

INR 2001 Introduction to International Relations – Class #27908

Spring 2026 Instructor: Danillo Ramon Ramos Nisio

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Class Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday @ Period 6 (12:50 – 1:40 pm)

Class Location: Anderson Hall 034

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 1:30 – 2:30 pm or by appointment (on Zoom)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to concepts and analytical tools for studying interactions among international actors: states, international organizations, and transnational groups. Social and behavioral science principles are used to analyze concepts such as power and national interests as they relate to social, political, and economic issues.

A primary objective of international relations scholars is to explore and explain the many phenomena in world politics by studying the effects of national and transnational actors on the outcomes or developments of international events. These effects are then facilitated and enhanced by actions such as fighting in wars/conflicts, conducting trade, signing treaties/legislations, migrating, and more. Students will be embarking on a journey that will help them better understand the world that we currently live in, and they will be able to better equip themselves with the abilities to ask and answer the “why and how” questions about many world events.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, given sufficient effort, you will be able to:

1. Identify the actors of the international systems, including states, international organizations, and transnational groups.
2. Identify and differentiate major schools of thought in various fields related to international relations, such as global economics and peacebuilding.
3. Use basic social and behavioral science principles to examine important themes, concepts, and theories of international relations.
4. Analyze the role key historical events played in the development of the international system.
5. Discuss the interaction among international actors in relation to theories of foreign policy and international relations, and as applied to social, political, and economic issues.

For the *General Education Subject Area Objectives*, you may find the information about this course by clicking here (<https://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-program/subject-area-objectives/>). The designations of this course are S (Social Science) and N (International).

Required Materials and Supplies Fee

Textbook (UFAccess pricing: \$45.75) – Karen Mingst and Heather Elko McKibben. *Essentials of International Relations*. 9th Edition. ISBN: 978-0-393-87217-0. <https://www.norton.com/books/9780393872187#!/about-the-book/product-details>

Note: An older edition of this book (8th edition) is available for download online. It has roughly the same outline, but some of the case studies are outdated, and it is one chapter short. Make sure to prepare for necessary adjustments if you decide to use that version of the book.

Reading (Free) – Please see the [Course Schedule](#) section for the other readings, other than the textbook. All the readings are mandatory. You can find them in the “Files” section on Canvas.

You should read the assigned materials before the lecture on the given day. In other words, all readings listed for a given date should be completed **before** that date. I will make all non-textbook readings freely available through Canvas or via direct links on the syllabus. It is imperative that you have a strong grasp of the material covered in both the readings and the lectures. To do this, always seek to understand the basic arguments first. As you read the text, annotate it, such as highlighting or circling essential messages. Take notes as you see fit. It is always better to grasp the basic arguments of every piece than to read every sentence.

Grades Distribution and Assessments

Quizzes: 25%

- **8 scheduled quizzes** administered in class. Each quiz will consist of either short-answer questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, or multiple-choice questions. Each quiz can be finished within 15 minutes. They will be based on both class lectures and textbook reading.
- Quizzes assess comprehension of lectures and readings. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. **All quiz dates are listed on the class schedule.**

Exams: 50%

This course uses a **progressive exam structure**, meaning later exams are weighted more heavily to reward improvement and deeper analytical engagement.

- **Exam I:** 10% (January 30)
- **Exam II:** 12% (February 27)
- **Exam III:** 13% (March 27)
- **Exam IV:** 15% (April 22)

Each exam includes objective questions (multiple choice, matching, true/false) and short analytical responses.

Roll Call Attendance: 10%

- Students are required to participate in the class actively and respectfully. You should contribute to the class by, among other things, showing up on time, answering/asking questions, taking appropriate notes, and participating in class dialogues.
- Throughout the entire duration of this course, I will be taking sporadic roll call attendance to encourage in-person participation in the class. It is imperative that students attend class lectures on time so that they can follow along with the progression of class content.
- There will be a total of 10 roll calls taken throughout this course. No absences will be excused without proof of excused leave (see below for further information on the attendance policy).

IR News Briefs (Canvas): 15%

- Students will complete **8 short Canvas discussion posts** connecting **current international news** to course concepts.

