

POLS 231 - 500: Introduction to World Politics

Dr. Rotem Dvir

Fall 2025

Class Hours: T / TR @ 03:55p.m. - 05:10p.m.

Location: *HECC 108*

Web: [Course on Canvas](#)

E-mail: rdvir@tamu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:30pm

Office: Allen 3027 (3rd floor)

Course Description

This is a course on international politics and is intended to provide you with an overview of the main theories that help explain and predict a wide variety of events on the global stage. We will address a host of interesting questions like “What are the causes of war?” “Why do international organizations fail in promoting peaceful resolutions of conflicts?” “What model offers good predictions of trade volume within a region?” “How come the Soviet Union collapsed?” and more.

The course covers the tools to identify patterns, meaning, and even some predictability in past and present global events. The overall goal of the course is to help you build a firm foundation of understanding the who, when, how, and why behind real-world international dramas that surround us in time and space. You will obtain knowledge in the history of world politics, what are the conceptual frameworks that explain these events and how can we make predictions about the likely outcomes of future events.

In this course, we will discuss the foundations of conducting research on global politics. A critical aspect is to make you better informed, a better consumer of information and have the capability to apply the knowledge on the foundations of world politics to past, present and future events.

Course Objectives

1. Identify key actors and institutions in world politics and explain their roles and incentives.
2. Understand the varying interests of different state, transnational, and non-state actors.
3. Discuss the major causes and effects of international conflict and cooperation.
4. Think analytically and critically about international interactions with respect to trade, financial and monetary relations, development, international law and norms, human rights, and the global environment.
5. Demonstrate the ability to apply this knowledge to current world problems and readiness to continue learning about issues that should matter to individuals following or interacting in the realm of world politics.

Required Readings

Textbook: *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions, 5th Edition* (2022), by Frieden, Lake, and Schultz, W.W. Norton and Company (Norton's online study tool, Inquisitive, is not required in this course).

- You may use an electronic edition. **This is probably the lowest cost option available.** The publisher has a special deal that includes the textbook and their online study tool for \$57, see link <https://wnorton.com/books/9780393872231>.
- You may **rent** an electronic edition from the TAMU MSC bookstore for \$69.
- You may **purchase** a hardcopy of the book from the TAMU MSC bookstore for \$135.
- If you elect to use an older edition of the textbook, you will be responsible for differences in content between it and the required edition.
- Reading assignments for each week of class are listed on Canvas. *Reading assignments should be completed prior to the relevant meeting.* Additional reading material will be made available ahead of time. Please note that some materials can only be accessed on computers connected to the University's network.

Course Material Copyright: The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By "Handouts," I mean all materials generated for this class, which includes but are not limited to syllabi, slides, and tasks. Because these items are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy handouts (or place them online), unless I expressly grant permission, which I have not. You do not have the right to electronically record (audio and/or video) any part of this class without the express, written consent of the instructor. You also do not have the right to post recordings of any portion of the class online or to distribute by other means.

Tech required

Important information about technology used in this class.

- **General Computer and Internet Access:** All assignments will only be available through Canvas, the university's digital learning system. You will need regular access to a computer and the internet throughout this course.
- **Portable Computing Device Required for Exams:** **You will need to bring a portable computing device with you to take course exams.** Exams will be given through Canvas, but will take place in the classroom or in the Disability Resources Testing center.
- **Permitted Device Types:** You may use a Windows or Apple laptop, a Chromebook, or an iPad. These are the only devices that are compatible with the exam security app we will use (see below). You may NOT use a mobile phone (Android or iOS) or an Android tablet to take exams.
- **Borrowing a Device:** If needed, you may borrow a suitable device from a friend or check out a laptop for temporary use ([More info click here](#)).
- **Tech issues:**
 - If you experience problems with your device before an exam, contact TAMU Help Desk Central (979-845-HELP) for troubleshooting assistance.

- If you experience problems during an exam, let me know immediately. I may be able to help you resolve the issue. I also keep a limited number of paper copies of exams on hand in the event of stubborn issues we cannot resolve.
- **Respondus LockDown Browser:** To enhance the security of the examination process, your portable computing device must have **the TAMU version of Respondus LockDown Browser** installed. This software is free. Instructions on downloading the software, installing, and checking it before exams are available in the Student resource module on Canvas.

Authorized and Prohibited Tools and Resources

Student Rule 20, “Honor System Rules,” states that the only tools and resources students may use in a course are those that have been specifically authorized by the instructor. This means that if you use any tool or resource that I have not specifically authorized, you are likely committing academic misconduct. In such a case, you should immediately stop using that resource and contact me for guidance.

