

PSCI 3143

Current Affairs in International Relations

Spring 2020

Time: Monday & Wednesday, 3:00pm-4:15 PM

Location: Hale 230

Instructor: Anna Gray

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Office: Ketchum 114G

Office Hours: Mon. 1:30-2:30pm, Wed. 12:00-1:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to help students broaden their knowledge of current international affairs while applying international relations theories to contemporary problems. By mixing traditional political science readings with news publications, political blogs, NGO reports, documentaries, and podcasts, students are challenged to connect academic theory to media output. Beyond simply learning about current affairs in the world, students are asked to hone their research skills by investigating their own cases. Substantively, the course focuses on the major themes in international relations as they are being manifested in the world: power negotiations, conflict, migration and trade, regime transitions, collective action, and international organizations. This is an advanced level course that assumes pre-existing knowledge of international relations and political science. Suggested prerequisites are PSCI 2223.

Required Materials

1. This course requires access to **Foreign Affairs**, a non-partisan US-based publication that focuses on international affairs and U.S. Foreign Policy. If you manage your account carefully, you should be able access the articles listed in the syllabus for free. Check here for full information about how many articles you can access per month. You are responsible for managing this: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/accessing-foreignaffairscom> Alternatively, a student membership can be bought for \$25.95 per year. If you choose to subscribe, make sure you select a digital subscription, so as to be able to access archived articles online. Foreign Affairs articles will NOT be posted on Canvas.
2. You will select **one book or podcast** from the materials listed for your In-Depth Exploration Project. If you select a podcast you can access that for

free online, whereas the books are available at varying prices for purchase online. These books have NOT been ordered to the CU bookstore – you are responsible for sourcing them yourself.

3. Additional reading material will be available either online, or posted on the Canvas classroom site. You may choose to pay for a limited subscription to other news sites for your own research purposes, but this will be according to your discretion. One out-of-class assignment requires that you rent a documentary to watch online – you should budget **\$4** for this.

Assignments and Grading

Your grades will be based on the following assignments:

In-Depth Exploration Project	20%
Case Analysis (April 8th).....	20%
Quizzes.....	10%
Midterm.....	15%
Final.....	20%
Participation.....	5%
Attendance.....	10%

Grade percentages correspond to letter grades as follows:

A 94-100, A- 90-93, B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82, C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72, D+ 67-69, D 63-66, D- 60-62, F <60

Exams

Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer, and do not require the purchase of a Blue Book.

Your Final Exam for this Course is May 4th, 7:30-10:00pm.

If you have more 3 or more exams on May 4th, you can arrange to reschedule this final. If this is the case, university policy requires that you do so by January 29th.

Quizzes

You will have 2 multiple choice quizzes, each worth 5% of your grade. Quiz dates are listed on the syllabus, and are: Feb. 10th and April 15th. Quiz makeups will only be allowed in the case of an excused absence, which must be fully documented.

Case Analysis

Descriptions of the expectations for the Case Analysis are posted on Canvas, along with its rubric.

For all written assignments, late documents will be given a 5% penalty if turned in late but on the due date. After the due date, a 10% penalty will be given for each day (including weekend days), and a paper will not be accepted once it is more than 1 week late.

All written assignments must be turned in online on Canvas. Only Word documents and PDF files will be accepted. Alternative files such as .pages will not be counted as on-time submissions.

In-Depth Exploration Project

You will choose one of the below books or podcasts to read or listen to as a means of further exploring one class topic that you are interested in. You will then have 3 separate online discussions regarding your book or podcast with other students who have selected the same material as you (discussion are due Feb. 3rd, Feb. 19th, and March 4th), guided by prompts I will provide in advance. On March 18th you will submit a 5-6 page paper that 1) summarizes your material, 2) connects it to political science theory discussed in class, and 3) critiques the material (positively or negatively). Assignment details, along with a rubric, for this paper will be available on Canvas. These materials vary in length and cost; the choice is up to you, but once you have made your selection (due Jan. 22nd), you cannot change it. Please be aware that the books or podcasts concerning conflict will contain graphic material. If you anticipate that you will be uncomfortable with this, you should not select these for your in-depth project.

