Relations? How do we think about it and how do we do it? The second week explores the emergence of the contemporary world order, beginning with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 through to the modern post-Cold War Era post-1989. This section is an essential foundation of the key concepts and actors that we discuss in this course. By the end of this unit, you should be able to identify and define central concepts and critically link them to historical events.

Module 1 – September 7

1.1. Course Orientation

For this module's readings, try to get a sense what a means to be a student of International Relations (IR). Think about what drew you to this course and what you hope to get out of it.

- Introduction to Global Politics, Chapter 1
- Francis Gavin, "It's Never Been a Better Time to Study IR," *Foreign Policy*, February 20, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/20/its-never-been-a-better-time-to-study-international-relations-trump-foreign-policy/>
- Film: Episode 1 of PBS' *Commanding Heights*

Additional Resources:

- Paul N. Edwards, "How to Read a Book, v5.0, School of Information, University of Michigan, <https://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf> (*Please note: The tips in this document are also generally applicable to reading journal articles.*)
- Stephen Van Evera, 1997, "Appendix: How to Write a Paper," *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 123-128.

Module 2 – September 9

2. Trying to Make Sense of the World Around Us

For this module's readings, think about starting to put the puzzle pieces together. Think about concepts like order and power; how does the *way* we think about them change *how* we think about them?

- Graham Allison, "The Myth of the Liberal Order," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-06-14/myth-liberal-order>
- Rebecca Friedman Lissner and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "The Liberal Order Is More Than a Myth," *Foreign Affairs*, 31 July 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-07-31/liberal-order-more-myth>
- Gurminder K. Bhambra, et al., "Why Is Mainstream International Relations Blind to Racism?" *Foreign Policy*, 3 July 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/03/why-is-mainstream-international-relations-ir-blind-to-racism-colonialism/>

Additional Resources:

- Christian Reus-Smit, 2020, "International Relations: A Very Short Introduction, OUP Press, Chapter 1.

Module 3 – September 14 and 16

3. Knowing World History, But Whose History?

For this week's module, try to make connections between chapter 1 and chapter 2 of the text. How does how we study history affect how we understand history? Whose history is ignored in the text?

3.1. Pre-Cold War

3.2. Post-Cold War

- Introduction to Global Politics, Chapter 2
- Anjali Dayal, "We Must Reckon with the Terrible Realities Hidden in Plain Sight," 02 April 2018, <https://onbeing.org/blog/anjali-dayal-we-must-reckon-with-the-terrible-realities-hidden-in-plain-sight/?s=03>.
- Film: Episode 2 and 3 of PBS' *Commanding Heights*

September 21 – Discussion Day 1

UNIT 2 – ANALYZE AND APPLY

This section of the course explores the core approaches (sometimes called theories or lenses) that International Relations scholars apply to better understand and explain world politics. Each approach offers its own criteria for making sense of the world, including particular assumptions and concepts. By the end of this unit, you should be able to identify, explain, and apply the key approaches to studying International Relations and link their development to a particular historical era. When you are thinking about these theories and approaches, remember IR

Professor Robert Cox's famous 1981 dictum that "theory is always for someone and for some purpose."

Module 4 – September 23

4. Studying International Relations

For this module's readings, think back to what we've discussed so far and how these scholars' ideas might change how you understand our course material. Keep these ideas in mind as we move forwards in our course.

- Stephen McGlinchey, Rosie Walters, and Dana Gold, 2017, "Getting Started with International Relations Theory," In *International Relations Theory*, eds. Stephen McGlinchey, Rosie Walters and Christian Scheinpflug. <https://www.e-ir.info/publication/international-relations-theory/>
- Marysia Zalewski, 1996, "All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up': theories, theorists, theorising," in *International Theory Positivism and Beyond*, eds Smith, Booth, and Zalewski. Cambridge University Press, 340-353.

Module 5 – September 28 and October 5

(N.B. No class on September 30 in honour of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)

Paper idea due September 28

5. Dominant (Anachronistic?) Approaches to Studying IR

5.1. Realism and Neorealism

5.2. Liberalism and "Neoliberalism"

This module's readings introduce you to the traditional or orthodox approaches to studying IR. Their development is linked to key moments in history as scholars attempted to respond to major world changes and events.

