IR-2028 / POL-2004: International Conflict Analysis (v 15/3/22)

Bann Seng Tan   **Spr 22**
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Bannseng.tan@ashoka.edu.in   **Tues & Thurs:** 10:10 AM - 11:40 AM.
Office hours: Thursday 5-6 pm or by appointment.
TA: Aarushi Kataria (Aarushi.kataria_ug22@ashoka.edu.in)

Course description:

This course introduces basic concepts and theories in the field of international security. The field is organized around the study of war, its causes, its characteristics and its mitigation. War is costly and yet both states and leaders resort to the use of force. Our task is to understand the rationale for this phenomenon.

The course is structured as follows. We start with the major theoretical approaches, realism, liberalism, and constructivism, and their understanding of the causes of war. We will then turn to the rationalist perspective to war and apply it to various issue-areas that have preoccupied both the scholarship and policy-making world. Issue-areas that will be covered include the nuclear proliferation, democratic peace, coups, and terrorism.

This course is dual listed under both Political Science (PS) and International Relations (IR). It follows the IR rules for the course requisites. This is not a course on current events. We will focus rather on the concepts that underpin the behavior of states and leaders with regards to international conflict.

Course Readings:

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. 2009. *Principles of International Politics*. 5th edition. CQ Press. ISBN-13: 978-1452202983, Referred to as "**BDM**".

Every reading is compulsory. The readings listed under "examples" are meant to illustrate the theory. We use Zoom, Google Classroom, the University's AMS.
Google classroom: https://bit.ly/3n8h6xa

Course Requirements:

Grade Breakdown:

a) Final exam   (30)
b) Midterm exam   (30)
c) Class Attendance & participation   (10)
d) Quiz 1   (15)
e) Quiz 2   (15)

Notes:

1. **Grading Scheme**

A=100-94	A-=93-90	B+=89-87	B=86-84	B-=83-80	C+=79-77
C=76-74	C-=73-70	D+=69-67	D=66-64	D-=63-51	F=0-50

2. **Distribution of the grade and requests for special treatments**
My course is designed to reward those who do consistent work. That is why the distribution of the grades is approximately evenly split amongst the major components. This means that if you have been doing badly for the first half of the course, you are arithmetically unlikely to make up for it in the second half. Please also note that you must complete all assignments in order to pass the course. I do not give Incompletes, extra credit or any unjustified special treatments. From the undergraduate handbook, the last day to drop the course (with permission of the Dean) is on February 13th. The last day to withdraw with a "W" (with permission of the Dean) is on March 13th. Inform us if you are dropping the course.

3. **Quizzes**
There are two quizzes. The format can be a combination of multiple choice, short structured questions and game theory problemsets. They are meant to be completed in a short period of time. Each quiz is non-cumulative and worth 15 % of your grade. The grading for quizzes is strictly numeric (you get a number, not a letter grade). They are usually held during the lesson. There is a fixed time and format for the quizzes. If you missed the allocated time, you will not be given extra time.

4. **Policy on make-ups**
You need to provide a valid reason and documentation for any make-ups. Without the documentation, you will automatically get a score of zero for that section. It is your job to contact me if you miss an assignment/exam. You should expect the make-up exam/assignment to be harder than the regular exam.

5. **Missing classes**
If you missed a class, it is your job to find out what you missed, I will not repeat material I have already taught during class. This is especially true for the 1st class where I do housekeeping. Students who miss that class and do not bother to find out about my policies typically do badly in the course.

6. **Class participation and attendance**

You are expected to show up for class. You may miss three lessons, unexcused without grade penalty. Each unexcused absence beyond the third lesson will result in a 1% deduction from the final grade. As attendance may be taken at any lesson, it behooves the student to show up. Attendance also requires the student to arrive on time.

Please do not conflate attendance with class participation. Class participation means just that, participation during class. Emails to me and visits during office hours may supplement your education but they are not in themselves a substitute for in-session participation. To participate effectively, you have to show up for class, read in advance and make informed comments that demonstrate you read the assigned texts. Comments that are independent of the course readings do not count as much. If you stay silent for the whole course, it will be reflected in your participation grade.