For each post, students must:

- Select a recent international news article from a credible source
- Clearly connect the event to **at least one theory, concept, discussion, or level of analysis** from the course
- Write approximately **250–300 words**
- Students are also required to engage with classmates by responding to peers on selected weeks.
- This assignment is designed to help students connect international relations theory and concepts to real-world examples.
- See Appendix A for the grading rubric and Appendix B for submission windows

Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Weekly Quizzes (8 Total, lowest score dropped)	25%
EXAM I	10%
EXAM II	12%
EXAM III	13%
EXAM IV	15%
IR News Briefs	15%
Roll Call Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Attendance and Submission Policies

Attendance and active participation are mandatory for students. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found here (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). Excused absences will be given make-up opportunities for exams and quizzes, provided the affected students have proper documentation.

To account for unforeseen circumstances, online assignments will be given a 1-hour grace period for submission. During the grace period, although your assignment will be marked as late, there will not be any penalty.

Grading Policy

All quizzes and exams will be hosted in-class. Late submissions will not be accepted except for the excused cases, which are outlined in the [catalog](#). If you miss an assignment and have a valid excuse, please email me within the same week to discuss making up the work.

The following grade cutoffs will be applied (Note: all grades will be automatically rounded to the nearest second decimal place by the Canvas system):

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
93 – 100 %	A	4.00
90 – 92.99 %	A-	3.67
87 – 89.99 %	B+	3.33
83 – 86.99 %	B	3.00
80 - 82.99 %	B-	2.67
77 - 79.99 %	C+	2.33
73 – 76.99 %	C	2.00
70 - 72.99 %	C-	1.67
67 - 69.99 %	D+	1.33
63 – 66.99 %	D	1.00
60 – 62.99 %	D-	0.67
0 - 59.99	E	0.00

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. For more information on the UF policies for assigning grade points (and GPA calculations), please visit <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradingpoliciestext>.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways: [1] The email they receive from GatorEvals; [2] Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals; or [3] The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluer.com>. Guidance on how to provide

constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Resources

Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See “Get Started With the DRC” Disability Resource Center webpage (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Health & Wellness Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling with any crisis including but not limited to gender, sexual, racial, or domestic violence, there are many community and University of Florida resources available. Some of these include:

- U Matter, We Care (umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, umatter.ufl.edu)
- Counseling and Wellness Center – available 24/7 (352-392-1575, counseling.ufl.edu)
- Student Health Care Center (352-392-1161, shcc.ufl.edu)
- Multicultural & Diversity Affairs (352-392-1217, multicultural.ufl.edu)
- UFPD Office of Victim Services (352-392-1111, police.ufl.edu)
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center (352-733-0111)

Academic Integrity

All students are required to abide by the University of Florida’s Academic Honesty Guidelines, which may be viewed at <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>. Most obviously, this means cheating on exams and plagiarism on papers is unacceptable. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to: submitting entire works written by others, submitting portions of works written by others, copying text without quotations and proper citation, or paraphrasing text without proper citations. In addition to harming your professional career, academic dishonesty will destroy your ability to learn from this class.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

Please note: The use of any generative A.I. (such as GPT-4 on ChatGPT) is strictly prohibited on written assignments. All suspected violations will be reported to the Office of

Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR) for adjudication to determine the sanctions to be imposed.

In-Class Recording

While students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures, the ways these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only purposes allowed are for personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the university, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the instructor's written consent.

Theme 1: What is IR? How to study it?

Jan. 12: Course Introduction; Syllabus Review

- Class syllabus (on Canvas)

Jan. 14: World Politics and How to Study It

- Textbook, Chapter 1 (14 pages); Chapter 3: p. 66-68 (2 pages)

Jan. 16: World Politics and How to Study It (continued)

Theme 2: Historical Contexts and the Emergence of Modern States

Jan. 19: No Class (MLK Day)

Jan. 21: The Emergence of the State

- Textbook, Chapter 2: p.19-34 (From the chapter's beginning until the section "The Interwar Years and World War II")
- BBC, "The Thirty Years War", *In Our Time*. ([Access here](#))

