

University of Toronto
Faculty of Arts and Science
POL208H1 F: Introduction to International Relations
Summer 2021
TuTh 2-4pm

Professor: W. Wong

See www.wendyhwong.com for [contact info](#) and [office hours](#)

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description:

This is a course on the study of International Relations (IR). More accurately, it is the study of global politics, that is, going beyond the international (between states). This course is organized around themes that will help us explore the basic theoretical frameworks, fundamental assumptions, and history of the sub-discipline of IR within political science. This course will explore: States, Power, Conflict, Cooperation, and Justice. Many of the weeks will assign a case to help us understand the theoretical discussion in lecture. Tutorial sections may also be given shorter, more specific readings that expand on the theory and cases from lecture.

Although a knowledge and interest in current events is helpful in the course, the point of the class is not to know the international headlines, but to understand how to analyze political events and their consequences. We will explore how to view political change as part of a longer timeline, intertwined with other concerns, rather than as one-offs or unique phenomena. The course will offer a survey of major theoretical, historical, and topical aspects of international relations. This is a second-year course, and designed for those who have already taken other university-level, writing-based classes. Because this is a summer course designed for an online environment, an emphasis will be placed on getting to know your peers through groupwork, as well as bringing in special guests when possible to give expert accounts.

Readings:

It is expected that students will complete the assigned readings *before* coming to class/tutorial.

There is one required textbook for purchase: Jeffry Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth Schulz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions*. 4th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton (FLS). It is available through the U of T bookstore, and there are paper and e-book editions. Please note that if you elect to use an old edition, it may not match up with material in the new edition. The course will be using material found in the 4th edition of the textbook, and that is the material for which you will be responsible for assignments.

Additional readings and course materials will be made available through the U of T library/Quercus if it not readily available online otherwise.

How this Course “Works”:

This administration of the course will be conducted entirely on Quercus, which means that you must check the course site regularly for any assignments, announcements, readings, and lecture material.

Every Tuesday, from 2-4pm EST, we will have a synchronous session on Zoom that will require you to communicate with other students and/or be able to take part in a synchronous session. Any special guest lectures will be recorded for later review, but students are strongly encouraged to participate live. Attendance will be taken for those meetings. In these meetings, you may be required to complete group-based assignments.

Every Thursday, all new content for the following will be posted on Quercus by 5pm EST. This content is for your review and will be the subject of extension and discussion for the *following* Tuesday and your tutorial sessions. New content may include pre-recorded lectures, podcasts, videos, and other relevant materials.

Every week, you will meet with your TA in a tutorial session on Zoom to discuss the course material. TAs will facilitate discussions and answer student questions about the material, and may give short assignments to be completed in class in order to ensure material absorption.

You must have a utoronto.ca account to access Quercus (please go to Robarts Library if you do not already have an account). It is your responsibility to log into Quercus to access the information posted regarding the course.

Course Requirements:

In this course, you will be evaluated on the basis of two “in-class,” group-based assignments, two individual assignments, questions, and your participation in tutorial. The breakdown of your course grade is as follows:

Group assignment 1:	15%
Group assignment 2:	15%
Finding IR in the news:	20%
Reflection paper:	20%
Questions for Q&As:	10%
Tutorial:	20%

All students’ course grades will be given based on their performance on the assignments in the course, according to the above percentages. There are NO exceptions.

Assignments:

Group assignments

DUE: May 11, 18 at 4pm EST

These will be assigned on our synchronous class days (Tuesdays). Groups will be determined in advance. Each person is expected to play an active role in completing the assignments. The groups will submit their work from the group assignments by 4pm EST on the Tuesday they are assigned.

Although it is a group-based assignment, not all group members will get the same mark if it is clear that some have done more work than others. Please make an effort to participate fully in your group and to be open to others' engagement so that your mark reflects a collective outcome.

Finding IR in the news

DUE: June 4 at 4pm EST

People often mistake IR courses for “current events” classes, but that doesn't mean IR can't be used to understand headlines. This assignment asks you to take any of the assigned readings from the course and find an article from the media in the past month that 1) reflects some of the ideas discussed in the reading; 2) that the reading can shed light on understanding better, or even differently; or 3) describes a situation that cannot be explained by the assigned reading. After choosing one of the three approaches, you'll explain the relevant theoretical insights from the reading and walk the reader through the logic behind your claim through the use of evidence from or analysis of your article.