- When in doubt about a tool or resource, you should always contact me to ask for clarification as needed.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) is restricted to specific tasks in this course. In the Student resources module you will find the resource: “Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in POLS 231.” This page describes different types of AI that students might use and clearly specifies if and when each type is an authorized tool or resource in this course.

Course Conduct

Respect is a particularly important Aggie Core Value because it talks to how we as individuals should interact with others. Respect should guide our words and our behavior in the classroom and other course-related interactions (virtual and in-person). This will help produce an environment conducive to learning and scholarship and free of harassment, hostile, or threatening behaviors.

We all must be proactive in helping others and speak up to avoid harm in the case that any of these unwelcome behaviors are observed. I commit to treating all people with dignity and respect. My physical and virtual classrooms and offices are open to all students, and each of you are welcome as you are and valued for who you are.

By its nature, this course will most certainly expose you to opinions and information that may be contrary to your own ideas and understandings. We will see information and be presented positions that may disagree with what we believe is true and best. When this happens, **respectfully engage** and seek to understand the new information and contrary position. Both you and your classmates will be the poorer if you choose agitation or anger instead. **I am always willing to converse via email or to meet with you outside of class to privately discuss any issue or idea that may be troubling to you.**

No matter the strength of any person’s convictions or the information they wield, respectful speaking and listening will be the rule in my course. One of the pillars of the greatness of America and this university is respectful and mutual consideration of our differing perspectives and opinions. We will lean and build upon that pillar in this course.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance will comprise 10% of your midterm and final course grades. **I strongly urge you to plan to attend as many lectures as possible - it is a critical step toward mastering the material, scoring well on the exams, and passing this course.**

- To encourage you to be present for lectures, I will take attendance during every lecture starting on the second week of classes and then assign points accordingly. We will use Canvas to record attendance using a very brief quiz at some point near the middle of each lecture period.
- To earn a perfect attendance score for the final course grade, you will need to attend and respond correctly to the attendance poll during **at least 75% of the lectures** once I have announced that formal attendance scoring has begun. I will announce this in class and via Canvas.
- I will routinely consider excused absences of any type (illness, athletics, etc) to be part of the remaining 25% of lecture days (aka, allotted “miss days”) when calculating your attendance grade.
- I will clearly announce the attendance poll during every class. You may use a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop to respond.
- You should be prepared to answer the attendance poll correctly every day you attend lecture.
- If you have to miss class due to excused absence, you must notify me via email and fill the *Excused absence request form* (link to the form is available on Canvas).

Important: Do not answer an attendance poll if you are not present and seated in the classroom. Do not answer an attendance poll for another student who is not present in the classroom. These are both serious violations of the Aggie Code of Honor and Student Rule 20. I will report and sanction all honor violations.

Grading Policies

Your grade for this course consists of the following:

(1) Attendance (10%): as detailed in the section above.

(2) Home assignments (30%): These activities will be assigned each week and will require you to read several web pages, documents, and/or articles and then complete an “open-article” quiz based on those sources. These sources are designed to help you discover the connections between the concepts and theories we discuss in the course and real-world events and processes.

- You are **to work alone** on these activities. They are graded activities and are labeled in the modules as Scored Assignments.
- You will have **up to two attempts on each HW session**. If you use both attempts, your assigned score will be the most recent score of the two attempts.

(3) Exams (60%): There will be **4 exams** during the semester, each covering the material assigned since the previous exam. The fourth exam will occur during the final exam period, but will NOT be comprehensive.

- All exams will be taken online using **Respondus Lockdown Browser**: This browser is a tool that works with Canvas to help prevent students from accessing during the exam any unau-

thorized applications or information on their desktop/laptop, including other browsers and communications channels.

- Exams will be taken in the classroom. The only exceptions will be students taking a makeup exam or those with an exam-related accommodation from Disability Resources. Students with disability accommodations associated with exams must schedule their exams directly with the Disability Resources Testing Center to occur on the same day the exam is given in the classroom.
- Exams will be available only during an extended class period, with exams usually available up to 5 minutes before the usual lecture start time. Students will be permitted 60 minutes to complete the exam but must submit their exams before the end of the class period even if they have not used all 60 minutes.
- All questions will be multiple-choice, multiple-answer, or true/false.
- Exams will be taken without using any notes, course material, internet searches, or unauthorized assistance or information of any kind.
- **Signing Out:** Every student testing in the classroom MUST present their picture ID and sign the exam roster near the podium after completing the exam but before leaving the classroom (approved IDs include a TAMU ID, Driver's License, Green Card, passport, or other federal or state-issued ID that includes a picture).
- Students without an ID should sign out with me after finishing the exam - they will be unable to receive credit for the exam until I have seen and verified their ID. Students who take the exam but do not sign the roster will NOT receive a score for the exam until they have met with me to help me establish whether this was an oversight or a possible Honor Code violation.

