

PSCI 3143: Current Affairs in International Relations

Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Megan Roosevelt

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Location: Duane G2B47

Time: TTh 12:30 – 1:45pm

Office: Ketchum 122

Office Hours: W 1:00 – 3:00pm

or by appointment

Course Overview/Objectives: The field of political science concerns itself first and foremost with the study of preferences and power. Using the scientific method we develop and test theories about the way states and individuals interact, producing a body of empirical relationships that help us understand the political world around us. A firm grasp on current affairs is critical to this exercise: it grounds our research questions to ensure their salience, it helps us formulate hypotheses, and it may help us disprove longstanding working theories, which is arguably just as crucial to the endeavor of producing “good” science. And outside of the discipline, knowledge of current affairs equips us to participate actively in society, perform our civic duties, and develop a fuller understanding of lives other than our own. This course pairs the study of robust scientific relationships on topics such as war, the global economy, and migration with case studies of current conflicts, trade agreements, etc., prompting students to assess how well the world as we see it today matches onto the general statistical trends demonstrated by data.

Required Text:

- *Dear Leader: My Escape from North Korea*, by Jang Jin-Sung
- All other assigned readings will be available online through D2L.

Grading Policy:

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Reaction papers	3 @ 10% apiece
Policy brief	25%
<u>Presentations</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

For converting final percentages into letter grades, A: 94-100, A-: 90-93, B+: 86-89, B: 83-85, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62, F: <60.

Graded items and assignments:

Attendance: Students will sign next to their name on daily attendance sheets which will circulate at the beginning of each class. Attendance makes up 10 percent of the overall grade. Students are allowed three missed classes with no questions asked; beyond that, each missed day will deduct one percentage point from your attendance grade (i.e. once you miss 13 days of class, you will have an attendance grade of 0). The three free days are intended to encompass all absences, “excused” or otherwise. If you miss a day due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, feel free to drop by my office hours or talk about it if you wish, but I do not require (or want) documentation to attempt to excuse the absence.

Participation: Students will receive a participation score that counts for 10 percent of their overall grade in the class. This grade will come in part from routine engagement with colleagues and course materials during the semester, and in part from contribution to casual in-class debates. Reading assignments should be completed before the class for which they are assigned; as an upper-division class, this course will require readings for most days, including some peer-reviewed scientific articles. While you may not understand all of the quantitative testing, you should make your best effort to understand the arguments put forth and the broader debates in which they are situated. If you need help with effective reading strategies for academic writing, please come by office hours.

Reaction papers: students will complete three short written assignments between Weeks 3 and 15, each accounting for 10 percent of their grade (30% total), demonstrating comprehension of the material covered in the week prior, and analyzing it by making connections to other topics covered, lived experience, and/or other newsworthy events. These should be *turned in in hard copy at the start of class on Mondays* and should be approximately one page, single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12pt or comparable font, with standard margins. You may space out your completion of these papers throughout Weeks 3-15 however you like, but keep in mind that students are rewarded for improvement over the course of the semester, and waiting until the final three weeks will limit the amount and quality of feedback you will receive to foster such improvement. The best papers will make connections between theories and current events that have not already been explicitly made in class.

Policy Brief: In lieu of a final exam, the final project for this class will be a policy brief of sorts, in which students synopsise a current international political event of their choosing and then detail two policy approaches to it: those that could be taken by the international community (e.g. IGOs, international NGOs, the UN, the Hague, etc.) and those that could be taken domestically by the government of the primary country in question. These policy alternatives should be based in scholarly research and empirical trends. This paper will be approximately 5-7 pages in length, double-spaced, and should have a strong analytical component rather than focusing on summary; I will provide a detailed set of guidelines later in the semester.

Presentation: In Week 16 students will give short presentations before the class on the topic they have selected for their policy brief. These will provide background on the current event chosen and justify their recommended policies for both the international community and domestic leadership. Both days of presentations will involve a Q&A period in which students have the opportunity to provide each other with constructive feedback before the policy brief itself is due.