Jan. 23: Post-WWI International Relations + Quiz 1

- Textbook, Chapter 2: p. 35-51 (From the section "The Interwar Years and World War II" until "The Immediate Post-Cold War Era")
- Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue," in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. ([Access here](#))

Jan. 26: World Politics in the Modern World

- Textbook, Chapter 2: p. 52-63 (From the section “The Immediate Post-Cold War Era” to the chapter’s end)

Theme 3: Theoretical Perspectives in International Relations

Jan. 28: Realism

- Textbook, Chapter 3: p. 68-76 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “Liberalism”)

Jan. 30: EXAM I

Feb. 2: Liberalism and Constructivism

- Textbook, Chapter 3: p. 77-88 (From the section “Liberalism” until the section “The Radical Perspective”)
- Paul Formosa, “Guide to the classics: Immanuel Kant’s Toward Perpetual Peace and its relevance to the war in Ukraine,” *The Conversations*. ([Access here](#))

Feb. 4: Other Theories in IR + Quiz 2

- Textbook, Chapter 3: p. 89-100 (From the section “The Radical Perspective” to the chapter’s end)
- Marcos Farias Ferreira, “Introducing Critical Theory in International Relations,” *E-International Relations*. ([Access here](#))

Theme 4: Levels of Analysis in International Relations

Feb. 6: The International Level of Analysis

- Textbook, Chapter 4: p. 103-118 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “The State”)

Feb. 9: The State Level of Analysis

- Textbook, Chapter 4: p. 119-125 (the section “The State” only)

Feb. 11: The Individual Level of Analysis

- Textbook, Chapter 4: p. 126-139 (From the section “The Individual” to the chapter’s end)

Theme 5: Power and the State

Feb. 13: Power and How to Use It + Quiz 3

- Textbook, Chapter 5: p. 141-159 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “Models

of Foreign Policy Decision Making”)

Feb. 16: Models of Foreign Policymaking

- Textbook, Chapter 5: p. 160-165 (the section “Models of Foreign Policy Decision Making” only)

Feb. 18: Modern Challenges to the State

- Textbook, Chapter 5: p. 166-174 (From the section “Challenges to the State” to the chapter’s end)

Theme 6: War and Peace

Feb. 20: What are Wars?

- Textbook, Chapter 6: p. 177-194 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “The Causes of War”)
- John J. Mearsheimer, “Sister Camilla and the Anarchic Schoolyard,” ([Access here](#))

Feb. 23: Why do Wars Happen? + Quiz 4

- Textbook, Chapter 6: p. 195-201 (The section “The Causes of War” only)

Feb. 25: Preventing War for International Security

- Textbook, Chapter 6: p. 201-218 (From the section “Preventing War and Managing State Security” to the chapter’s end)
- Brett Ashley Leeds, 2003, “Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 427–439. (On Canvas)

Feb. 27: EXAM II

Theme 7: International Institutions

Mar. 2: Why and How to Cooperate?

- Textbook, Chapter 7: p. 220-233 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “International Law”)

Mar. 4: International Law;

- Textbook, Chapter 7: p. 234-255 (From the section “International Law” to the chapter’s end)

Mar. 6: The Global Organization: UN + Quiz 5

- Textbook, Chapter 9: p. 306-330 (From the chapter's beginning until the section titled "The European Union – Organizing Regionally")

Mar. 9: The EU and Other Regional Organizations

- Textbook, Chapter 9: p. 330-342 (From the section "The European Union – Organizing Regionally" until the section "Nongovernmental Organizations")

Mar. 11: The Effects and Roles of NGOs

- Textbook, Chapter 9: p. 342-351 (From the section "Nongovernmental Organizations" to the chapter's end)

Theme 8: International Political Economy

Mar. 13: Entities and Processes in the International Economy

- Textbook, Chapter 8: p. 257-271 (From the chapter's beginning until the section "How the Globalized Economy Works Today")
- Brad McDonald, "International Trade: Commerce among Nations," *IMF*. (Access [here](#))

Mar. 16 – 20: No Classes (Spring Break)

Mar. 23: Global Finance and Its Politics + Quiz 6

- Textbook, Chapter 8: p. 271-293 (From the section "How the Globalized Economy Works Today" until the section "Economic Challenges in the 21st Century")

