

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
PSC 2710, High Point University
Dr. Mark Setzler
Spring 2025 Syllabus

COURSE BASICS:

Instructor contact information:

Phone: 336/841-9018 (office)

Email: msetzler@highpoint.edu

Course Website: marksetzler.org/PSC2710 (**password when needed: icecream**)

Seminar Meetings:

MWF: 10:40 - 11:50, Phillips School of Business, Room 222

Meeting Hours:

The political science faculty are all “officed” in cubicles located off campus this year, which makes face-to-face meetings there undesirable and inconvenient.

I will be available for face-to-face meetings on the first floor of Smith Library or in Phillips Hall’s lobby (depending on space availability and noise level) at these times:

- Mon. & Wed.: 12:00 – 1:30
- Tues. & Thurs.: 1:30 – 2:00

If you would like to meet, please let me know a little in advance to avoid overlapping meetings and to confirm a meeting location. If you are unavailable during the listed meeting times, we can schedule virtual or in-person meetings in my off-campus “office” at other times as long as you give me sufficient notice.

Course bulletin description:

This course explores how global and domestic politics shape foreign policy behaviors, strategic alliances, and interactions among nations. Students will investigate why countries choose to cooperate or engage one another in conflictual ways, how globalization and the changing fortunes of the world’s most powerful nations are reshaping the roles and power of international institutions, and the extent to which nations are likely to work together to solve the most pressing international problems of our day.

What is this course about?

We will focus on the use of military, economic, and other forms of power in the international system. The class is organized around three big questions: Why do countries act the way they do? How and under what circumstances do nations and international organizations cooperate to address critical challenges and opportunities? And, what are the main opportunities and issues shaping global politics at the moment and looking ahead as you begin your professional careers?

You will learn, critique, and apply a variety of major theories and concepts used by international relations scholars to understand and predict the behavior of the US and other countries. By the end of the semester, you should be able to provide informed answers to questions such as: Why do countries often refuse to cooperate with other countries even when both sides would benefit and they share similar socioeconomic and cultural values and institutions? Why do countries

enforce certain political, economic, and cultural values within their own societies but not when interacting with other nations? How powerful are international organizations and regimes, and what do they do? Who leads these organizations and for what ends? Why do international conflict and economic inequality among nations continue to threaten international security in our prosperous world? In the final unit, we will examine several questions that will have significant implications for the future of international relations, including what factors will most shape the longevity of American hegemony, the rise of China, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Each of the assignments on which you will receive a grade is linked to at least one specific learning objective for the course. By the end of the term, you should:

- Be familiar with many of the central research questions and findings from the field of international relations (This outcome will be assessed with the three examinations)
- Understand the three main theoretical approaches used by political scientists to describe and explain and predict the foreign policy choices of states and their leaders. (This outcome will be assessed with three examinations, and will be a major focus of the first unit's examination.)
- Develop at least a basic understanding of the key international institutions, groups, and processes that shape present-day relations among nations. (This outcome will be assessed with three examinations, and will be the main focus of the second examination.)
- Apply the methods and findings of international relations to analyze and draw informed conclusions about contemporary international problems (This learning outcome operationalizes the General Education – Analytical Skills learning outcome #2 ; it will be a major focus of the third test, the final exam long essay, and an op-ed essay assignment)
- Analyze and apply evidence from complex writings that represent a range of scholarly views and research methods in international relations. (This outcome will be assessed with essays and in the short answer section of tests.)
- Delineate a detailed problem statement and identify the most relevant contextual factors (i.e., constraints, resources, attitudes, and additional knowledge needed to solve the problem). (This learning outcome operationalizes the General Education – Creative Problem Solving learning outcome #1 ; it will be a major focus of an op-ed assignment that will be completed in the second half of the course)

READING SOURCES AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- **A textbook:** Karen A. Mingst and Heather Elko McKibben (Author). *Essentials of International Relations*, 9th edition. Norton Publishing. You will want the 9th edition because you will find it difficult to use any earlier version of the textbook effectively as you complete the required online quizzes. A six-month license for access to the ebook version of the textbook can be purchased from the publisher under \$50; it comes packaged with an InQuizitive subscription at no additional cost. (See <https://digital.wwnorton.com/essir9> and the “purchase options” link)
- **A subscription to the textbook's online InQuizitive resource.** Access to the InQuizitive costs around 25 dollars if not bundled with the online textbook. This resource will be necessary for you to take the required textbook chapter quizzes. *Important: You will need to carefully follow the instructions in the online schedule to correctly register to take quizzes.*
- **Various academic journal, news-magazine articles, and videos.** All of your non-textbook readings and some required video assignments will be accessed via links in the course's online assignments webpage. To open and read some of the assignments, you will need to use a PDF reader and the password noted at the top of the syllabus.