Late work policy: All late work will be penalized by one letter grade for every day it is late. This is mainly applicable to the policy brief assignment, but may apply to reaction papers as well if students fail to complete three before Week 15.

Note: This class will cover sensitive and controversial topics, including (but not limited to) refugee crises, foreign policy debates, and strategies of terrorism. We will watch documentaries that may be graphic in parts. The goal of covering such subjects is to prompt thoughtful, informed, and respectful dialogue, and as such, I encourage students to participate even when it challenges them personally. However, I cannot make you do so; feel free to talk to me if you have any concerns about the topics we will cover or the ways in which we will address them.

Class Schedule:

*subject to change

Week 1: Introduction

- Tuesday, 8/20: syllabus day
- Thursday, 8/30: ****no class – APSA annual conference****

Week 2: The Basics of International Relations

- Tuesday, 9/04: How to study IR
- Thursday, 9/06: Paradigms and actors

Week 3: Human Migration

- Tuesday, 9/11: Trends in migration flows & policy – why are people anti-immigrant?
 - Reading: Hainmueller, Jens, and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. “Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 61-84.
 - Brooks, Clem, Jeff Manza, and Emma D. Cohen. 2016. “Political Ideology and Immigrant Acceptance.” *Socius* 2: 1-12.
- Thursday, 9/13: Immigration and right-wing populism
 - Reading: Brubaker, Rogers. “The New Language of European Populism: Why ‘Civilization’ is Replacing the Nation.” *Foreign Affairs*, December 2017.
 - Vieten, Ulrike M., and Scott Poynting. 2016. “Contemporary Far-Right Racist Populism in Europe.” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37(6): 533-540.

Week 4: Global Economic Exchange

- Tuesday, 9/18: Cooperation in international trade
 - Skim: Whalley, John. 1998. “Why do countries seek regional trade agreements?” in Frankel, Jeffrey A. (ed.). *The Regionalization of the World Economy*. University of Chicago Press.
- Thursday, 9/20: Controversy over trade agreements
 - Reading: Granville, Kevin. “What is TPP? Behind the Trade Deal that Died.” *The New York Times*, January 23, 2017.
 - “How to Improve NAFTA,” *The Economist*, August 19, 2017.

Week 5: Barriers to Economic Liberalism – the US & China

- Tuesday, 9/25: Trade wars
 - Reading: “Trade war: The US and China just slapped new tariffs on each other.” *CNNPolitics*, August 23, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/23/politics/china-us-tariffs/index.html>
- Thursday, 9/27: Currency and investment as political tools
 - Reading: Bergsten, C. Fred. “China is No Longer Manipulating its Currency.” Petersen Institute for International Economics, published November 18, 2016.
 - “A Golden Opportunity: China’s President Ventures into Donald Trump’s Backyard,” *The Economist*, November 17, 2016.

Week 6: Brexit and the EU – immigration or the economy?

- Tuesday, 10/02: Why vote Leave?
 - Reading: Colantone, Italo, and Piero Stanig. 2018. “Global Competition and Brexit.” *American Political Science Review* 112(2): 201-218.
- Thursday, 10/04: What’s next for European integration?
 - Reading: Dhingra, Swati. “Salvaging Brexit: The Right Way to Leave the EU.” *Foreign Affairs* November/December 2016.

Week 7: Environmental Politics and International Organizations

- Tuesday, 10/09: Environmental policy in the United States
 - Reading: Nordhaus, Ted, and Alex Trembath. “Trump’s Paris Agreement Withdrawal in Context: The Polarization of the Climate Issue Continues.” *Foreign Affairs* snapshot, June 5, 2017.
- Thursday, 10/11: Climate and development in Africa
 - Reading: “Africa Climate Business Plan: Delivering on Climate Promises.” *World Bank Group*, November 8, 2016.