Mar. 25: The Economic Challenges that We Face

- Textbook, Chapter 8: p. 294-305 (From "Economic Challenges in the Twenty-First Century" to chapter's end)
- Miles Kahler and David Lake, "Governance in a Global Economy: Political Authority in Transition," *Political Science & Politics*. ([Access here](#))

Mar. 27: EXAM III

Theme 9: Human Rights

Mar. 30: Human Rights and Human Wrongs

- Textbook, Chapter 10: p. 353-367 (From the chapter's beginning until the section "The Role of the International Community – IGOs and NGOs")

Apr. 1: The Global Politics of Human Rights

- Textbook, Chapter 10: p. 368-378 (From the section "The Role of the International Community – IGOs and NGOs" until the section "The Globalization of Rights: Women's

Rights as Human Rights”)

- Ethan Kapstein, “The New Global Slave Trade,” *Foreign Affairs*. (On Canvas)

Apr. 3: Specific Topics in Human Rights: Women’s Rights & R2P + Quiz 7

- Textbook, Chapter 10: p. 379-388 (From the section “The Globalization of Rights: Women’s Rights as Human Rights” to the chapter’s end)

Theme 10: Global Environmental Politics

Apr. 6: Climate Change in the Context of IR

- Textbook, Chapter 11: p. 391-406 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “Natural Resource Issues”)

Apr. 8: Natural Resources and the Commons Problem

- Textbook, Chapter 11: p. 406-417 (From the section “Natural Resource Issues” until the section “Environmental Issues and Conflict”)
- Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*. (On Canvas)

Apr. 10: How Environmental Problems Lead to Conflicts

- Textbook, Chapter 11: p. 417-422 (From the section “Environmental Issues and Conflict” to the chapter’s end)

Theme 11: Human Security and Global Health

Apr. 13: Human Security and Migration

- Textbook, Chapter 12: p. 425-441 (From the chapter’s beginning until the section “Health – Protecting Individuals in the Global Commons”)

Apr. 15: Global Health

- Textbook, Chapter 12: p. 442-458 (16 pages)

Apr. 17: Global Health (continued) + Quiz 8

- “Covid-19 and Food Security: What You Need to Know,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. ([Access here](#))

Apr. 20: General Review (Exam IV)

Apr. 22: EXAM IV

Apr. 24: No class (Reading Days)

Appendix A: IR News Briefs (Canvas) — Grading Rubric

(15% of Final Grade)

Level & Range	Word Count	Analysis & Relevance	Theory / Concept Connection	Writing Quality
Excellent 10–8.5	250-300 words	Insightful analysis; goes beyond summary; clearly engages with the news event	Clearly and accurately connects the news event to one or more IR theories, concepts, class discussion or levels of analysis	Clear, well-organized, and well-written
Satisfactory 8.4–7.0	200–249 words	Addresses the news event but analysis lacks depth or focus	Makes a basic connection to course material, but linkage is underdeveloped	Generally clear; minor grammar or organization issues
Unsatisfactory 6.9–0	< 200 words	Superficial, descriptive, or off topic; little analytical engagement	Fails to meaningfully connect the news event to course concepts	Frequent errors; unclear or difficult to follow

Appendix B: IR News Briefs — Submission Schedule

Brief	Submission Window
Brief 1	Sat. Jan. 17 → Mon. Jan. 19 (11:59 PM)
Brief 2	Sat. Jan. 31 → Mon. Feb. 2 (11:59 PM)
Brief 3	Sat. Feb. 7 → Mon. Feb. 9 (11:59 PM)
Brief 4	Sat. Feb. 21 → Mon. Feb. 23 (11:59 PM)
Brief 5	Sat. Feb. 28 → Mon. Mar. 2 (11:59 PM)
Brief 6	Sat. Mar. 21 → Mon. Mar. 23 (11:59 PM)
Brief 7	Sat. Mar. 28 → Mon. Mar. 30 (11:59 PM)
Brief 8	Sat. Apr. 11 → Mon. Apr. 13 (11:59 PM)