In-Depth Topics & Material:

1. **Russia**
We Need to Talk About Putin: How the West Gets Him Wrong, by Mark Galeotti

2. **China**
Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, And Faith In The New China, by Evan Osnos

3. **South Sudan**
First Raise A Flag: How South Sudan Won The Longest War But Lost The Peace, by Peter Martell

4. **Afghanistan & Iraq**
The Forever War, by Dexter Filkins

5. ISIS

Caliphate, a podcast by the New York Times featuring Rukmini Callimachi (all episodes)

6. Brexit

Brexit: A Love Story?, a podcast by BBC Radio 4 featuring Mark Mardell (all episodes)

7. Climate Change

Climate Justice: A Man-Made Problem With A Feminist Solution, by Mary Robinson

Participation

Your classroom is a community. As such, to be successful in participation you must appropriately engage with your classmates and instructor. As we discuss complex and sometimes volatile issues, your ability to disagree and engage with one another respectfully is a key part of your participation. This course is not designed in such a way that you must actively earn participation points, but you may lose points as a result of disruptive or disrespectful behavior, using technology for entertainment, sleeping through lecture, etc. One final participation grade will be given at the end of the semester. If you are concerned that you may be losing participation credit, please feel free to come speak with me about your grade as soon as you become concerned.

Attendance

You are allowed 2 unexcused absences this semester. After your 2 unexcused absences have been used up, each additional absence will result in a 10% drop in your attendance grade. Excused absences are reserved for health issues, university athlete sport events, of which I must be notified at the beginning of the semester, and religious absences, of which I must also be notified at least 2 weeks in advance. Any other absence beyond your 2 “freebies” will be counted against you, even if it was not premeditated and was beyond your control. Documentation for absences that you believe may be qualified as “excused” should be presented to me within a week of the absence.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class by passing out a sign-in sheet. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, please feel free to attend, but you will be marked as absent. Signing anyone other than yourself in on the attendance sheet will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. If caught doing this, you will receive a zero for your attendance grade for the semester, and your case may be submitted to the Honors Code Council.

Extra Credit

I will sporadically make extra credit available in the form of short online discussions about class material. To take advantage of these, you will need to participate in them within a certain timeframe, and they will be graded like regular assignments. Extra credit opportunities will not total more than 3% of your final grade, so please do not plan on these as a means of fully making up for a missed or poorly executed assignment.

Class Communication

This is a paper-free class, with the exception of the quizzes you will take in class. You are welcome to print off reading materials and bring them to class, but that is not my expectation. As such, technology is welcome in the classroom, but should be used for learning purposes only.

All written assignments should be turned in electronically via Canvas, and will receive electronic feedback. I will communicate with you via announcements on Canvas, and via e-mail. You will be held responsible for paying attention to and keeping track of both forms of communication.

If you believe you have received an unfair grade on an assignment, you must submit a written grade complaint to me within one week of receiving the contended grade. I encourage you to meet with me beforehand before doing so, to ensure that you fully understand the grade that you received.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students) (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor. This should be done at the beginning of the semester in a timely fashion.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, **please submit written notification of any religious**

holidays that will conflict with class within the first 3 weeks of the semester. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Course Schedule

The material bulleted below the class date should be read or listened to before the class meeting that day.

Because most of the current events we are analyzing in this class will be developing over the course of the semester, I may occasionally change the assigned readings. In the case of a change, I will be sure to give you one week of advance notice via e-mail.

Many of the topics we will be covering in class this semester are controversial, and some of the material may be **graphic and difficult to consume, particularly in regards to violence**. While I encourage you to challenge yourself to face uncomfortable material, if you are concerned that some of it may be too much for you, or may be triggering in some way, please feel free to come speak with me about alternative materials you may be given (this should be done at least one week in advance of any assignments).

Week 1: Getting our Bearings

- Jan. 13 – Course Introduction
- Jan 15 – The Theoretical Foundations of International Relations
 - Snyder, Jack. 2009. "One World, Rival Theories." *Foreign Policy*.

Week 2: Review – Actors & Information

- Jan 20 – No class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
- Jan 22 – Foreign Policy Analysis & Separating Fact From Fiction
 - Tandoc Jr, Edson C., Zheng Wei Lim, and Richard Ling. 2018. "Defining "fake news" A typology of scholarly definitions." *Digital journalism* 6(2):137-153.
 - **Due: In-Depth Project Selection**

Week 3: Major Actors in the Int'l System: Russia

- Jan 27 – Russia as an International Actor
 - Kotkin, Stephen. “Russia’s Perpetual Geopolitics: Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern.” *Foreign Affairs*. April 19, 2016.
 - Tepperman, Jonathan. “How to Repair Venezuela’s Shattered Economy.” *And Now the Hard Part*. October 21, 2019. (Podcast: 32 min)
- Jan 29 – Current International Russian Affairs
 - Zaretsky, Robert. “Ambivalence About Moscow is a French Tradition.” *Foreign Affairs*. December 30, 2019.

