

# POLITICAL SCIENCE (POLS) 3360: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

(CRN 35835)

Online, SUMMER 2020

INSTRUCTOR: DR. CHARLES BOEHMER

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: 202 Benedict Hall (not in use during the pandemic, unless otherwise noted)

Email: [crboehmer@utep.edu](mailto:crboehmer@utep.edu) (only use your UTEP miner email when contacting the instructor)

Phone: 747-7979 (during the pandemic, this will route to my UTEP email)

## ONLINE OFFICE HOURS

- Cyber- Café synchronous Discussion, Q & A sessions in Blackboard Collaborate, daily, open to all – best oriented towards group discussion – these will be held 11:30-12:30 most days during the semester. See the course calendar for details on themes.
- I am happy to set up a one-on-one Blackboard Collaborate virtual meeting on request.

## COURSE GOALS AND OVERVIEW

This is an online course designed as a gateway to the study of international relations. This course is mandatory in the International Politics concentration of our major, and also in our International Politics minor. It can be counted as either fulfilling the requirement of courses in three of the six different subfields, or an elective, within our general major. This course can also count as a block elective for those students within the College of Liberal Arts who are not a major or minor in political science. The goal of this course is to cover the basic concepts, topics, and some theories of international relations, providing students with an understanding about how world politics is studied. Students will explore the nature of international cooperation, conflict, terrorism, international environmentalism, weapons of mass destruction, international law and organization, and international political economy. I teach this as an introductory survey course that should be seen as a pre-requisite (informal) to other upper-level courses in international relations and security studies. Although the subject matter is taught as an introduction, some students may find the topic harder to understand than American politics; the difficulty springs from the lack of effective and strong international institutions (especially the lack of a world government), which has profound effects on international politics.

After the completion of this course, students should have the following skills or knowledge that relate to the UTEP EDGE Initiative (highlighted in bold and italics):

- Have a higher level of confidence about comprehending the concepts, important theoretical approaches, and topics included in the course, such as conflict & cooperation, international environmental issues, ethnic conflict, terrorism, civil war, international organization & law, and international political economy.

- Have some foundation to analyze and think critically about topics of international security and cooperation, especially through the research paper and UN simulation.
- Have greater global awareness of basic knowledge of some countries around the world through the readings and examples mentioned in lectures/discussions.
- Possess a higher level of library information literacy and higher confidence regarding searches and types of sources.
- Improve communication skills as part of the research process and UN simulation.

## **TIPS FOR PASSING THIS COURSE**

1. Many students find that they need to cut corners due to income, but it is important that you find a way to rent the textbook and read it. The instructor bases some quiz and exam questions on the textbook. If you attempt to take this course and do not read the textbook, then you will likely lower your course grade. When you do read and study, do not just aim to memorize the material. Study with an aim towards comprehension. Additionally, sometimes our minds stray when we read, or we become distracted; even when the book is open, sometimes we do not read carefully. If you are confused about ideas or concepts, then speak with the instructor would love to help you through written responses or using an appointment in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. I love talking about this subject matter; tap my time and expertise; that is what you are paying me for, in addition to assessing your performance in this course.
2. Stay informed about what is going on in the course by following the syllabus, paying attention to your miner email account (including emails that come through Blackboard), and not missing, or being late on assignments.
3. Review the power point slides, but remember that they do not suffice as a reminder of everything covered in a lecture or module. For this reason, you need to take notes, which forces you to concentrate on lecture and class discussions. Typing up notes is an excellent way to study because it forces one to think about what we covered in class. Try to include your responses or ideas that you have in conjunction with the notes or content of the course as a way to connect it to your life in a way that you care about the subject matter. Take an active interest in the subject matter, even if it is not your top interest. After all, you are not going to learn what you don't want to know.
4. Study from your old exams and quizzes for the final exam.
5. Follow the course guidelines and policies outlined below.

## **ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

- Exams: 15% (5% each, end of each of the first three weeks)
- Final Exam: 20%
- Quizzes Average Grade: 15%
- Discussion Board Participation: 15%
- Research Paper References (including interacting with reference librarian): 10%
- Country Foreign Policy Paper: 20%
- Simulation Participation: 5%

**Quizzes:** Each module will conclude with a quiz on the subject matter. These questions will be drawn from the readings and the lecture material provided by the instructor. The format will

often be true/false and multiple choice. The quizzes and exams should help students gain confidence in the subject matter; if students are struggling, they should seek help from the instructor.

**Discussion Board:** The instructor will include some discussion questions that connect to the exams, and relate to the quiz questions, for each module. Students will earn full credit when they post an answer or a question on the subject matter, and then reply to at least one other student's posts. The goal of these discussions is for the instructor to highlight important content, including exam topics, and students should gain a higher degree of confidence, and the ability to think critically, about topics of the course. This should also expand global awareness of the world and help improve communication skills. A maximum of three points will be earned when a student posts a useful comment or question of substance, and two points in a reply to at least one other student's posting.

**Exams:** Three exams will be scheduled at the end of each of the first three weeks of the semester based on the readings and lectures, and will consist of open-book essay questions. The ability to demonstrate comprehension and synthesis of the subject matter will earn higher points than those that just repeat what is provided in the textbooks and lecture content.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be similar to the other tests but will be cumulative and longer. This exam evaluates your ability to integrate the readings and require a synthesis of the subject matter. The material from the last week of class will be new content not covered in the first three exams.

