

INTA IIIIA:

Introduction to International Relations

Dr. Jarrod Hayes
Assistant Professor
School of International and Area Studies

Tel: 404.894.0289
Email: jarrod.hayes@gatech.edu
Office: Habersham 2I6
Hours: MWF 2-3 PM (office)¹

TAs:

Megan Rast (mrast3@gatech.edu)
You Jeong Kim (ykim354@mail.gatech.edu)

Goals, Requirements, and Expectations of INTA IIIIA:

The goals of this course are three-fold: 1) give you a solid grounding in historically informed International Relations, 2) introduce the concepts, vocabulary, and theories of International Relations, and 3) use these concepts, vocabulary, and theories to analyze issues facing political leaders and societies. This is a heavily analytical course; critical thinking is required equipment.² My intent is not to teach you ‘facts’ or measure your ability to commit them to memory by rote. While there are dates and actors that will be of significance, of far more importance will be your ability to take the concepts and theories we discuss in class and use them to analyze issues confronting societies and the policy responses mounted by political leaders. The only exception to this general claim pertains to geography. Where states are located and who their neighbors are (i.e. their geography) is an important aspect of international relations. To this end, I expect you to have a good general idea of which states are located where, and you will be graded on this knowledge.

This course is not ‘easy.’ The 1000 level classification speaks less to the difficulty of the course and more to the order in which it should be taken (that is, before more issue specific courses at the 3000 level). We will not be ‘easing’ into the subject of international relations. Instead, the course is the primary opportunity to develop a firm foundation in IR theory and concepts. The reading load for this class is not light; we will average over 50 pages a week, but some weeks will approach 100. We will be making use of two excellent textbooks from Oxford University Press: Barry Buzan and Richard Little’s *International Systems in World History* and John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens’ edited volume, *The*

¹ Because unexpected meetings and assorted similar events occur all the time, office hours must inevitably be flexible and I may, from time to time be required to cancel them. If this becomes necessary, I will notify you as far in advance as possible and endeavor to arrange alternative office hours. If you cannot make office hours, I am available for scheduled appointments.

² Professor Jason Enia at Sam Houston State University defines critical thinking in the International Relations context thus: “Critical thinking is not about blindly accepting the wisdom of the ‘talking heads’ you see on television or the information you get online. It is about admitting and being comfortable with uncertainty. In the complex arena of international politics—where there are almost always multiple and competing assessments of and solutions to international problems—this type of analysis is crucial. It includes the ability to *break a problem into its component parts, to question assumptions, to recognize and critically assess multiple and competing sources of information, to evaluate alternative perspectives on problems, and finally to design and evaluate solutions to those problems.* The value of the study of the social sciences lies in the development of these critical thinking skills.”

Globalization of World Politics.³ These are top-notch textbooks used at some of the finest universities in the world. Once you have mastered these texts, your understanding of International Relations will be significantly more sophisticated and nuanced, giving you an excellent foundation both for upper division courses in International Relations as well as your future career. Light bulbs will go off. Mysteries will be revealed and resolved. You might even enter a higher plane of consciousness.

This assumes, of course, that you study. I have **high** expectations in this regard. I have checked the requirements for a degree at Georgia Tech and INTA 1110 is not required to graduate. It follows, since you are enrolled in this class, that you have an abiding interest in International Relations and seek to learn as much as you can about it. This course has been structured under the assumption that every student in this class *wants* to be here. Accordingly, I have expectations regarding your desire to commit time and energy to this course. Among other things, this means showing up for class. Course attendance, however, will not be enforced. I expect that you, as adults, are responsible for your decisions. While this means you have the freedom to skip class without immediate consequence, it also means that stories of woe at the end of semester will have very little audience with me (i.e. extra credit will not be forthcoming). Similarly, claiming that you 'don't get it' before the course final when I have not seen you in office hours or heard questions from you in class will find little sympathy.

This is a lecture-based class with question and answer sessions at the start of each class. While I prefer to structure courses around student engagement and discussion, such a framework is impractical for a class this size. That, however, does not absolve you of your obligations to prepare for class. That means you need to **complete the assigned reading before the class date to which it is attached**. Let me say this again. If chapter 6 is listed next to January 26, that means you need to read chapter 6 **by** that date, **not** on that date. The course texts, particularly the Buzan and Little text, require intensive, sustained focus and engagement; this is not light reading to be done while you watch television or wait for the latest YouTube video to download. International Relations is *not supposed* to be easy. If it were, we would have figured it all out a long time ago. The fact that so many problems and issues today can be traced to the relations between states clearly proves that we have not. Underestimate this course, and its subject, at your own (grade) peril.

Objectives for Students:

- Analyze and understand the major themes of international relations and global politics
- Develop an appreciation of theory and its utility in the study and practice of international relations
- Improve critical thinking and writing skills

Course Texts:

- Baylis, John, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 4th edition. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Buzan, Barry and Richard Little. *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

³ In addition, you should also be regularly reading a current events news source like the *New York Times* or the *Economist*. You will find that doing so will be a significant boon on the exams.