GRADE COMPONENTS:

Your final grade is based on your performance in several different types of activities:

- **Unit tests: 45 percent of the course grade.** At the end of the first two course units, you will take in-class tests that assess your understanding of reading materials, class lectures, and any other assigned materials in the preceding course unit. Your third unit test will be administered during the first half of the final exam period.
- **InQuizitive textbook chapter quizzes: 10 percent of the final grade.** Most of the course readings covering theories and key concepts will come from the textbook. After completing many of its chapters, you will take an InQuizitive assessment. Each quiz you need to take will be linked in the course schedule), and each quiz will be graded automatically as explained here: <https://wwnorton.knowledgeowl.com/help/inquizitive-students-grading>

The quizzes' main purpose is to assist you in getting more out of your reading, and an important feature of the online quiz program is that you can reread the textbook pages relevant to each question before you answer it. Moreover, even if you miss several items, you will have the opportunity to earn an A on each quiz if you correctly answer additional items. There will be no +/- grades for your overall InQuizitive grade. Students whose average quiz score is at least 60 percent will earn a D for the component; those with at least a 70% will earn a C; those with at least an 80% will earn a B; and those with at least a 94.5% will earn an A. Before calculating your average quiz score, I will drop your lowest score even if it is a zero.

- **Final examination: 15 percent.** During the second half of the final exam period, you will write a several-page essay asking you to reflect on the course's major themes and apply them to examples from the last half of the course. You will be given this essay's topic several days before the testing period.
- **Letter to an editor/op-ed article: 10 percent.** On the last day of the semester, you will submit a typed essay that is 500-700 words (two pages) in length. Drawing upon a limited amount (a minimum of five sources) of high-quality, independent research, your essay will argue that the United States government should pursue a specific course of action concerning a major global problem whose resolution requires the coordinated response of multiple countries.

You will receive more detailed instructions later in the term. For planning, please be aware that this assignment will expressly prohibit you from using research and writing for which you have or will receive credit in another class, and it will require you to address a topic outside of those closely examined in the class readings.

- **Professionalism—class preparation, participation, and engagement: 20 percent.** I assess participation and professionalism at the end of each course unit, adjusting the component's overall grade up or down to reflect how you have done up to that point in the term as a whole. As described in detail in the rubric on the course website, this grade will assess pre-class preparation, listening, note-taking, speaking skills, and the other aspects of professionalism required to actively participate and contribute in professional settings for extended periods of time.
- **Optional paper(s) will replace half of the unit test grade(s) if submitted.** At the end of each course unit, you may choose to write a 1500-word analytical essay demonstrating your understanding of and ability to apply the course's assigned reading materials.

Some students typically perform better on papers than tests, other students are looking for more opportunities to improve their writing, and still others may feel like they were not as ready as they had hoped to be for a particular exam. Recognizing these different learning styles and needs, you will be given an essay topic at least a week before each unit test is administered. For the first two course units, the optional paper will be due within one week *after* the test (but

before grades will be available for the test. For unit 3, the paper will be due at the start of our final exam.

GRADING:

University policy mandates that letter grades accurately reflect a student's quality of work. As noted in the University Bulletin, A-range grades must be reserved for excellent "work of a markedly superior quality" when compared to what is typical performance in a course at this grade level. Bs are assigned to work that is "clearly above average," when compared to typical student work at this course level. C-range grades are assigned to "satisfactory work" that at least meets the course's minimum expectations. Ds are assigned where student performance is markedly weaker than what is typical for a student taking a college course at this level. An F grade indicates that a significant portion of the work has not been completed or is so deficient in quality that it does not merit college credit.

To calculate course grades involving multiple types of activities and grade weights, most instructors translate letter grades into numerical values and vice-versa. When I assign letter grades to test items, papers, and other course/assignment elements, these grades are also recorded as numerical scores.

Unless otherwise specified in an assignment's instructions, the numerical values substituted for letter grades are calibrated so that a modestly lower letter grade on one item will not lower your overall letter grade if you earn higher grades on at least two other equally weighted items. For example, a student who earns an A- on two essay questions and then a B+ on a third question will earn a 90 A- grade for the three items as a whole.