When you submit your assignment on Quercus, please create one PDF/Word doc that includes an original screenshot or PDF of the article you picked, in addition to your explanation. You should identify the course reading clearly at the top of your response. You should also provide a URL for the article. You should provide a bibliography or works cited list.

A few tips: 1) Pick an article that's long enough that it gives you enough “meat” to grapple with the assigned reading (~ 1000 words). 2) Pick a piece from a reputable source that provides a balanced portrayal of the situation (examples below). 3) Don't worry about the case being too esoteric. Often, it's helpful to highlight issues that are less well-known in order to make a point. 4) Don't use sources that are more “analysis” or “opinion” than factual unless they make a point of being balanced in their portrayal.

Assignment length: 1000-1200 words

Examples of reputable sources (if you're not sure, email your TA or the professor)

Mainstream: CBC, The Guardian, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, National Post, Wall Street Journal, Al Jazeera, New York Times, Boston Globe, LA Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post, The Atlantic

Alternative/specialized: Alternet, Rabble.ca, Vox, The Conversation, Global Voices, Duck of Minerva, The Monkey Cage, Political Violence at a Glance, UN Dispatch, Open Global Rights

Reflection paper

DUE: May 28 at 4pm EST or June 11 at 4pm EST

You will be writing a reflection paper in response to the topics covered by “Conflict” and Prof. Green's visit to class, or the topics covered by “Justice” and Prof. Smith-Cannoy's visit to class (please see the Schedule of Topics and Readings below). You only have to write one reflection paper for the course. These papers should be submitted on Quercus.

Reflection papers give students the chance to think more deeply about the assigned materials in the course. You are free to be critical of the views espoused by a reading(s) or guest, as long as you justify that view with alternative arguments/examples from the course. You must provide an argument (thesis) and support that argument. You should only use materials from the course. Although the material from the specific weeks (“Conflict” or “Justice”) are directly applicable, you may find useful readings in other weeks. You should provide a bibliography or works cited list.

All reflection papers should answer: What are the different ways in which conflict/justice can be conceived in IR? Which way do you find most convincing, and why? Explain how an alternative perspective is not convincing, and why your favored perspective can answer questions the alternative can’t. Draw on the expertise of the speakers to inform your answer.

Assignment length: 1200-1300 words

Questions for Q&As

DUE: May 25, June 8 at 12pm EST

There are two Q&A sessions with professors whose work we specifically cover in the course. You will be asked to submit 3 thoughtful questions to ask each guest in advance of their class visit. Please submit those questions on Quercus by 12pm EST on the day of the guest’s visit. You can choose to ask the questions “in person” during the Zoom session. Your questions may also enter the conversation via the TAs/instructor if they choose your question to ask.

Tutorial

AS SCHEDULED

Tutorial attendance is crucial to your success in this course. Your tutorial leader will discuss themes from the readings and lecture, and review any questions that students may have. You may have assignments designed to clarify challenging material. Your grade in tutorial is based on attendance, informed participation, and performance on in-class or take-home assignments, if applicable. Participation can take place in the chat with substantive content, in the form questions posed during tutorial, answering questions during tutorial, or contributing to tutorial assignments. Students who show up each time and participate in some way can expect to receive a minimum of a B in their tutorial mark.

Attending fewer than 50% of your tutorials will lead to a tutorial grade of 0%.

Accessibility Concerns:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, call (416) 978- 8060, email accessibility.services@utoronto.ca, or visit <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca> for detailed information.

All of the course material for POL208 will be posted on Quercus. Any audio/video recordings of lectures will be uploaded to Quercus, along with their transcription. If you require other accommodations, please contact your TA.

Grade Appeals:

If you are unhappy with a grade on an assignment, you may submit a written appeal to your TA, explaining why you feel your grade on an assignment is unjustified. **You must submit this written appeal no later than two weeks after your assignment is returned.** Be warned: no regrades result in an automatic increase in the grade, as assignments must be evaluated anew. Your grade may stay the same, go up, or go down.

Please note: changes to student grades on assignments will only be considered if there is *demonstrable* clerical error in the calculation of a particular score. **You must submit a written appeal** in order to have a grade reevaluated.