7. **Emails**
In all emails to me, please include your name and class code (POL-2004/IR-2028) in your subject headline. My response will be more effective if you identify yourself clearly. If you have questions about your grades, you should arrange a time to meet in my office.

8. **Etiquette**

Set your electronic devices to silent mode in class as a courtesy to your fellow students. It is your responsibility to inform me, well in advance of the scheduled deadlines, about any factor that will interfere with your ability to perform in class. If you anticipate technical difficulties (poor internet), you are also expected to troubleshoot it ahead of time. Failure to deliver means that policy 2 applies.

If you need accommodations, you must contact the Office of Learning Support and get documentation on the type of accommodations needed. Please do this early in the course. Accommodations requested are not retrospective. Use common sense. Last minute and after-the-fact requests do not help your credibility.

9. **Current circumstances**

Wear your mask at all times!

If we should revert back to online teaching, we reuse the zoomlinks established in the first half of the course. For logistics queries, check with the TA.

Course Outline:

Jan 18   Introduction

Frankfurt, 1986.
Graham, 2016.

Topic 1   How to approach International Relations.

Jan 20   Assessing Theories

BDM, Chp 1, pp. 35-63.

Jan 25   All Politics is Local? (I)

Kaarbo 2015

Jan 26   Holiday

Jan 27   All Politics is Local? (II)

James Fearon 1998

Feb 1   All Politics is Local? (III)

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2012.
Example: New York Times (NYT) 2020a.

Feb 3   Selectorate theory (I)

BDM, Chp 2, pp. 64-95.

Feb 8   Selectorate theory (II)

BDM, Chp 2, pp. 64-95.

Feb 10   Selectorate theory (III) and Review

BDM, Chp 2, pp. 64-95.

Feb 15   **Midterm exam**

Topic 2   **Analytic tools: case study of North Korea**

Feb 17   **Median Voter Theorem and Win Sets**

BDM, chp 3, pp. 96-124.

Feb 22   **Win Sets (continued) and Expected Utility**

BDM, chp 3, pp. 125-37.

Feb 24   **Game Theory (I)**

BDM, Chp 4, pp. 138-150.
Example: NYT 2020b.

Mar 1   **Game Theory (II)**

BDM, Chp 4, pp. 150-164.

Topic 3   **Theories of War**

Mar 3   **Why War?**
                     Quiz 1

BDM, Chp 5. pp. 165- 195.

Mar 5–13   **Semester Break**

Mar 15   **Domestic Theories of War (I)**

BDM, Chp 5. pp. 195-204.
BDM, Chp 6. pp. 205-223, and pp. 228-238

Mar 17   **Diversionary War**

Oakes 2006.

Mar 22   **Consequences of Coup-proofing**

Böhmelt & Pilster 2015.

Mar 24   **Democratic Peace (I)**

BDM, Chp 14. pp. 443-456.
Xenias, 2005
Russett, 2005

Mar 29   **Democratic Peace (II)**

Maoz and Russett 1993
Schultz 1998
Bueno de Mesquita 1999

Topic 4   **Issues-areas in International security**

Mar 31   **Nuclear Proliferation**
                     Quiz 2

Sagen, 1996-7

Apr 5   **The politics of foreign aid**

BDM, Chp 12. pp. 383-414.

Examples:
BBC 2010
Christian Science Monitor. 2009.
British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2018.

Apr 7   **Regime Type, Aid & Democracy Promotion**

BDM, Chp 14. pp. 456-474.
Tan 2020, chp 1.

Apr 12   **Terrorism as Rational**

BDM, Chp 13. pp. 415-442.

Apr 14   **Terrorism as Irrational (I)**

Harris 2002a.
Harris 2002b.

Apr 19   **Terrorism as Irrational (II)**

Harris 2002b (continued).
Wood 2015.
Examples:
BBC 2016, https://bbc.in/2ML7Xet
Wiki, 2011, https://bit.ly/2ZwlOYk
NYT 2021a, b, c, d, e, f

Apr 21   **Review**

May 2-6   **Final Exam**