Week 8: The Internet as a Political Phenomenon

- Tuesday, 10/16: Does the internet strengthen or undermine democracy?
 - Reading: Kornbluh, Karen. “The Internet’s Lost Promise, and How American Can Restore It.” *Foreign Affairs* September/October 2018.
 - Skim: “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections.” *Declassified Intelligence Community Assessment*, January 6, 2017.
- Thursday, 10/18: The politics of internet censorship
 - Reading: Segal, Adam. “When China Rules the Web: Technology in Service of the State.” *Foreign Affairs* September/October 2018.
 - Skim: King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2017. “How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument.” *American Political Science Review* 111(3): 484-511.

Week 9: Islam, Islamism, and Democracy

- Tuesday, 10/23: Did the Arab Spring make a difference?
 - Reading: “Blanket Repression is the Wrong Way to Deal with Political Islamists,” *The Economist*, August 26, 2017.
- Thursday, 10/25: Prospects for democracy in the Middle East
 - Reading: Jamal, Amaney A. 2006. “Reassessing Support for Islam and Democracy in the Arab World?” *World Affairs* 169(2): 51-63.

Week 10: Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa

- Tuesday, 10/30: ISIS and understanding terror tactics
 - Reading: Irving, Doug. “What Life Under ISIS Looked Like from Space.” *The RAND Blog*, January 9, 2018. <https://www.rand.org/blog/rand-review/2018/01/what-life-under-isis-looked-like-from-space.html>
 - Ward, Antonia. “Do Terrorist Groups Really Die? A Warning.” *The RAND Blog*, April 9, 2018. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/04/do-terrorist-groups-really-die-a-warning.html>
- Thursday, 11/01: Inside the Syrian Civil War
 - In class: watch documentary “The White Helmets”

Week 11: North Korea 1 – The Origins of the Kim Dynasty

- Tuesday, 11/06: US-North Korean diplomacy since the 1950s
- Thursday, 11/08: The North Korean bureaucracy
 - Reading: *Dear Leader* – Translator’s Note (p. 319-321), Prologue, and Part One: DICTATOR (p. ix-92)

Week 12: North Korea 2 – Human Rights and Isolationism

- Tuesday, 11/13: Human rights violations
 - Skim: “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea 2017 Human Rights Report.” *US Department of State*.
- Thursday, 11/15: Leaving North Korea
 - Reading: *Dear Leader* – Part Two: FUGITIVE (p. 95-202)

Week 13

- ******no class – Fall Break******

Week 14: North Korea 3 – Kim Jong-Un’s North Korea

- Tuesday, 11/27: Nuclear Brinkmanship on the Korean Peninsula and beyond
 - Reading: Stanton, Joshua, Sung-Yoon Lee, and Bruce Klingner. “Getting Tough on North Korea: How to Hit Pyongyang Where It Hurts.” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2017.
- Thursday, 11/29: Foreign and domestic policy parallels across the three Kim administrations
 - Reading: *Dear Leader* – Part Three: FREEDOM (p. 205-307)
 - Optional: *Dear Leader* – Epilogue and Afterword

Week 15: Visions of the future of international relations

- Tuesday, 12/04: Predictions for 21st century politics at the end of the Cold War
 - Huntington, Samuel. 1992. “The Clash of Civilizations?” in Art, Robert J., and Robert Jervis (eds). *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Ideas* (9th ed.). Prentice Hall.
- Thursday, 12/06: Predictions for 21st century politics one decade in
 - Friedman, George. 2010. “The New Fault Lines,” excerpted from *The Next 100 Years: A Forecast for the 21st Century*. Anchor.

Week 16: Looking forward

- Tuesday, 12/11: Presentations
- Thursday, 12/13: Presentations, cont.
- **Policy brief due Friday, 12/14 at 11:59pm**

University Policies:

Academic Honesty: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information regarding the Honor Code policy can be found online and at the Honor Code Office.

Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries guidelines under the Quick Links at the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Observances: 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. If applicable, please let me know in a timely manner.

Appropriate Learning Environment: 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 differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. 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.

Discrimination and Harassment: 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 discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to 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 discriminated against should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be found at the OIEC website.