At the end of the semester, I will convert the overall numerical score you have earned into a single letter grade using these assignment weights noted earlier, with these cut-off points: 92.5% and above, A • 90, A- • 87.5, B+ • 82.5, B • 80, B- • 77.5, C+ • 72.5, C • 70, C- • 67.5, D+ • 62.5, D • 60, D- • Below 60%, F.

COURSE POLICIES

- **Changes to the schedule, specific assignments, or course policies.** Instructors and the University reserve the right to modify course requirements/policies as unanticipated circumstances dictate. I don't expect to make any major changes to courses once I have written their syllabi but sometimes need to make alterations part way through the semester as unexpected challenges (e.g. class cancellations) and opportunities emerge. If any changes are necessary, you will be notified as soon as possible.
- **Attendance.** Students are expected to attend class except for documented instances of: 1) documented illness or serious emergency; 2) OARS-approved online accommodations in combination with an instructor-approved plan to replace missed classwork with alternative assignments or; 3) other unavoidable, documented circumstances.

If you need to miss a class or two during the semester for personal, professional, or university-sanctioned obligations, please discuss your situation with me as soon as possible, the same way you will need to do so in future work environments. I have built a maximum number of permissible absences to accommodate illness or these types of situations.

If you are unable to attend a class for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining missed materials and submitting assignments when they are due. As discussed below, make sure to contact me as soon as possible about any absences that will influence your ability to complete assignments as scheduled.

Attendance concerns will be documented in Starfish, and *students who miss more than five classes typically will be withdrawn*. If you are tardy for a class, it is your responsibility to alert the instructor at the end of class so that you are not marked as missing and to explain why you are late. Your punctual, regular attendance also is assessed as part of your professionalism grade.

Make sure to consult the university's Academic Calendar before making your end-of-term, mid-term break, and holiday travel plans. Students are expected to attend class and be available for presentations, assignments, and tests whenever the university is in session or final examinations are being held. Out of fairness to all students (many of whom would like to leave early for breaks and holidays), if you book a ticket to leave school early at the end of the term or for a school break, be prepared to receive a zero grade on any assignments you miss. You should note the date of the final exam for this course (and all of your others) on the first day of the course:
<https://www.highpoint.edu/registrar/final-exam-schedule/>.

- **E-Mail accounts.** I rely on your HPU email account to distribute important course materials and announcements. I assume that any message sent to your university mailbox will be accessed by you within one day. When contacting me, please use my email account; I may well not see messages sent via Starfish or Blackboard.
- **Starfish flags.** HPU uses the Starfish system to alert you and others on campus when you may need additional support to achieve academic success. If instructors observe situations where you are struggling with assignments, seem disengaged, or appear to be in distress, they may raise a Starfish flag. They may also refer you to your academic advisor, or another support resource on campus. Flags do not affect your grade or carry any punitive consequence and are intended to signal that you need to make some changes in how you are approaching your coursework.
- **Student remote access to classes.** HPU is committed to in-person learning, and the faculty have been instructed to not permit short-term remote attendance to classes unless explicitly approved by the University. There are a limited number of absences built into the syllabus; any instances of remote attendance will need to be approved on a day-by-day basis by your professor and Dr. Kifer, the Chair of Political Science, mkifer@highpoint.edu. Long-term remote learning related to accessibility issues must be approved by the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS).
- **Late work and extensions.** Make-up tests for unscheduled absences normally will not be allowed except for serious extenuating, verifiable circumstances (e.g., a serious illness). As likely will be the case with your future employers, I can be more flexible about postponing tests and giving assignment extensions when you provide advance notice and a reasonable justification for needing to move an assignment's date. If you know you will not complete an assignment, take a test, or give a presentation as scheduled (e.g., required participation in a university-sponsored event or a religious holiday), see if I am willing to grant an extension well before the assignment is due.

If a student's late work is accepted or a late exam permitted, the typical penalty will be a five percent deduction per day, starting the same day the work was due. This penalty will double if a student does not promptly notify me that they have missed a due date, explain why work is tardy, and tell me when it will arrive.

