

University of Western Ontario: Department of Political Science

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 9511A**  
**International Relations**

Fall 2024

See OWL Brightspace site for class time and location

**Course Director**

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**Course Description**

This course provides students with an advanced introduction to the politics of international relations and foreign policy with an emphasis on contemporary issues and cases. The first part of the course examines different approaches to foreign policy and international relations including realism, liberalism, neoconservatism, libertarianism, conservative nationalism, social conservatism, and progressivism. The second part of the course examines the debate between these approaches across different issues and cases. The course also examines the institutions, history, and politics of Canadian foreign policy.

**Course Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to: describe and apply the key approaches to international relations and foreign policy; recognize and critique the application of these approaches across key debates in international relations; acquire knowledge of the history of the international system including key institutions, actors, and events; acquire knowledge of contemporary policy issues and debates in international relations; demonstrate an understanding of Canada's role in global affairs including key institutions, actors, and events; identify and describe some of the key tools and techniques of foreign policy; acquire knowledge of and apply research skills related to primary and secondary documents; communicate ideas regarding the nature of international relations in a variety of written and oral mediums to a diverse set of audiences.

**Course Structure**

This is planned as an in-person course with 3-hour weekly seminars comprised of class discussions focused on the readings assigned for each week.

## Required Readings

All course readings are posted on the course website in the 'Readings' folder and then under their specific week. All readings in the folders are required readings.

## Course Assignments

Seminar Participation (first half to 28 Oct)	10%	
Seminar Participation (second half)	10%	
Weekly Reading Analyses	20%	
Essay	45%	Due Friday 8 Nov on OWL
Op-Ed and Presentation	15%	

## Assignment Due Dates

All assignments are due on OWL by 11:55 p.m. on the due date. After that, they will receive the late penalty designated for each assignment. All assignments must be submitted as PDF or Word files.

Sunday nights	Weekly reading analysis. Op-eds as per the assigned schedule.
8 Nov (Friday)	Essays due on OWL.
1 Dec (Sunday)	All weekly reading analyses submitted as a single document.

## Accommodations

- Students can miss one class without documentation (excluding your presentation day).
- After that, documentation is required or it will affect your participation grade.
- Extensions will NOT be granted for workload. Extensions will only be granted for documented medical and compassionate reasons.

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## ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

### Seminar Participation

Participation grades will be based on active participation in class discussions. For every class, your participation will be assessed as zero, low, at the class median, or high based on the quantity and quality of your contributions. These assessments will then be used to determine an overall participation mark relative to the rest of the students for the first and then second halves of the course. Therefore, if your participation is average compared to the other students over each half of the course, you will receive participation grades of B+. If your participation is above or below the average compared to the other students, you will receive participation grades above or below B+. For example, perfect attendance with low participation will result in a low B grade. Attendance will be taken and participation marks will be deducted for any classed missed without a documented accommodation.

## **Weekly Reading Analyses**

For every class (except the first class), students must submit a 1 page, typed, single-spaced analysis of that week's readings. The analyses must be in sentence format with your name typed at the top. Weekly reading analyses are due on the course website by 11:55 p.m. on the day before the class. After that, each late analysis will drop the overall grade by 2/100. All analyses must be submitted as PDF or Word files. In the final week, all of the weekly summaries up to and including the analysis for the final week's readings, must be submitted as a single document to turnitin.com through the course website by 11:55 p.m. If you miss a class, the analysis of that week's reading must be included when you submit all the reading analyses in the final week.