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Course grading:

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|---|------------|
| Participation (Clickers) | 15 percent |
| Map Quiz (January 20) | 5 percent |
| Teaching Project (April 28) | 20 percent |
| Midterm exam #1 (February 8) | 15 percent |
| Midterm exam #2 (March 15) | 20 percent |
| Final exam (cumulative) (May 3, 8-10:50 AM) | 25 percent |

The Map Quiz will consist of 25 questions requiring you to identify selected countries.

Grade Scale: 100-90 (A) | 89-80 (B) | 79-70 (C) | 69-60 (D) | 59-0 (F).

Grading Policy: Grade inflation is a documented problem in U.S. higher education. While no single class will change the phenomenon to any significant degree, this course will be graded to the original conceptualization of the letter grades. As such, an A represents excellent work, a B mark indicates good or above average work, a C denotes average work, a D signifies below average, and F means unacceptably subpar work. This does not necessarily suggest that the average or median of the class will be a C. The descriptors are meant to signal the assessed level of understanding of the course material demonstrated by the student rather than a measure against the performance of other students.

Participation: While discussion is impractical, modern technology has enabled something resembling student engagement in the form of 'clickers.' These are a required component of the course, so please ensure you bring yours with you **every day** and ensure it is operating order (e.g., batteries that work). Responses to clicker activities will comprise an important portion of your overall course grade, so it is in your interest to take this element of the class seriously. Each clicker question will be worth 2 points. Your objective is to attain 100 points. I understand that electronic malfunctions as well as unexpected absences occur, so I have built in a (small) buffer (e.g. the total number of points available in the semester exceeds the amount needed for a perfect score), so there is no need to request make-up clicker questions, nor will any be granted if they are requested.

Teaching Project: One of the goals of a university education is to give you skills that will be useful throughout your life. One of the more important skills you should leave university with is how to be a learner, rather than just a student. What is the difference? A semester-long course could easily be taught on the subject, so space constraints prevent a complete answer. One answer might be, a learner is a person who actively pursues knowledge and assimilates it, linking to what they already know and finding ways to incorporate that knowledge into their active understanding of the world. Part of the goal of this class is to push you down the path of the learner. To that end, you will complete a teaching project, which will force you to consider the knowledge you gain in this class from a very different standpoint than the one to which you are accustomed.

In small groups (the exact number will depend on final course enrollment), you will work throughout the semester to build a multimedia PowerPoint presentation (with accompanying teaching notes) designed to teach a high school class about an important idea or concept in international relations. These presentations will be uploaded to a website designed to make these presentations available to high school teachers. Do not underestimate this project! It will require you to deeply understand your chosen idea or concept and find ways to communicate these ideas to high schoolers with less experience and knowledge than yourself. This is an extremely challenging project. You and your group must address questions like: How will we

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keep high school students engaged with the material? How do we communicate complex ideas and concepts in a short period of time? How do we make the material relevant to high school students? What examples work best?

Groups will be assigned at random by the second week of class. Any students inclined to drop, please do so before this point to minimize group disruptions as much as possible. Each group will be required to post their initial project ideas to T-Square by the February 3. By March 10, each group must post to T-Square an outline of their presentation. Presentations will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Does the presentation demonstrate proper understanding of the central idea or concept?
- How well do the example(s) used relate to the central idea or concept?
- How well does the presentation find ways to engage the audience
- How well do the teaching notes guide the high school teacher through the lesson
- How well are multimedia elements incorporated into the presentation?
- How well as classroom activities integrated into the lesson?
- How well balanced are the conceptual elements with examples?
- How creative is the project?

Each presentation should focus on a central idea/concept/theory, with examples used to aid in explanation. Presentations must balance conceptual content with examples/multimedia/activities. Too much of the former will leave the audience glassy-eyed, too much of the latter will leave the presentation meaningless. You should aim to work in classroom exercises as well as multimedia. These are high school students! They have short attention spans! Be creative, but remain focused on the central aim of the presentation: teaching high school students an idea or concept they didn't know before. Remember, these presentations will be used by real high school teachers with real high school students! This is a great opportunity to give something back to the community and enhance the American education system—don't blow it!

You will have significant levels of support for this project. Both TAs will be available should you have difficulties working through your presentations conceptually, and a computer science graduate student will be available to answer technical questions through T-Square (in addition to support you can get at the Library Multimedia Studio). At the end of the project, each member of the group will be required to specify the way in which they contributed to the project, and all members will have to sign off on these descriptions.

Exams: The Midterm exams are designed to give you an opportunity to hone your analytical skills in the context of the theories and concepts of the class in preparation for the final exam. To this end, the value of the first exam is discounted vis-à-vis the second.

Miscellaneous: Students are required to take exams at the scheduled time. Students with excused absences will be able to take a make-up, but are responsible for arranging the time. All work for the semester should be kept until final grades are processed. Grades will be posted to T-Square.