- **The use of electronic devices in class.** Please do not use phones, laptops, or other distracting electronic devices during our seminar meetings unless their use has been approved explicitly or you have been instructed otherwise. Repeated use of electronic devices will result in a substantial reduction in your course grade as explained in the online grading rubric addressing expectations and grading for professionalism and engagement. If you have OARS accommodations or a unique situation related to your learning style, see me for guidance.
- **Recording and distributing course content.** Students are welcome to seek permission to record in-class lectures to assist in their notetaking. Neither your instructor nor your classmates have granted permission for any recorded or online content to be shared outside the instructional purposes of this class. Per our college's guidelines, "Any audio or video recording in the class, including the instructor's lecture/discussion, or other classroom activity, is strictly prohibited unless authorized by the instructor and students in the classroom. This includes the unauthorized recording of online discussions and online breakout rooms." If you want to record classes to assist in effective note-taking, this will be

encouraged as long as you receive approval in advance and adhere restrictions that will prohibit you from sharing your recordings with any other party.

- You are strongly encouraged to study with your peers in this class; however, you may not share completed assignments, test questions, graded work, or your class/readings notes with other students who are or will be preparing to complete similar assignments in the future.

Regardless of intent, posting course materials to Chegg and similar online “tutoring” websites or otherwise making them available to peers provides them with an unfair academic advantage, which is a violation of HPU’s Honor Code, even if you have no idea who the recipient of your assistance might be.

- **Using OARS-approved accommodations.** Students with accommodations due to a diagnosed disability must submit appropriate documentation and receive instructions from the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (336-841-9026; oars@highpoint.edu). Only that office can approve accommodations (including requests to use a computer for note-taking). Remember, by federal policy, students must verbally request each specific accommodation to which they are entitled and proactively discuss with instructors the implementation of their accommodation(s). Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively. If your OARS-approved accommodations include typing exams, a separate testing environment, or extended testing time, you must follow OARS policies and procedures that require you to *make appropriate arrangements with the testing center several days ahead of exams*.
- **When can you use AI in *this* class?** Public access to artificial technology (AI) bots capable of generating clear, elegant prose is a recent development. At least in the short term, you may find that courses and instructors may have different policies regarding the use of AI, depending on each course’s specific learning outcomes.

You may use AI as a personal tutor to help you to better understand class and reading concepts. ChatGPT and comparable resources can be a wonderful, personalized tutor for some subjects if you use it like a personal tutor rather than as a crutch to answer questions for you. It can be especially helpful if you are the kind of learner who benefits from seeing examples or hearing the same core information explained in several different ways.

*You may also use AI to assist in proofreading and editing **your** writing to enhance its clarity.*

Any AI assistance with submitted work *must* be disclosed in a short note at the start of your assignment (i.e., in the paper title section where you put your name and other assignment specifics).

When using AI to proofread, you are responsible for any factual, grammar, or phrasing issues, even if they were introduced by the digital assistance. As has long been the case with an electronic thesaurus, don’t use any words or phrasing in your paper that you do not understand completely and that fits the exact idea you are trying to communicate.

- **When can’t you use AI in *this* class?** (I.e., what uses would be a violation of the Honor Code’s provisions stating that you may only take credit for your own ideas and work)? One of the key objectives for the political science classes I teach is to help students learn how to better formulate, organize, synthesize, and articulate *their* comprehension of and views about facts, concepts, theories, and ideas covered in class materials and homework. In other words, my pedagogy and assignments are structured to help you build critical thinking, reading, vocabulary, analytical, writing, and communication skills by applying them. You build and demonstrate knowledge and mastery by learning how to explain complex ideas and present original arguments *in your own words*. Consequently, **you will not be permitted to use AI for *any* of the following purposes:**
 - To assist you in any way during in-class exams, where using a laptop may be permitted

for some parts of tests.

- To *write*—either in draft or final form—partial or full responses to any prompt on any assignment. If there is doubt about the authorship of any writing you submit for credit, you will be asked to complete an oral or hand-written assignment demonstrating your ability to clearly explain passages from your assignment as well as the course materials on which the assignment is based.
 - To *paraphrase* material written by someone else and then presenting the AI-generated writing as if this writing were the result of your own effort, understanding, and writing skills.
 - To *do any of background research* required for your op-ed essay assignment. The purpose of the assignment is for you to become familiar with an issue that *you* care about and to apply concepts and ideas *you* have learned *in this class* to formulate ways to address a major international concern.
 - To *summarize or take notes on any assigned reading materials*. You will be asked to read materials of varying difficulty, length, and intended audiences. They have been carefully curated to help you build vocabulary, reading comprehension, note-taking, and critical thinking skills of the kind you will need in professional workplaces and graduate schools. While AI is a wonderful tool for helping authors to polish their writing, its widespread use also makes it more important than ever to develop *your* critical reading skills so that you can better leverage AI to effectively communicate *your* ideas and understanding of complex concepts.
- **Academic dishonesty.** We all must support and enforce the university's Honor Code. As a condition of membership in the university community, every High Point Student is honor-bound to refrain from cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. You also are honor-bound to report violations of the honor code should you ever observe them. Without exception, students taking or facilitating an inappropriate academic advantage will have an honor code violation case filed, and they will be sanctioned according to the applicable university policies.