Acceptable analyses must include:

- good detail to demonstrate you have done the readings and understand the main approaches, concepts, or arguments
- relevant quotations (not just short phrases) and page citations from the readings using the in-text, bracketed format with the author surname and page number: e.g. (Smith, 345) - no bibliography or endnotes are required
- synthesis of the readings by theme and/or discussion questions rather than going reading-by-reading
- some of your own analysis such as views on the arguments, comparisons to other readings, approaches, issue areas, etc.
- an example of an acceptable analysis is posted on the website
- you do NOT need to cover every reading or every discussion question

Students will receive brief comments on their first analysis only to ensure they understand what is expected. Analyses will then be graded as a whole at the end of the course. Analyses that are on time and meet the acceptable standard will receive a grade of 83%. On rare occasions, if a student has consistently gone above and beyond, a somewhat higher grade may be awarded. Analyses that fall below the standard, will receive a lower grade as appropriate.

## **Essay**

MA students will complete one Policy Briefing Report with 13-15 typed double-spaced pages of text plus a title page, endnotes, and bibliography as per the Citation Guide. PhD students will complete the PhD Exam Preparation Essay with 18-20 typed double-spaced pages of text plus a title page, endnotes, and bibliography as per the Citation Guide. An e-copy of the essay must be submitted to turnitin.com through the course website by 11:55 p.m. on the Friday due date. Extensions will only be given for documented illnesses, emergencies, etc. and will not be given for workload. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day including weekends and holidays to a maximum of 10%.

### ***PhD Exam Preparation Essay***

This essay focuses on the different explanatory theories of IR and their application to the case of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. Most of the articles you will require for the essay are in the PhD

Exam Preparation folder. See the Essay Instructions doc on the course website for details on the specific requirements for the essay.

### ***MA Policy Briefing Report***

This essay is formatted as a Policy Briefing Report. You will pick a specific foreign policy issue and write a report that briefs and advises a government or political party on a specific course of action. The essay must have a clear thesis arguing in favour of a specific policy option. You can select a topic from the list provided on the course website or choose your own based on the required criteria. See the MA Policy Briefing Report Instructions on the course website for details on the specific requirements for choosing topics and writing the report. All self-selected topics must be approved by the course instructor.

### **Op-Ed and Presentation**

Each student will write and present an 800-word opinion-editorial (op-ed). Specific topic/dates will be assigned at random and a list will be posted on the course website. Students can only swap topics if they must miss the assigned class due to an accommodation. Op-eds are due by 11:55 pm on the Sunday night before the assigned class. Extensions will only be given for documented illnesses, emergencies, etc. and will not be given for workload. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day including weekends and holidays to a maximum of 10%. Students will present their op-ed argument in the assigned class. Presentations will be approximately 10-minute in length and will be verbal only and given from your usual seat (i.e. no PowerPoints or standing in front of the class). See the Op-Ed Instructions doc on the course website for details on the specific requirements and grading criteria.

### **Academic Offenses and Plagiarism**

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the university policy at:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

### ***Avoid these plagiarism mistakes:***

- Do not copy and paste from your own previous essays. You can use some research and sources from previous essays, but not the same words. Even if you adjust the wording a little, turnitin will pick it up. It shows us your paper, the full original paper you copy-and-pasted from, and then highlights the exact words and sentences that overlap. Turnitin will also tell us when and to what course the original paper was submitted.
- Do not copy and paste from other people's essays, online sources, etc. and then try adjusting some of the words or deleting/reordering the odd sentence. Turnitin will pick it up. Turnitin searches all essays that have been submitted to universities around the world since turnitin was created as well as all online sources including media articles, academic articles, blogs and websites.
- AI and Academic Fraud. There will be zero tolerance for academic fraud. Students submitting essays, op-eds, reading analyses, etc. based in whole or in part on AI technologies will automatically receive a grade of zero. They will also be reported to the university. In most cases, two instances of academic fraud will get you expelled.

- Your essay and op-ed bibliographies must provide hyperlinks to all sources used and you must retain them in case they need to be verified by the course instructor.

### **Turnitin.com**

As noted above, course assignments must be submitted electronically to turnitin.com (available through the course website and under license to the University). Please be advised that: All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

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## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Sept. 9 Course Introduction**

This class introduces the course. It will include a discussion of the course outline and requirements as well as a short discussion on the different approaches to foreign policy and how they are promoted by different factions within US and Canadian political parties. There are NO required readings or weekly reading analyses due this week.

