

INTA 1110A: Introduction to International Relations

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Goals, Requirements, and Expectations of INTA 1110A:

The goals of this course are three-fold: 1) give you a solid grounding in historically informed International Relations, 2) introduce the concepts, vocabulary, and theories of International Relations, and 3) use these concepts, vocabulary, and theories to analyze issues facing political leaders and societies. This is a heavily analytical course; critical thinking is required equipment.² My intent is not to teach you ‘facts’ or measure your ability to commit them to memory by rote. While there are dates and actors that will be of significance, of far more importance will be your ability to take the concepts and theories we discuss in class and use them to analyze issues confronting societies and the policy responses mounted by political leaders. The only exception to this general claim pertains to geography. Where states are located and who their neighbors are (i.e. their geography) is an important aspect of international relations. To this end, I expect you to have a good general idea of which states are located where, and you will be graded on this knowledge.

This course is not ‘easy.’ The 1000 level classification speaks less to the difficulty of the course and more to the order in which it should be taken (that is, before more issue specific courses at the 3000 level). We will not be easing into the subject of international relations. Instead, the course is the primary opportunity to develop a firm foundation in IR theory and concepts. The reading load for this class is not light; we will average over 50 pages a week, but some weeks will approach 100. We will be making use of two excellent textbooks from Oxford University Press: Barry Buzan and Richard Little’s *International Systems in World History* and John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens’ edited volume, *The Globalization of World Politics*.³ These are top-notch textbooks used at some of the finest universities in the world. Once

¹ Because unexpected meetings and assorted similar events occur all the time, office hours must inevitably be flexible and I may, from time to time be required to cancel them. If this becomes necessary, I will notify you as far in advance as possible and endeavor to arrange alternative office hours. If you cannot make office hours, I am available for scheduled appointments.

² Professor Jason Enia at Sam Houston State University defines critical thinking in the International Relations context thus: “Critical thinking is not about blindly accepting the wisdom of the ‘talking heads’ you see on television or the information you get online. It is about admitting and being comfortable with uncertainty. In the complex arena of international politics—where there are almost always multiple and competing assessments of and solutions to international problems—this type of analysis is crucial. It includes the ability to *break a problem into its component parts, to question assumptions, to recognize and critically assess multiple and competing sources of information, to evaluate alternative perspectives on problems, and finally to design and evaluate solutions to those problems.* The value of the study of the social sciences lies in the development of these critical thinking skills.”

³ In addition, you should also be regularly reading a current events news source like the *New York Times* or the *Economist*. You will find that doing so will be a significant boon on the exams.

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you have mastered these texts, your understanding of International Relations will be significantly more sophisticated and nuanced, giving you an excellent foundation both for upper division courses in International Relations as well as your future career. Light bulbs will go off. Mysteries will be revealed and resolved. You might even enter a higher plane of consciousness.

This assumes, of course, that you study. I have **high** expectations in this regard. I have checked the requirements for a degree at Georgia Tech and INTA 1110 is not required to graduate. It follows, since you are enrolled in this class, that you have an abiding interest in International Relations and seek to learn as much as you can about it. This course has been structured under the assumption that every student in this class *wants* to be here. Accordingly, I have expectations regarding your desire to commit time and energy to this course. Among other things, this means showing up for class. Course attendance, however, will not be enforced. I expect that you, as adults, are responsible for your decisions. While this means you have the freedom to skip class without immediate consequence, it also means that stories of woe at the end of semester will have very little audience with me (i.e. extra credit will not be forthcoming). Similarly, claiming that you 'don't get it' before the course final when I have not seen you in office hours or heard questions from you in class will find little sympathy.

This is a lecture-based class with question and answer sessions at the start of each class. While I prefer to structure courses around student engagement and discussion, such a framework is impractical for a class this size. That, however, does not absolve you of your obligations to prepare for class. That means you need to **complete the assigned reading before the class date to which it is attached**. Let me say this again. If chapter 9 is listed next to January 26, that means you need to read chapter 9 *by* that date, **not** on that date. Reading will be enforced through periodic, in-class reading quizzes. The course texts, particularly the Buzan and Little text, require intensive, sustained focus and engagement; this is not light reading to be done while you watch television or wait for the latest YouTube video to download. International Relations is *not supposed* to be easy. If it were, we would have figured it all out a long time ago. The fact that so many problems and issues today can be traced to the relations between states clearly proves that we have not. Underestimate this course, and its subject, at your own (grade) peril.

Objectives for Students:

- Analyze and understand the major themes of international relations and global politics
- Develop an appreciation of theory and its utility in the study and practice of international relations
- Improve critical thinking and writing skills

Course Texts:

- Baylis, John, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 5th edition. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Buzan, Barry and Richard Little. *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Course grading:

Reading Quizzes (one percent each)	20 percent
Map Quiz (January 20)	5 percent
Midterm exam #1 (February 8)	15 percent
Midterm exam #2 (March 15)	25 percent

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Final exam (cumulative) (May I, 11:30-2:20 PM)

35 percent

The Map Quiz will consist of 25 questions requiring you to identify selected countries.

Grade Scale: 100-90 (A) | 89-80 (B) | 79-70 (C) | 69-60 (D) | 59-0 (F).

Grading Policy: Grade inflation is a documented problem in U.S. higher education. While no single class will change the phenomenon to any significant degree, this course will be graded to the original conceptualization of the letter grades. As such, an A represents excellent work, a B mark indicates good or above average work, a C denotes average work, a D signifies below average, and F means unacceptably subpar work. This does not necessarily suggest that the average or median of the class will be a C. The descriptors are meant to signal the assessed level of understanding of the course material demonstrated by the student rather than a measure against the performance of other students.