Policy on letters of recommendation:

You must have taken at least two courses with me before I will consider writing a letter of recommendation for you. I will only write letters for students that have performed well in class, which means usually an A- or better in both classes, although I would be open to writing a letter for an individual who shows

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improvement from the first to second class (e.g. B or B+ in the first class to A in second class). Since a recommendation relies on personal knowledge, it would be in your interest to distinguish yourself in class. If I don't know you, I cannot comment on anything besides your course performance. Trust me when I tell you that a letter consisting of "Jim/Jane did well in two courses, receiving an A in both," hardly makes for a compelling recommendation.

Laptops in class:

I am aware that students no longer use chalk on cave walls to take notes, and that laptops are ubiquitous in the modern classroom. I have no problem with using laptops to take notes. It even makes sense to have your notes in a format where you can easily search for particular dates or terms. What I have a serious problem with is the use of your laptop to check email, browse the web, watch videos, or catch up on Facebook, Twitter, Fritter, or whatever the latest social networking site is called. Do not do it. I have asked the teaching assistants to keep an eye on your activities from the back of the room. If we have to warn you more than once, points will be deducted from your participation grade.

Cheating and plagiarism:

Don't do it. I have a zero tolerance with respect to these activities. Cheating and plagiarism demean the efforts of others who put in blood, sweat, and tears to do well in the class. I will not allow the above-board work of honest students to be undermined by those who seek shortcuts. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, receiving unauthorized assistance on exams and asking another student to respond to clicker questions in your absence. The Georgia Tech Honor Code is available online: <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>. If caught cheating, you *will* be dealt with accordingly.

Students with Disabilities:

Georgia Tech is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities through the ADAPTS program (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>). Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate their educational opportunities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the ADAPTS-Disability Services Program prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The ADAPTS-Disability Services Program is located in Smithgall Student Services Building, phone 404-894-2564 or TDD only 404-894-1664.

Religious Observance:

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me immediately if you will need to miss class at any point during this semester.

Add/Drop:

Please consult the GT academic calendar to make sure you observe add/drop deadlines (<http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/home/calendar.php>)

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Course Schedule

Key: BSO = *The Globalization of World Politics* | BL = *International Systems in World History* | ➔ Marks an important date, usually exam dates or assignment deadlines.

Laying the Theoretical Foundations

Week I

January 11 | Introduction, Syllabus, International Society: BSO Chapter 2 (36-53)

January 13 | International History: BSO Chapter 3&4 (54-89)

Week II

January 18 | Realism and Liberalism: BSO Chapter 5 & 6 (90-123)

➔ **January 20 | MAP QUIZ**; Neo-Neo Debate: BSO Chapter 7 (124-141)

Week III

January 25 | IPE and Marxism: BSO Chapters 8&14 (142-159, 242-261)

January 27 | Constructivism: BSO Chapter 9 (160-173)

Week IV

February 1 | Alternative Approaches and International Ethics: BSO Chapter 10 & 11 (174-209)

Re-examining IR Theory and History

➔ February 3 | **Teaching Project checkpoint I**, Challenging IR Theory: BL Introduction & Chapter 1& 2 (17-48)

Week V

➔ **February 8 | Midterm I**

February 10 | Theoretical Toolkit: BL Chapter 4 & 5 (68-110)

Week VI

February 15 | Preinternational Systems: BL Chapter 6&7 (111-159)

February 17 | Ancient and Classical Systems I: BL Chapter 8&9 (163-215)

Week VII

February 22 | Ancient and Classical Systems II: BL Chapter 10&11 (216-240)

February 24 | Modern System I: BL Chapter 12&13 (241-299)

Week VIII

March 1 | Modern System II: BL Chapter 14&15 (300-343)

March 3 | Postmodern System/World History and IR: BL Chapter 16&17 (347-385)

Actors, Institutions, and Issues in International Relations

Week IX

March 8 | United Nations: Chapter 18 (312-329)

➔ March 10 | **Teaching Project checkpoint 2**, International Law and Regimes: BSO Chapter 16&17 (278-311)

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Week X

- ➔ **March 15 | Midterm Exam #2**
March 17 | Film

Week XI (spring break)

- March 22 | SPRING BREAK: No Class!
- March 24 | SPRING BREAK: No Class!

Week XII

- March 29 | Transnational actors/Environmental Issues: BSO Chapter 19&20 (330-369)
- March 31 | War: BSO Chapter 12 (210-225)

Week XIII

- April 5 | International and Human Security: BSO Chapter 12&28 (226-241, 490-506)
- April 7 | Terrorism and nuclear proliferation: BSO Chapter 21&22 (370-401)

Week XIV

- April 12 | Nationalism and Culture: BSO Chapters 23&24 (402-433)
- April 14 | Gender: BSO Chapter 15 (262-277)

Week XV

- April 19 | Regionalism: BSO Chapter 25 (434-449)
- April 21 | Human Rights/Humanitarian Intervention: BSO Chapter 29&30 (506-539)

Week XVI

- April 26 | Poverty and Trade: BSO Chapter 26&27 (450-489)
- ➔ **April 28 | Teaching Projects Due! The Future: BSO Chapter 31&32 (542-575)**

Final Exam (Cumulative):

May 3: 8-10:50 AM