### **Sept. 16 Neoconservative and Realist Approaches: Debating the Iraq War**

This class examines the realist and neoconservative approaches to foreign policy in general and through a case study of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq.

#### Discussion questions:

- What are the key principles of, and differences between, the neoconservative and realist approaches to foreign policy? Which intellectuals, politicians, and parties are associated with each approach?
- What are the basic historical details of the Iraq invasion case?
- How did the US invasion of Iraq reflect neoconservative ideology? How did realists criticize the invasion?
- Has/should the invasion discredit the neoconservative approach to military intervention?
- What causal factors explain Canada's decision not to participate in the Iraq invasion compared to Australia? Should Canada have supported the US during the invasion?

### **Sept. 23 Libertarian and Progressive Approaches: Trade and Inequality**

This class examines the libertarian (economic neoliberal) and progressive approaches to economic and foreign policy in general and through a case study of the ongoing debates over international trade and economic globalization.

#### Discussion questions:

- What are the key principles of, and differences between, the libertarian (economic neoliberal) and progressive approaches to international trade and economic globalization?
- Which approach do you think offers the better guide to economic policy and why?

- What is the concept of ‘policy competition’ and how have views concerning it affected the evolution of the debate over trade and globalization? How does it relate to the Trudeau government’s notion of ‘progressive trade’ and Biden’s global minimum corporate tax?
- What are the views of libertarians and progressives on other foreign policy issues such as national security, immigration, foreign aid, and the United Nations? Which intellectuals, politicians, and parties are associated with each approach?
- As in the ‘Saving Globalization’ article, what do many liberal internationalists advocate on trade?

**Sept. 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation– No Class**

**Oct. 7 Liberal and Conservative Nationalist Approaches: International Institutions**

This class examines the liberal internationalist, conservative nationalist, and social conservative approaches to foreign policy in general and through their views on international institutions.

Discussion questions:

- What are the main assumptions of liberal internationalism and why does it strongly support international cooperation, trade, and institutions?
- What are the key principles of, and differences between, the conservative nationalist (or paleoconservative) approach and the social (or religious) conservative approach? Why do they tend to oppose most international institutions?
- As outlined by Mearsheimer, what is the realist view of international institutions?

**Oct. 14 Thanksgiving/Reading week - No Class**

**Oct. 21 Canadian Foreign Policy**

This class examines key events in the history of Canadian foreign policy as well as the different ideological approaches across Canadian political parties.

- Which approaches do human security and middle power internationalism reflect and why?
- Which approach/approaches did the Harper government’s foreign policy reflect and why, and what might it imply for Canadian foreign policy in a Poilievre government?
- Which approach/approaches has the Trudeau government’s foreign policy reflected and why?
- How would you evaluate the Harper vs Trudeau approaches to foreign policy and which do you think is best for Canada going forward? What changes would you make to Canada’s foreign policy?
- How would you evaluate the NDP’s approach to foreign policy?
- How would you evaluate Latham’s call for a restraint realist approach to Canadian foreign policy?

**Oct. 28 Global Environmental Politics**

This class examines key concepts related to the politics and economics of environmental policy with a specific focus on climate change.

Discussion questions:

- What does Adow's argument about the West's climate debt to developing countries imply for climate policy?
- How does climate change constitute a 'negative externality' in economic terms and what does this imply for climate policy?
- What are the different policy approaches to climate change mitigation and which do you think would be best for Canada?
- What do realists advocate on climate change and why? Do you agree with their arguments?
- How would you evaluate Nordhaus' argument in favour of climate penalties?
- What are 'Border Carbon Adjustment' policies and what are their pros and cons?

#### **Nov 4 Gender and Feminist Foreign Policy**

This class examines key concepts and approaches related to gender and feminism and how they have been applied through the recent trend towards 'feminist foreign policy'.