Participation: In a class of this size, in-class participation is difficult to require for grade points. Therefore, while I encourage you to ask questions in class, participation will not have a grade attached to it. To facilitate communication and communal development of knowledge, I have established a class account at the online Q&A/discussion forum *Piazza*, where you and your fellow classmates (using either your real names or anonymously) can discuss the ideas, concepts, and theories in class and I can provide guidance in your discussions. To access the site, you need to sign-up for an account at: <http://www.piazza.com/gatech/spring2012/inta1110a>

Exams: The Midterm exams are designed to give you an opportunity to hone your analytical skills in the context of the theories and concepts of the class in preparation for the final exam. To this end, the value of the first exam is discounted vis-à-vis the second. Exams will include both multiple choice questions and essay questions.

Miscellaneous: Students are required to take exams and quizzes at the scheduled time. Students with excused absences will be able to take a make-up, but are responsible for arranging the time. All work for the semester should be kept until final grades are processed. Grades will be posted to T-Square.

Policy on letters of recommendation:

You must have taken at least two courses with me before I will consider writing a letter of recommendation for you. I will only write letters for students that have performed well in class, which means usually an A- or better in both classes, although I would be open to writing a letter for an individual who shows improvement from the first to second class (e.g. B or B+ in the first class to A in second class). Since a recommendation relies on personal knowledge, it would be in your interest to distinguish yourself in class. If I don't know you, I cannot comment on anything besides your course performance. Trust me when I tell you that a letter consisting of "Jim/Jane did well in two courses, receiving an A in both," hardly makes for a compelling recommendation.

Laptops in class:

I am aware that students no longer use chalk on cave walls to take notes, and that laptops are ubiquitous in the modern classroom. I have no problem with using laptops to take notes. It even makes sense to have your notes in a format where you can easily search for particular dates or terms. What I have a serious problem with is the use of your laptop to check email, browse the web, watch videos, or catch up on Facebook, Twitter, Fritter, or whatever the latest social networking site is called. Do not do it. I have

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asked the teaching assistants to keep an eye on your activities from the back of the room. If we have to warn you more than once, points will be deducted from your FINAL grade.

Cheating and plagiarism:

Don't do it. I have a zero tolerance with respect to these activities. Cheating and plagiarism demean the efforts of others who put in blood, sweat, and tears to do well in the class. I will not allow the above-board work of honest students to be undermined by those who seek shortcuts. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, receiving unauthorized assistance on exams and asking another student to respond to clicker questions in your absence. The Georgia Tech Honor Code is available online: <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>. If caught cheating, you *will* be dealt with accordingly.

Students with Disabilities:

Georgia Tech is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities through the ADAPTS program (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>). Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate their educational opportunities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is located in Smithgall Student Services Building, phone 404-894-2564 or TDD only 404-894-1664.

Religious Observance:

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class at any point during this semester.

Add/Drop:

Please consult the GT academic calendar to make sure you observe add/drop deadlines (<http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/home/calendar.php>)

Course Schedule

Key: BSO = *The Globalization of World Politics* | BL = *International Systems in World History* | ➔ Marks an important date, usually exam dates or assignment deadlines.

Laying the Theoretical Foundations

Week I

January 10 | Introduction, Syllabus, The Evolution of International Society: BSO Chapter 2
January 12 | International History: BSO Chapter 3&4

Week II

January 17 | Realism and Liberalism: BSO Chapter 5 & 6
➔ January 19 | **MAP QUIZ**; Neo-Neo Debate: BSO Chapter 7

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Week III

January 24 | IPE and Marxism: *BSO* Chapters 8&15
January 26 | Constructivism: *BSO* Chapter 9 (160-173)

Week IV

January 31 | Alternative Approaches and International Ethics: *BSO* Chapter 10-12
Re-examining IR Theory and History
February 2 | Challenging IR Theory: *BL* Introduction & Chapter 1& 2 (17-48)

Week V

➔ **February 7 | Midterm I**
February 9 | Theoretical Toolkit: *BL* Chapter 4 & 5 (68-110)

Week VI

February 14 | Preinternational Systems: *BL* Chapter 6&7 (111-159)
February 16 | Ancient and Classical Systems I: *BL* Chapter 8&9 (163-215)

Week VII

February 21 | Ancient and Classical Systems II: *BL* Chapter 10&11 (216-240)
February 23 | Modern System I: *BL* Chapter 12&13 (241-299)

Week VIII

February 28 | Modern System II: *BL* Chapter 14&15 (300-343)
March 1 | Postmodern System/World History and IR: *BL* Chapter 16&17 (347-385)

Actors, Institutions, and Issues in International Relations

Week IX

March 6 | United Nations: Chapter 19
March 8 | International Law and Regimes: *BSO* Chapter 17&18

Week X

➔ **March 13 | Midterm Exam #2**
March 15 | Transnational actors/Environmental Issues: *BSO* Chapter 20&21

Week XI (spring break)

March 20 | SPRING BREAK: No Class!
March 22 | SPRING BREAK: No Class!

Week XII

March 27 | War: *BSO* Chapter 13
March 29 | International and Human Security: *BSO* Chapter 14&29

Week XIII

April 3 | Film
➔ **April 5 | Film, Film Quiz**

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Week XIV

April 10 | Terrorism and nuclear proliferation: *BSO* Chapter 22&23

April 12 | Nationalism and Culture: *BSO* Chapters 24&25

Week XV

April 17 | Gender: *BSO* Chapter 16

April 19 | Regionalism: *BSO* Chapter 26

Week XVI

April 24 | Human Rights/Humanitarian Intervention: *BSO* Chapter 30&31

April 26 | Poverty and Trade: *BSO* Chapter 27&28

Final Exam (Cumulative):

May 1, 11:30-2:20 PM