

## **PS 0500: Introduction to World Politics**

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University of Pittsburgh  
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Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-3:50

Recitations: As Scheduled

Langley A221

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Posvar 4446, 12:45-2:45

World politics is the study of how states interact with each other. This course builds a working knowledge of our field, introducing the background, theoretical, and empirical tools necessary to understand international relations today. Students will learn about important findings in a variety of subfields, including war, international political economy, institutions, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism. To do so, the course emphasizes readings from original research material rather than from a textbook. Students will also solve problem sets and work with common international relations datasets to obtain a working understanding of the discipline's methodological foundations.

## Course Materials

Blackboard is difficult to work with. Thus, I will post all course materials on my website: <https://williamspaniel.com/classes/ps-0500-2017/>. Most importantly, this includes links to required readings, PDFs of lecture slides, and recorded videos of lectures.

There are no required books for this course. However, students may find it useful to purchase *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions* as a reference textbook. Used copies of the second edition are [available on Amazon for less than \\$10](#).

## Recitation

This class has weekly recitations in place of the scheduled Friday lecture. Recitations are mandatory and constitute a large portion of your grade. There will be no leniency for students attending lecture but not recitation.

## Evaluation

Grades have four components: two problem sets, two data analyses, recitation, and two exams. The problem sets are worth 10% each and will test your ability to think strategically about basic problems in international relations. The two data analyses are worth 5% each and will ask you to become more familiar with IR's common datasets. Recitation is worth 19% and will be based on attendance and participation, as your teaching assistant will further detail. The exams are non-cumulative and each worth 25%.

After weighting each individual grade, final grades will be no worse than the following:

$94\% < x$	A
$90 \leq x \leq 94\%$	A-
$87\% < x < 90\%$	B+
$83\% < x \leq 87\%$	B
$80\% \leq x \leq 83\%$	B-
$77\% < x < 80\%$	C+
$73\% < x \leq 77\%$	C
$70\% < x \leq 73\%$	C-
$x < 70\%$	Non-passing grades

### **Late Work**

Absent any university regulations that provide exceptions, no late work will be accepted under any circumstance. This is because I will go over the correct answers in class.

### **Teaching Assistant Recitation and Office Hours**

Matthew Jackson

mij35@pitt.edu

Office Hours: M 2:00-4:00, Political Science Department

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. You alone are responsible for attending lecture and checking the website to stay up-to-date.

## Readings and Schedule

The readings and schedule are subject to change, pending international crises and how fast we move through the material. Please see the website for links to the readings and an up-to-date schedule.

### **Topic 1: Introduction and IR Basics (1/5, 1/10)**

No readings.

### **Topic 2: Basic Models of Conflict and Cooperation (1/12, 1/17)**

[“The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War”](#)

*The Evolution of Cooperation*. [Chapter 1](#) and [Chapter 4](#).

### **Topic 3: Bargaining and War (1/19, 1/24, 1/26)**

[“Rationalist Explanations for War”](#)

[The Rationality of War](#). Chapter 2.

### **Topic 4: International Trade (1/31, 2/2)**

Problem Set #1 due 1/31.

### **Topic 5: The Democratic Peace (2/7, 2/9)**

[The Logic of Political Survival](#). Chapter 1.

Data Analysis #1 due 2/9.

### **Topic 6: Leader-Based Explanations (2/14, 2/16)**

[“International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still \*Ex Post\* Inefficient?”](#)

[“Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War”](#)

### **Exam 1 (2/21)**

Note: No lecture on 2/23 and no recitation on 2/24 (Annual International Studies Association Conference)

### **Topic 7: Economic Sanctions (2/28, 3/2)**

[“Do Economic Sanctions Destabilize Country Leaders?”](#)

["The Microfoundations of Economic Sanctions"](#)

Note: No recitation 3/3 and 3/10. No class on 3/7 and 3/9. (Spring Break.)

**Topic 8: International Institutions (3/14, 3/16)**

["The Rational Design of International Institutions"](#)

*Controlling Institutions*. [Chapter 1](#).

Problem Set #2 due 3/16.

**Topic 9: The United Nations (3/21, 3/23)**

["How Much Is a Seat on the Security Council Worth? Foreign Aid and Bribery at the United Nations"](#)

**Topic 10: Nuclear Proliferation (3/28, 4/4)**

["Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb"](#)

["Winning with the Bomb"](#)

Note: No lecture on 3/30 (Nuclear Latency Conference)

Data Analysis #2 due 4/4.

Note: No lecture on 4/6 and no recitation on 4/7 (Annual Midwest Political Science Conference)

**Topic 11: Terrorism (4/11, 4/13)**

["The Strategies of Terrorism"](#)

["Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism"](#)

**Topic 12: International Intervention (4/18)**

["The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement"](#)

**Exam 2 (4/20)**