##### Discussion questions:

- What are the different 'waves' of feminism and is the notion of 'waves' a useful analytical tool?
- What are the key concepts/concerns common to most forms of feminism? What are the different types of feminism outlined in the Chambers article and how do they relate to the different ideological approaches to foreign policy?
- What is the basic history of 'feminist foreign policy' and what are the specific policies associated with it?
- How have some progressives and some conservatives critiqued the Trudeau government's feminist foreign policy?
- Who are the key actors and what are the key views of the international anti-feminist movement? How do you evaluate their views on issues such as: hierarchy, biological essentialism, and rights appropriation?

Nov. 8 FRIDAY ESSAYS DUE BY 11:55 PM ON OWL

#### **Nov. 11 The Politics of the Middle East**

This week examines the politics of the middle east including the basic history and key issues in the Iran-Saudi Arabia and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. It also examines what the different approaches to foreign policy advocate toward the region. There are no op-eds or presentations this week as the essays are due the previous Friday.

##### Discussion questions:

- What have been the main sources of Saudi-Iranian conflict and which actors and proxy battles is each state linked to?
- What are the key actors, claims, issues, and events in the Israel-Palestine conflict? Are there any not mentioned in the reading that we should discuss?
- Was Trump's policy towards Israel-Palestine about 'exploiting the partisan divide' as the reading claims or a reflection of the different factions in the Republican party or both? What do the different foreign policy ideologies advocate in terms of US foreign policy towards

Israel? Do we see a similar divide among Canadian political parties? (Also check your notes on previous readings on the approaches and Canadian parties).

- Is it possible to have a ‘neutral’ foreign policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict? If so, what would it look like?
- How did the Abraham Accords change the broader dynamics in the middle east?
- What have been the different views within Israel on the conflict and how have they shifted over time?

### **Nov. 18        Russia, Ukraine, and NATO**

This class examines the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the NATO response to it including what the different approaches to foreign policy advocate on the issue. We will also examine the growing threat of Russian influence/information operations.

Discussion questions:

- What is Mearsheimer’s realist argument about the causes of the Ukraine crisis and do you agree or disagree with it?
- What is Kagan’s neoconservative argument about the need for NATO to support Ukraine and do you agree or disagree with it?
- How do the different foreign policy ideologies explain the US partisan divide over support for Ukraine? Do we see a similar divide among Canadian political parties?
- What is Charap’s realist argument about the unwinnability of the Ukraine war and do you agree or disagree with it?
- What are the techniques and targets of Russian information operations and how can NATO countries respond to them?

### **Nov. 25        The Rise of China**

This class examines different concepts related to the rise and fall of hegemonic powers and current debates over US-China relations.

Discussion questions:

- What is ‘declinism’, ‘hegemonic stability theory’, ‘imperial overreach/overstretch’, and ‘power transition theory’ and to what extent do they apply today?
- What is Mearsheimer’s realist argument about the failure of liberal ‘constructive engagement’ and the current potential for US-China conflict?
- What is Zakaria’s argument about the ‘China threat’ being overstated and its policy implications?
- What do the different foreign policy approaches advocate towards China and why, and which do you think offers the best path forward?
- What lessons do Russia’s actions in Ukraine offer China and the West over the issue of Taiwan?

### **Dec. 2        Nuclear Proliferation: Iran and North Korea**

This class examines key concepts related to the issue of nuclear proliferation, the basic history of US-Iran and US-North Korea relations, and what the different approaches to foreign policy advocate in terms of dealing with these countries.



Discussion questions:

- What is Waltz's realist argument about letting Iran get nuclear weapons and how do you evaluate it?
- Was Trump right to pull out of the JCPOA Iran deal?
- What are the options going forward for US foreign policy towards Iran and which would you lean towards?
- What do the different approaches to foreign policy advocate in terms of dealing with Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs? How would you critique each approach and which do you think offers the best path forward?
- What are the implications of the growing cooperation between Russia and North Korea?