While there are many forms of academic dishonesty, its core element is easy to understand: Cheating refers to any effort to gain academic credit or a higher grade by representing that you have behaved appropriately, completed work, and adhered to both syllabus and assignment-specific expectations when this is not true. The HPU Honor Code also states that facilitating cheating by other students is an act of academic dishonesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include:

- The presentation of writing or work done by another student or an AI assistant as your own work (unless explicitly instructed otherwise, you must use quotation marks around phrasing that is not your own)
- Taking a block of someone else's writing and replacing some words or slightly rearranging the phrasing to conceal the fact that the writing or structure of the prose is mostly not your work
- Verifying test or assignment answers against other students' work without having been given instructor permission to do so or without other students being aware they are providing you with assistance
- Splitting assigned work among multiple students who subsequently each represent in papers or exams that they individually completed the entirety of the required work on their own
- Hiring other students or external services to complete your assignments, such that you are passing off the effort and original work of someone else as though it were your own (working with HPU's tutors, seeing the writing center, or asking an HPU peer to read through your work to assist you with proofreading or provide you with critical feedback are all appropriate stopes and encouraged; having others do your work for you is not appropriate and violates the Honor Code)

- Working with other students or outside resources to obtain test questions or assignments before they are distributed to all students in a class. Providing such assistance either directly or by posting course assignments to websites facilitates cheating and will be treated as such
- Misconstruing the circumstances under which class meetings, exams, or assignment deadlines have been missed to avoid a grade deduction
- Substantially overstating the word count of an assignment to meet minimum-length requirements
- Submitting without preapproval by all involved instructors the same work for academic credit in multiple courses

COURSE TOPIC SCHEDULE

*The typical reading load in this class is 75-100 pages each week, which should be completed before the applicable seminar. Please consult the online version of this document for more detail and links to your readings and assignments. Many of the readings will be downloaded and require a password to be opened: **icecream***

UNIT I: UNDERSTANDING AND PREDICTING STATE BEHAVIOR

Topic 1—Introduction to the course

Topic 2—What is the study of “International Relations” about?

Topic 3—What are the defining qualities of “the modern state system,” and where did they come from? How has the international system of global power evolved in the 20th Century?

Topic 4—Leaders, the sociopolitical structures, or the international system: How do “levels” of analysis help us to predict what countries do?

Topic 5—How can the theories of “realism” and “liberalism” help us to predict state actions? Does the international system for states to avoid cooperation in favor of their self-interest?

Topic 6—Is international politics what we (or at least what those of us of who are well off) choose to make it? “Constructivist” and Marxist theories of state behavior

UNIT II: INTERNATIONAL REGIMES, BEHAVIOR, & INSTITUTIONS

Topic 1—Is globalization a completely new international system that will lead to different patterns and rules for state and international behavior?

Topic 2— When and how do states cooperate? Who needs international organizations? What are the alternatives?

Topic 3— Why is humanity still at war? Are we getting any better at stopping it?

Topic 4—How does the United Nations work and what does it do? Can we make it work better to reduce international conflict?

Topic 5—Why do countries trade, and how do global institutions shape international economics?

How and when do international institutions respond to economic crises within countries and beyond?

UNIT III: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Topic 1—To what extent is global development really an “international” issue? Why are some poor countries benefiting from globalization while others are not? Are there international solutions to problems of development and underdevelopment?

Topic 2—Should the world fear or embrace American hegemony? Is the American empire in trouble? What happens when America no longer leads?

Topic 3—What are the international consequences of the Chinese economic miracle? What do China's foreign relations tell us about its international ambitions? Will China and the US be at the center of a new Cold War?

Topic 5—How should the international community regulate weapons of mass destruction? Why are there different WMD rules for different countries? Is there an international solution to the proliferation of these weapons?

Topic 6—Course wrap-up: What did you learn in this class?

Final Examination – As scheduled by the University

<https://www.highpoint.edu/registrar/final-exam-schedule/>:

- **Monday, April 28, from 12-3pm**

Please plan to take your final exam in person. With the exception of graduating seniors, no early exams will be given

- **Graduating seniors must take an early exam because their grades are due before our final exam period.** Please schedule this exam at least two weeks prior to the end of the term.