Make-up Policy

Students will be allowed (in most cases, see Student Rule 7) to make-up tasks, provided that they **email me within 24 hours of their absence**. Students are required to submit the *Excused absence request form*. In addition, they must show original evidence of a university-excused absence or a letter from their dean explaining their absence. For instructions on how to obtain a letter from your dean regarding your excused absence, refer to Student Rule 7.2: "The associate dean for undergraduate programs, or the dean's designee, of the student's college may provide a letter for the student to take to the instructor stating that the dean has verified the student's absence as excused" [Student Rule 7](#).

Makeup exams procedures:

- Exams will be provided on **Friday** following the missed exam date.
- Exams will be taken **in-person in a class in the Allen Building between 4:00-5:00pm**.
- Please arrive early to set up your computer for the exam. Late arrivals will cause interference with your taking the test.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned as follows: all grades will be final and will not be changed unless the instructor has made a miscalculation.

- A: ≥ 89.5
 B: $\geq 79.5 - < 89.5$
 C: $\geq 69.5 - < 79.5$
 D: $\geq 59.5 - < 69.5$
 F: < 59.5

Scores & Grades on Canvas: All activity scores will be posted on Canvas. It is **important to recognize that the Total Grade in Canvas is only an approximation and is not your official grade.** I will manually calculate your official midterm and final course grades based on the scores posted in Canvas. You must be careful when using the Total Grade in Canvas to judge your situation in this course.

Late Work Policy

All deadlines in this course will be **before 5pm (not midnight!)** on the designated days, unless otherwise announced in class and via Canvas.

- I will consider all assignments submitted **at or after the posted deadlines** to be late and they will be assigned **a score of zero.**
- The only clocks that count for assignment deadlines are the internal clocks within Canvas. Furthermore, “submitted” means that the assignment has been processed and accepted by Canvas. The time shown by the associated platform for the submission will be the official submission time.
- Submissions made on the actual due dates of assignments will be done so **at your own risk** in the event that technical issues arise.
- This means that any late-breaking technical problems on your end (e.g., computer), the distant end (e.g., Canvas), or in between (e.g., WiFi, internet provider) that occur on the due date and prevent your successful submission of an assignment will **NOT** be acceptable reasons for you to request additional attempts or deadline extensions from me.

In order to avoid from any issues, I recommend:

- Submit assignments early whenever possible.
- Build-in time to deal with tech/submission issues.
- Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from the late work policy.

Communication

The best place to ask questions is in the classroom. If your question is not related to class material or relevant to other students, we can discuss it after class. Communications outside the classroom:

1. Office Hours: Zoom meetings are available weekly (**link through Canvas**). I recommend watching [this Video \(link\)](#) - it is both fun and offers some pointers on office hours. Under some circumstances, I am available to meet outside of office hours, but you must contact me in advance so we can schedule a time that works for both of us.
2. Canvas Announcements: main communications channel is Canvas announcements (automatically forwarded to your TAMU email). To ensure you do not miss any important

changes or updates, you **must check Canvas or your TAMU email for any new announcements at least once a day.**

3. Email: you can **always** email me with any concern you have (class-related or not), but I need your help:
 - To ensure that I reply in a timely-manner, use you TAMU email (no messages through Canvas).
 - Please ensure that every subject line in every email starts with your course identifier, followed by the reason you are contacting me (Example: Subject: POLS 231 - Request for excused absence).
 - You can expect me to reply to emails within 24 hours during the work week.
 - I will not reply to emails on the weekend, except for urgent matters.
 - As with all business related correspondence, please include an appropriate salutation, identify yourself, and write in complete sentences.

Students with Disabilities

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on campus. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services at 979-845-1637 or email to disability@tamu.edu. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism statement and Policy

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Student Rule 20, Section 20.1.2.3](#)).