If you are still unhappy after your TA's regrade, you may contact the professor to request an instructor regrade. These regrades will be granted only in cases where the TA's reassessment is found wanting.

Other Course Policies:

Please read the following carefully. By registering in this course, you agree to abide by the rules below:

- 1) All work must be submitted via Quercus in order to avoid penalty. There are no exceptions. No assignments will be accepted via Zoom, email, fax, or any other means *but* Quercus. You must be able to access Quercus for this course.
 - a. Unless otherwise stated, all times refer to Eastern Standard Time (EST).
- 2) All assignments have due dates and percentages as detailed in this syllabus. Any changes in due dates (if applicable) will be announced on Quercus. If there are no updates announced on Quercus, your assignments are due in accordance with the details outlined in the syllabus.
- 3) You must submit the Academic Integrity Checklist with your essay-based work. See #10-12.
- 4) The global pandemic has exerted extra pressures on us all. Students, faculty, and TAs alike are dealing with extra burdens, stresses, and possible illness. The summer term format puts additional time pressure for the course. As such, the late policy for the following individual assignments is:
 - a. A no-questions asked, 3 business day extension for the *Reflection Paper* and *IR in the News*. To get this extension, fill out this form (also on Quercus) in advance of the stated deadline.
 - b. "Business day" begins and ends at the stated time the assignment is due. For example, if the assignment is due at 12pm EST, each business day is counted from that time. That means that, even if the due date has been extended, the time by which the assignment must be received will stay the same.
 - c. If you fill out the form after the stated deadline, but before the end of the 3 business day extension period, you will incur a per day late penalty (see #5) until you fill in the form. You will also "lose" the extension days, in whole or in part, up until you filed the form. For example, if you fill in the extension form one day after the assignment is due, your no-questions asked extension is now only 2

- business days. If you fill in the extension form one hour after the original stated deadline, you will also “lose” the entire business day.
- d. If you do not fill in the form within the period of 3 business days after the stated due date, you will incur a late penalty (see #5) and your assignment will not get comments.
 - e. 3 business days means that if your assignment’s stated deadline is Monday, the extension gives you until Thursday to turn it in. You have until the time of the stated deadline to turn your assignment in for no penalty.
 - f. You cannot request an extension after the 3 business days post-state due date has ended. For example, if the deadline is Monday, you cannot ask for an extension on the Thursday.
- 5) The late penalty is -2 points per day, in whole or in part, starting immediately after the hour and day of the stated deadline. For example, if you turn in an assignment at 9pm the day it is due, you will incur a late penalty of -2 on your assignment. Turning it in the day after the stated deadline will incur you a penalty of -4, and so on.
- a. The late penalty applies to all assignments in the course, including the group assignments, except as outlined in #4.
- 6) From time to time, we may distribute surveys intended to help us better design the course or evaluate assignments. Please help us by filling out the forms.
- 7) All at-home assignments are to be typed, 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1” (2.5 cm) margins. *You must use PDF or Word format.*
- 8) You cannot “make up” missed tutorials with alternative assignments. If you have reasons for not attending a tutorial (trips, appointments, etc.), you should talk to you TA *before* the tutorial to make arrangements. Be aware that missing more than 50% of your tutorials will lead to a tutorial grade of 0%.
- 9) Absence policy: Please file your Absence Declaration on ACORN: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/covid19-artsci-student-faqs#fw2021-absence-declaration-accordion-2> and email your TA that you have done so.
- 10) **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Individual assignments are meant to evaluate your comprehension and progress within the course. It is the expectation that you will submit work that is original and your own. There are many group elements to the course, including soliciting feedback from peers to complete individual assignments. It is important that while others might give you feedback, what you present under your own name is something you have come up with, with or without the assistance of others. This applies to *all* individual assignments. By extension, your group assignments are meant to reflect the efforts of your immediate group and all of your individual contributions to a collective outcome. Group assignments should reflect the efforts that you have collectively made *within your group*.
- 11) **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** When you use other people’s words and ideas, you must properly cite them, whether these words come from the readings, the Internet, or in class. Failing to do so constitutes plagiarism, and is a very serious academic offense. Please consult myself or your TA if you have any questions. For further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>.
- 12) **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** All individual, essay-based assignments will require the submission of the Academic Integrity Checklist to reflect your understanding #10 and

#11 above. **Read this carefully.** You can be held accountable to any of the factors you check off in your assignment. The Checklist is available on Quercus.