Week 4: Major Actors in the Int'l System: China

- Feb. 3 –China as an International Actor
 - Zakaria, Fareed. 2020. “The New China Scare.” *Foreign Affairs*. January/February 2020.
 - **Due: In-Depth Exploration Discussion #1**
- Feb. 5 – Current International Chinese Affairs
 - “China Steps Up Its Information War in Taiwan.” *The Economist*. Jan. 9, 2020.

Week 5: Interstate Conflict

- Feb. 10 – Conflict: Types, Trends, Interstate Theory
 - Malley, Robert. 2019. “10 Conflicts to Watch in 2019.” *Foreign Policy*. (I suggest reading it online)
 - **Quiz #1**
- Feb 12 – Interstate Conflict: India & Pakistan
 - Documentary: “Partition: The Day India Burned.” BBC. 2007. (90 min.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGiTaQ60Je0>
 - Review Kashmir section of “10 Conflict to Watch in 2019”

Week 6: Civil Conflict

- Feb 17 – Understanding Civil War
 - Walter, Barbara F. 2009. "Bargaining failures and civil war." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 12: 243-261.

- Feb. 19 – Civil War: South Sudan
 - Temin, John. 2019. “South Sudan’s Proposed Unity Government Is Still Divided.” *Foreign Policy*. November 11, 2019.
 - Documentary: “Saving South Sudan.” Vice News. May 22, 2014. (34 min).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDSu8wIQG6c>
 - **Due: In-Depth Exploration Discussion #2**

Week 7: Terrorism

- Feb 24 – The Causes and Strategies of Terrorism
 - Kydd, Andrew H., and Barbara F. Walter. 2006. "The strategies of terrorism." *International Security*. 31(1):49-80.
- Feb 26 – The Causes and Strategies of Terrorism, con't.
 - Norman, Julie M. and Drew Mikhael. “Youth Radicalization is on the rise. Here’s what we know about why.” Monkey Cage. August 28, 2017.
 - Tesfaye, Beza. “Education alone doesn’t prevent terrorism. Here’s what else you need.” Monkey Cage. January 5, 2017.

Week 8: Terrorism & Conflict in the Middle East

- March 2 – Understanding Global War on Terror
 - Documentary: “Hell On Earth: The Fall of Syria and the Rise of ISIS.” (99 min. - available for rent online, \$4.)
- March 4 –Power & Identity Politics in the Middle East
 - Short reading or podcast TBD
 - **Due: In-Depth Exploration Discussion #3**

Week 9: Midterm

- March 9 – Review Day
- March 11- **Midterm Exam**

Week 10: International Trade

- March 16 – Migration, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers
 - Nyabola, Nanjala. “The End of Asylum.” *Foreign Affairs*. Oct. 10, 2019.

- March 18 – Understanding the Latin American Refugee & Migrant Crisis
 - Betts, Alexander. “Nowhere to Go.” *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 2019.
 - **Due: In-Depth Exploration Paper**

Week 11: Spring Break!

- March 23 – No class
- March 25 – No class

Week 12: Populism

- March 30 – Understanding Populism
 - Molloy, David. “What is populism, and what does the term actually mean?” BBC. March 6, 2018.
- April 1 – Populism: Venezuela
 - Tepperman, Jonathan. “How to Repair Venezuela’s Shattered Economy.” *And Now the Hard Part*. October 21, 2019. (Podcast: 32 min)

Week 13: Authoritarianism

- April 6 – Authoritarian Theory
 - Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (Introduction, posted on Canvas)
- April 8 – Authoritarian Trends
 - No Reading
 - **Due: Case Analysis**

Week 14- International Organizations

- April 13 – What are international organizations and why do they matter?
 - Optional reading: Russett, Bruce, John R. Oneal, and David R. Davis. 1988. “The third leg of the Kantian tripod for peace: International organizations and militarized disputes, 1950–85.” *International Organization*. 52(3): 441-467.

- April 15 – Brexit & the EU
 - Reading: TBD
 - **Quiz #2**

Week 15 – International Cooperation: Climate Change

- April 20 – Cooperation Challenges
 - Kamarck, Elaine. “The Challenging Politics of Climate Change.” Brookings Institute. September 23, 2019.
- April 22 – Geopolitics of Climate Change
 - “How to Understand the Geopolitics of Climate Change” Foreign Affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/lists/how-to-understand-the-geopolitics-of-climate-change>
 - Choose 2 of the 6 articles to read

Week 16 – Looking Towards the Future

- April 27 – New Developments in the International Sphere
 - TBD
- April 29 – Exam Review Day