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website <https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>. Always remember:

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Wk	Day	Date	Topic	Events to remember	Submissions
1	T	08/26	Course Intro & Intro Vol. I		
	TR	08/28	Intro Vol. II & History Part I		
2	T	09/02	History Part II		
	TR	09/04	Ch.2 (Intersts, Interactions) Part I		
3	T	09/09	Ch.2 (Intersts, Interactions) Part II & Game Theory		
	TR	09/11	EXAM #1	Intro, Chpts 1-2, Game Theory	HWs 1-3: FRI 9/12
4	T	09/16	Ch.3 (Why Wars?) Part I		
	TR	09/18	Ch.3 (Why Wars?) Part II		
5	T	09/23	Ch.4 (Domestic Politics & War) Part I		
	TR	09/25	Ch.4 Part II & Ch. 5 part I		
6	T	09/30	Ch.5 (International Institutions & War) Part II		
	TR	10/02	Ch.6 (Non-state Actors) Part I		
7	T	10/07	Ch.6 (Non-state Actors) Part II		
	TR	10/09	MID TERM EXAM (#2)	Chpts 3-6	HWs 4-7: FRI 10/10
8	T	10/14	NO CLASS		
	TR	10/16	Ch.7 (Trade) Part I		
9	T	10/21	Ch.7 Part II & Ch. 8 Part I		
	TR	10/23	Ch.8 (Global Finance) Part II		
10	T	10/28	Ch.9 (Monetary Relations) Part I		
	TR	10/30	Ch.9 (Monetary Relations) Part II		
11	T	11/04	Ch.10 (Wealth, Poverty) Part I		
	TR	11/06	Ch.10 (Wealth, Poverty) Part II		
12	T	11/11	EXAM #3	Chpts 7-10	
	TR	11/13	Ch.11 (International Laws & Norms) Part I		HWs 8-11: FRI 11/14
13	T	11/18	Ch.11 Part II & Ch. 12 Part I		
	TR	11/20	Ch.12 (Human Rights) Part II		
14	T	11/25	Ch.13 (Global Environment) Part I		
	TR	11/27	NO CLASS		
15	T	12/02	Ch.13 (Global Environment) Part II		
	TR	12/04	Ch.14 (Global Order Challenges) & Course Wrap		
	F	12/12	HW 12-14		
	TR	12/15	EXAM #4	Chpts 11-14	

Course Schedule

This is a **projected schedule** for the course. I will announce any major changes to this schedule, especially exam dates. Canvas will always be the default source for due dates, exam dates, and other major events and deadlines.

Notice of Nondecriminalization

Texas A&M University is committed to providing safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and work environments for all members of the University community. The University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment or admission, and the

public regardless of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. Texas A&M University will promptly, thoroughly, and fairly investigate and resolve all complaints of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), complicity and related retaliation based on a protected class in accordance with System Regulation 08.01.01, University Rule 08.01.01.M1, Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) 08.01.01.M1.01, and applicable federal and state laws. In accordance with Title IX and its implementing regulations, Texas A&M does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity, including admissions and employment. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies: Jennifer M. Smith, TAMU Associate VP & Title IX Coordinator at YMCA Ste 108, College Station, TX 77843, 979-458-8407, or email civilrights@tamu.edu. For other reporting options, visit <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr> to locate the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Civil rights, Free speech and Title IX policies

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit discrimination and harassment based on an individual's race, color, sex, (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic. This includes forms of sex-based violence, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, dating/domestic violence, and stalking.

Students can report discrimination/harassment, access supportive resources, or learn more about their options for resolving complaints on the [University's Civil rights & Title IX webpage](#).

Pregnancy Accommodations

Texas A&M provides reasonable accommodations to students due to pregnancy and/or related conditions, such as childbirth, recovery and lactation. Students should contact the University's [Pregnancy Coordinator](#) as soon as they become aware of the need for accommodation. Depending on the circumstances, accommodations could include extended time to complete assignments or exams, changes in course sequence, or modifications to the physical classroom environment. Texas A&M will also allow a voluntary leave of absence, ensure the availability of lactation space, and maintain grievance procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination. For information regarding pregnancy accommodations, email TIX.Pregnancy@tamu.edu.

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors influencing a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care practices by utilizing the resources and services available through [University Health Services](#) on its [mental health webpage](#). The [TELUS Health Students support app](#) provides access to professional counseling in multiple languages anytime, anywhere by phone or chat, and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24-hour emergency support at 988 or <http://988lifeline.org/>.

Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items can do so within howdy.tamu.edu using the Directory Information Withholding Form. The complete [FERPA Notice to students](#) and the student records policy is available on the Office of the Registrar webpage.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

Directory items include name, UIN, local address, permanent address, email address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, dates of attendance, program of study (college, major, campus), classification, previous institutions attended, degrees honors and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, medical residence location and medical residence specialization.