We live in an era of unprecedented global connectivity, in which what happens in one part of the world (in the cities of Wuhan or Kabul for example) has the capacity to affect the lives of billions of people everywhere, sometimes dramatically. At the same time, phenomena like the internet and climate change know no national boundaries and shape
life-prospects around the world. In this global era, it is critical that students acquire the ideas, knowledge, and skills necessary for understanding how the world works. This course introduces first-year students to the main building blocks used in social science to understand international politics. We will begin by defining what is meant by "International Politics" and how the field of International Politics – also called International Relations or IR – emerged and evolved. We will then briefly survey the main theoretical approaches to International Politics, before turning to examine key topics in the field: the concept of world order, statehood and sovereignty, causes and consequences of military conflict and war, and international political economy. We will conclude the semester with a discussion of contemporary forces shaping (and likely to shape) International Politics in the 21st century.

Course Goals

This course is designed to make students more globally literate. It aims to provide first-year students with an introductory understanding of contemporary international relations. By the end of the course, students should gain introductory knowledge about some international relations theories and have a basic understanding of the assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses of these approaches. Students will become familiar with major substantive issues in international relations, including international security, international political economy, and globalization. Students will develop critical reading and analytical skills designed to to better understand and analyze contemporary problems in international relations.

Grading

Final examination (100% of the grade).

NOTE: IDC rules require regular attendance and engagement with course materials and discussions. There exists a very strong correlation between regular, active attendance and examination performance.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should gain introductory knowledge about some international relations theories and have a basic understanding of the assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses of these approaches. Students will become familiar with major substantive issues in international relations, including international security, international political economy, and globalization. Students will develop critical reading and analytical skills designed to to better understand and analyze contemporary problems in international relations.
Lecturer Office Hours

By appointment

Tutor Office Hours

By appointment

Reading List

All required readings are posted on the course Moodle site. Podcasts and videos are supplementary (not required) materials and will not be included in the examination.