- *Introduction to Global Politics*, pp. 76-104 (first part of chapter 3)
- Stephen Walt, 1998, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110, 29-46
- Jack Snyder 2004, "One World, Rival Theories." *Foreign Policy*, no. 145, 52-62.

Module 6 – October 7 and 12

6. "Critical" Approaches to Studying IR

This module's readings explore the theories or approaches that emerged in response to realism and liberalism. These readings offer a primer on these lenses and introduce you to one of the germinal pieces in the literature.

6.1. Constructivism

6.2. Marxism and Others

- *Introduction to Global Politics*, pp. 104-121 (second part of chapter 3)
- Theys, Pal, Gerreria, and McMorro, 2017, "Chapters 4-7: Constructivism, Marxism, Critical Theory, and Poststructuralism," In *International Relations Theory*, eds. Stephen

McGlinchey, Rosie Walters and Christian Scheinpflug. <https://www.e-ir.info/publication/international-relations-theory/> (Use this as an additional resource.)

- Alexander Wendt, 1992, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics” *International Organization* 46.2, 391-425.

Module 7 – October 14 and 19

7. “Alternative” Approaches to Studying IR

These readings consider who is left out or marginalized by the more conventional approaches. They encourage you to think about alternative ways of understanding the world around us that yield different perspectives. As you read, think about what “critical” or “alternative” means. Critical of what? Alternative to what? How can these lenses help us understand the world around us and how we think about world politics?

7.1. Gender and International Relations (aka Feminist International Relations)

7.2. Non-Western Approaches to International Relations

7.3. Race and International Relations

- J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg, 2016, “Feminism,” In *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 4th edition, eds. Dunne, Kurki, and Smith, pp. 288-308.
- Annick Wibben, 2004, “Feminist international relations: Old debates and new directions,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 10(2), 97-114.
- Hayden King, 2017, “The Erasure of Indigenous Thought in Foreign Policy,” *OpenCanada*. <https://www.opencanada.org/features/erasure-indigenous-thought-foreign-policy/>.
- Olivia U. Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam, 2018, “Postcolonial Politics: An Introduction,” In *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics*,” eds. O. Rutazibwa and R. Shilliam, Routledge.
- Black History Month Interviews, 2019, E-IR, https://www.e-ir.info/2019/10/31/black-history-month-interviews/?utm_content=buffer8dc0f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

October 21 – Discussion Day 2

October 26 – Midterm

UNIT 3 – REFLECT AND PRACTICE

International Relations’ primary concerns revolve around managing conflict and promoting cooperation between actors in world politics. The following weeks focus on how political actors behave in the context of contemporary global challenges. By the end of this unit, you should be comfortable analyzing world events through the various lenses discussed in the previous unit. You should also be able to question and dissect who benefits from particular approaches and recognize marginalized voices.

Module 8 – October 28 and November 2

8. International Actors and Institutions

These readings offer an introduction to one of the essential pieces in the IR literature and provide insight into how international actors and institutions work on the ground. Think about how the previous unit helps you make sense of the political developments explored this week.

- Introduction to Global Politics, Chapter 5
- Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 1998, “International norm dynamics and political change,” *International Organization*, Autumn, 887-917.
- Stephanie C. Hofmann and Christian Kreuder-Sonnen, 2020, “How international organizations are stepping up to respond to the pandemic,” *The Washington Post*, 4 May 2020.
- Adam Chapnick, 2020, “Ottawa’s Ill-Fated Quest for a UN Security Council Seat,” *Policy Options*, 19 June 2020. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2020/ottawas-ill-fated-quest-for-a-un-security-council-seat/>

Module 9 – November 4 and 16

Term paper outline due November 5

Peer-to-peer outline feedback due November 16

9. Security

This is a heavier week, with the assumption that you will use the reading week to catch-up on whatever you can’t get to this week. This module presents key concepts in security studies and some central concepts and ideas that ground much of the work of IR scholars.