- 13) **Final grades are final.** Please do not try to negotiate your grade with the instructor or your TA. Grades are calculated according to the above percentages, assessing your performance on all of the class assignments. **THEY ARE NOT ARBITRARY.** You should ask for help *before* an assignment – we are always happy to answer your questions. Making the effort before the grades are turned in will always be more beneficial to you than making the case afterward for why you need extra points.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

May 4: What are we Trying to do in IR?

Required readings

FLS, Chapter 1

Donald Houston. “Five maps that will change how you see the world.” March 22, 2017.

Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meredith Loken. “Why Race Matters in International Relations.” *Foreign Policy*. June 19, 2020.

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. 2015. “Must International Studies be a Science?” *Millienium* 43 (3): 942-965.

May 6, 11: The State in the World

Assignments due:

Group assignment 1 due May 11, 4pm EST.

Required readings

FLS, Chapter 2

Podcast: CONIFA, *Same Difference*, RSJ Radio, Ryerson School of Journalism. Season 1, Episode 10.

Tanisha M. Fazal. 2018. “Go Your Own Way.” *Foreign Affairs* 97 (4): 113-123.

Seva Gunitsky. 2015. “Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability.” *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (1): 42-54.

Follow-up questions (podcast): Prof. Seva Gunitsky discusses his article

May 13, 18: The Nature of Power

Assignments due:

Group assignment 2 due May 18, 4pm EST.

Required readings

Watch: Thucydides, “The Melian Dialogue.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viDfK6Nrxbg>

Play the Melian Dialogue: <https://philome.la/NevilleMorley/the-melian-dilemma/index.html>

Podcast: Hey, Remember the Olympics?, Why it Matters, Council on Foreign Relations.

David A. Baldwin. 2013. “Power and International Relations.” In *Handbook of International Relations*, 2nd ed. Eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. 273-297.

W. R. Nadège Compaoré. 2018. “Rise of the (Other) Rest? Exploring Small State Agency and Collective Power in International Relations.” *International Studies Review* 20 (2): 264-271.

Follow-up questions (podcast): Prof. Nadège Compaoré discusses her article

May 20, 25: Conflict

* Prof. Jessica Green will be visiting the class on **May 25** to talk about her research on existential politics and global governance of the environment.*

Assignments due:

3 Questions for Prof. Green due May 25, 12pm EST.

Required readings

FLS, Chapter 3

Jessica F. Green. “The Existential Politics of Climate Change.” Forum Response: How to Fix the Climate. *Boston Review*. January 25, 2021.

Emily Hencken Ritter and Christian Davenport. “An Illustrated Glossary of Political Violence.” *Political Violence at a Glance*. January 18, 2021.

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. 2014. “Drop your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works.” *Foreign Affairs* 93 (4): 94-106.

May 27, June 1: Cooperation

Assignments due:

Reflection paper on Conflict/Prof. Green’s visit due May 28, 4pm EST.

Required readings

FLS, Chapter 7

Neta C. Crawford. 2000. “The Passion of World Politics.” *International Security* 24 (4): 116-156.

Charles Sabel and David G. Victor. “How to Fix the Climate.” *Boston Review*. January 25, 2021.

Follow-up questions (podcast): Prof. Stephen Saideman explains NATO

June 3, 8: Justice

* Prof. Heather Smith-Cannoy will be visiting the class on **June 8** to talk about her research on international law and human rights.*

Assignments due:

Finding IR in the News due June 4, 4pm EST.

3 Questions for Prof. Smith-Cannoy due June 8, 12pm EST.

Required readings

FLS, Chapter 11, 12

Heather Smith-Cannoy and Nina Lea Oishi. 2021. “The International Criminal Court as a Bellwether for the Future of International Human Rights Law.” Paper prepared for the International Studies Association Annual Meeting.

Wendy H. Wong and Eileen A. Wong. 2020. “What COVID-19 revealed about health, human rights, and the WHO.” *Journal of Human Rights* 19 (5): 568-581.

June 10: Last day

Assignments due:

Reflection paper on Justice/Prof. Smith-Cannoy’s visit due June 11, 4pm EST.