

PIA3108: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

International Relations

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

3108

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

SA3108 / POL3108 International Relations / AIS/PIA3121 Theories of International Relations

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to

- examine the key concepts, core issues, principles and processes in international relations;
- discover the underlying values of international relations and the challenges of international relations in face of globalization and the changes in the new era of global configuration
- apply the concepts and theories to analyse the international conflict and cooperation; and
- evaluate critically the role of international organizations, international non-governmental organization and the new alliance among the emerging powers.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Detect and recognize the essential concepts and theories in international relations	20	x	x	
2	Examine the different approaches and models in the study of international relations	20	x	x	
3	Assess foreign policy goals and strategies; foreign policy actions; and the instruments of foreign policy.	20	x	x	
4	Apply various theories to analyse different topics in the international relations	20	x	x	
5	Analyze and cultivate basic research skills and ability to develop and apply theoretical frameworks in analytical academic writing	10	x	x	
6	Appraise and develop the basic skills in performing tasks associated with careers demanding an understanding of international relations	10	x	x	

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	The instructor will present concepts, theories, and factual data on the core IR theories	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Group discussions, group presentations, and debates	Students will work in groups to lead a class discussion and make a presentation on a critical global problem	1, 2, 3, 4	

3	Quizzes	Each student, working alone, will sit for two quizzes to demonstrate mastery of the course material	1, 2, 3, 4	
4	Global problem analysis paper	Each student, working alone, will write an independent global problem analysis paper critically explaining the problem using competing IR theories	2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Attendance and participation	1, 2, 3, 4	10	-	No
2	Discussion	1, 2, 3, 4	10	-	Yes
3	Panel presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	15	-	Yes
4	Policy analysis paper	2, 3, 4	25	-	Yes
5	Quizzes	1, 2, 3, 4	40	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class participation

Criterion

Active and informed participation in the classroom

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good to very good understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Partial understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.

Marginal (D)

Flawed understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of low quality, including in discussions.

Failure (F)

Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.

Assessment Task

Presentations

Criterion

Ability to deliver an effective presentation as part of a group

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good to very good understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Partial understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.

Marginal (D)

Flawed understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of low quality, including in discussions.

Failure (F)

Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.

Assessment Task

Quizzes

Criterion

Demonstrating mastery of the material midway through the term and toward the end

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good to very good understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Partial understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically.

Marginal (D)

Flawed understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically.

Failure (F)

Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Assessment Task

Research paper

Criterion

Ability to write an effective and compelling 3,000–5,000-word research paper, analysing a global problem from competing theoretical vantage points

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically and analytically.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good to very good understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically and analytically.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Partial understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically and analytically.

Marginal (D)

Flawed understanding of theories of International Relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically and analytically.

Failure (F)

Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Levels of analysis; international systems; foreign policy strategies; security; autonomy; alliance; non-alignment; power; influence; diplomatic recognition; the functions of diplomats; international negotiations; propaganda; economic rewards and coercion; military sales and transfers; clandestine actions and military intervention; deterrence strategies; arms control and disarmament; international law; international public opinion; ethics in international relations; conflict and crisis; conflict resolution; United Nations, regional organizations; international co-operation; technological change; and globalization.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Essentials of International Relations / K. A. Mingst & I. M. Arreguín-Toft, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, [2017], 7th Edition. [Reserve (Semi-closed) JZ1305 .M56 2017]
2	Essential Readings in World Politics / [edited by] K. A. Mingst & J. L. Snyder, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, [2014] 5th Edition. [Reserve (Semi-closed) JZ1305 .E85 2014]
3	Chinese Foreign Relations: Power and Policy Since the Cold War / [4th ed.], R. Shutter, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Bull, H. (1997) <i>The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics</i> (New York: Columbia University Press).
2	Gilpin, R. (2000) <i>The Challenges of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
3	Goldstein, J. S. (2013), <i>International Relations</i> (Boston, Mass.; Hong Kong: Pearson Longman).
4	Gray, C. S (2012), <i>War, Peace and International Relations: an introduction to strategic history</i> (London: Routledge, 2012)
5	Graig, G. A., and Alexander, L. G. (1990) <i>Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time</i> (New York: Oxford University Press).
6	Holsti, K. J. (1995) <i>International Politics</i> (7th edition), Englewood Cliffs (New Jersey: Prentice Hall).
7	Huntington, S. P. (1993) "The Clash of Civilizations?", <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer, pp. 22-49.
8	Larsen, J. A. and Gregory J. R. (eds.) (1996) <i>Arms Control Towards the 21st Century</i> , (Boulder: Lynne Rienner).
9	Nye, J. S. (1993) <i>Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History</i> (New York: Harper Collins).
10	Robert, A. and Robert J. (2000) <i>International Politics</i> (N.Y.: Longman).
11	Vincent, R. J. (1992) "The Idea of Rights in International Ethics", in T Nardin and David Mapel (eds.), <i>Traditions of International Ethics</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
12	Viotti, P. R. and M. V. Kauppi (2013), <i>International Relations and World Politics</i> , (Boston, Mass.; Hong Kong : Pearson)
13	Waltz, K. N. (1994) "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better", in Richard K. Betts (ed.), <i>Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace</i> (New York: Macmillan).
14	Online Resources: It is expected that students may access to most journals online. Suggested sources include: LexisNexis Academic, Academic Search Premier, WiseNews, CNN.com International, BBC News, Channel NewsAsia, CCTV International, Xinhua online