- Introduction to Global Politics, Chapter 6 and 7
- Jennifer Welsh, 2016, “The Responsibility to Protect after Libya and Syria,” *Daedalus* 145:4, 75-87. (N.B. There is another piece with the same title by Zifcak; don’t get confused.)
- Hadley Freeman, 2017, “What Do Many Lone Attackers Have in Common? Domestic Violence,” *The Guardian*, 28 March 2017.
- Jessica Davis, 2020, “Incel-related violence is terrorism – and the world should start treating it that way,” *The Globe and Mail*, 20 May 2020.
- Film: Fog of War (2003) (available on the library website)
- Film: Interview with Professor Aisha Ahmad: Jihad and Company: The Black Market Funding Terrorism, *World Affairs*, Published on Jan 11, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvZyvbNplsY>

Module 10 – November 18 and 23

10. The Practice of International Relations

This module’s readings explore foreign policy-making and diplomacy in the context of world politics. Think about who is behind the events, actors, and institutions that we’ve discussed over

the past few weeks. Think about how a policy-maker might apply the theories and approaches discussed in unit 2 to help with decision- and policy-making.

- Introduction to Global Politics, Chapter 4
- Stephen McGlinchey, “Chapter 2: Diplomacy,” *International Relations*, ed. Stephen McGlinchey, <https://www.e-ir.info/publication/beginners-textbook-international-relations/>

Module 11 – November 25 and 30

***Term paper due November 30 *** (two-day grace period)

11. Global Governance Challenges

11.1. Health & Environment

11.2. Economy

This module’s readings offer the chance to put together the concepts, theories, actors, and ideas that we have discussed. Think about how world politics works in the real world, outside of your textbook. Think back to why you wanted to study IR and what you have learned. How can what you’ve learned in this course connect to other courses?

- *Introduction to Global Politics*, Chapter 8 and 10 (not chapter 9)
- Daniel Drezner, 2020, “The Song Remains the Same: International Relations After Covid-19,” *International Organization*, 74 (supplement): E18-E35.

December 2 – Discussion Day 3

- Maja Zehfuss, 2019, “Chapter 28: What can we do to change the world??” In *Global Politics: A New Introduction*, 3rd ed., eds. J. Edkins and M. Zehfuss, Routledge.

Final Exam TBD

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all assignments to the appropriate folder on Brightspace. Please note that unless otherwise indicated the folder will close at 11:59 pm on the due date and you will not be able to submit without making prior arrangements with me. Students who do not make prior arrangements will receive a zero on the assignment.

1. Discussion Groups (15%) – September 21, October 21, December 2

Students will be divided into small set groups. Each group member will be required to lead or co-lead one discussion session. Students will then provide marks for each other using a rubric.

Failure to attend a group session without a valid reason *discussed in advance* will result in a zero.

2. Midterm Assignment (20%) – October 26

3. Term Paper (45%) – Scaffolded Deadlines:

a) Paper Outline (15%) – Due November 5

Please see the outline instructions on Brightspace. Remember: a good outline is as much work as the paper itself, if not more.

b) Paper Outline Feedback (5%) – Due November 16

Paying close attention to the outline instructions, please provide constructive feedback (approximately 50-150 words) for at least two of your fellow group members' paper outlines. All group members must receive at least two sets of comments so be sure to check in on what your fellow group members have done. Don't be afraid to offer respectful constructive criticism. You will be marked on whether you have participated in these discussions and contributed substantively to peer evaluations. Your peers will not assign you a grade.

c) Term Paper (25%) – Due November 30 (plus two-day grace period)

Please see the instructions on Brightspace.

4. Final Exam (20%) – TBD

The final exam will be scheduled by the University Registrar. We do not yet know how the university will conduct exams, but they will not require in-person participation. Please note that the expectations for this exam will reflect the adverse learning environment of our current circumstances. If you will be obliged to be absent from the final exam for some compelling reason (e.g., serious illness or injury, death in your immediate family), you must explain that reason in a letter to the Chair of the Department in advance of the scheduled exam; the Chair will render a decision on the matter. Additional information about the exam will be made available through the term.