**Research Paper References and Librarian Interaction:** This assignment is part of the research paper project and involves demonstrating that you are researching your topic. This paper will include a list of what references you have found relevant to include in your paper. This requires that you interact with one of our instructional librarians after you have begun to collect possible references for your paper. Their task to help guide you, but not find these references for you. They will provide additional details on these expectations. You will need to discuss briefly why each reference may be relevant to your paper and the classification of its type of reference (primary or secondary and what type, such as book, article, etc.). Identify with which librarian you met. This paper incentivizes a gradual building of the paper and some contact with the reference librarians to increase library and information literacy. You gain knowledge and confidence in using library reference materials from this project.

**Country Foreign Policy Paper:** Using the research references in the above paper, students will write a policy brief paper describing a country's foreign policy with other countries. This paper forms the basis for the role the student will play in the simulation in the final days of the semester. The instructor will provide further instructions in a PDF document on this assignment, located in the folder on the research project. This assignment will require you to improve your communication skills (writing) along with your ability to analyze critically content about political decision-making. This assignment should also expand your global awareness.

**Simulation Participation:** This grade will be based on the quality of the student's participation in the UN Crisis simulation at the end of the semester. This will be a synchronous event, on a specific day and time. Students who are present the whole time but do not talk will receive one point, whereas those students who participate will receive more points. The simulation is most

interesting and fun when students participate. Further instructions will be provided on this assignment. This assignment should also expand your global awareness.

## **MORE ON DISCUSSION POSTS/CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Students should find that this is an important aspect of the course. The course content can be very abstract, and students should participate in, and pay close attention to, the discussion boards and the synchronous discussion sections of the course. Here students will find key themes, topics, and problems discussed. Students should log into Blackboard several times during the week to participate effectively in discussions. Each week students will submit:(1) a discussion post in response to a guided question (minimum of 250 words and maximum of 500 words); and,(2) respond to at least one of your classmate's posts (minimum of 100 words and maximum of 500 words). Be sure to submit your discussion post and response to your peers by the time and day set by the instructor to receive credit for your participation. Student posts must be of substance and offer something new, and responses should likewise offer something besides "I agree" without providing some new thought or evidence. Here are some suggestions for successful posts: Write with the curiosity of university students. The instructor is more interested in doubts and the questions you raise rather than providing concrete answers. Given that ultimately the goal of the content of this course is linked to the prescriptive behavior of governments, international organizations, multi-national corporations, and individuals, there are few to none absolute answers to big picture issues, due to differences in cultures and contexts that change across time and space. The expression of doubt and uncertainty is a skill and something to be practiced and developed. You are strongly encouraged to use the UTEP writing center for assistance in drafting all written work, including discussion boards, essay, and reviews. Examples of bad posts are those that simply repeat others' points or other forms of plagiarism, or otherwise are the type of regurgitated answers from the notes or texts that do not elicit much conversation or interesting dialogue. The instructor expects everyone to actively participate in class and do so in a positive and appropriate way (see the "Online Netiquette and Effective Communication" section below). Keep in mind that class participation is more than just completing the scheduled assignments and taking exams — you should be willing to ask and answer questions, and contribute intellectually to class debates via online discussion posts. Before posting a discussion, please complete the assigned readings and go over the lecture notes. Full credit for a discussion post is reserved only for those that follow the online netiquette and effective communication rules below.

## **OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

This instructor abides by university policies, such as excused absences and attendance, as stated in the [UTEP Undergraduate Catalog](#). It is the student's responsibility to understand university policies and their rights. In addition to university policies, I add the following:

Late Work: The course has a compressed timeline of modules, activities, and assignments that need to be completed in order and this course will all go by quickly. Students falling behind and submitting late assignments will increase the chance of failing this course. This is not a self-paced course, and includes content covered over a compact four-week period. Work submitted late may incur a 50% reduction in credit for one day, and zero credit after two days. This is a

strong penalty given the course is only four weeks.

Attendance Policy (and make-ups): UTEP expects that students will not miss sessions without valid excuses. To deter lack of participation, students may be dropped by the instructor, counting against the UTEP six-course drop limit, who miss more than three class sessions (discussion boards, blackboard collaborate) without a valid excuse. If you face complications with some of these sessions, please note this to the instructor at the outset of the course. Valid excuses for missed work include religious holidays, recognized university related activities (with Dean of Students letter), and military leave. In addition, I add the following policies:

- The instructor reserves the right to accept, or not, excuses related to medical issues. Naturally, it is sometimes infeasible to document in advance time lost due to illness. The exception is planned surgeries and appointments (not normal check-ups). Any class time missed will be unexcused without medical or other valid documentation. I have the ability to read in Spanish, so documentation in Spanish is permissible. Students with severe medical problems that result in missing a majority of the semester may want to consider a complete withdrawal from the university for medical purposes (this requires dropping all courses). That is an option when multiple courses are affected. In cases where there is a significant, and documented, loss of time, the instructor may withdraw a student (excused) or work with the student to set up an “incomplete” grade and course of action. The course of action established will depend on the amount of time and assignments the student missed and the estimated chance of the student passing the course. The more the work of a course is completed, the more an incomplete grade may be coordinated.
- Absences/missed assignments due to conflicts with work, child care, etc. that make it impossible for you to attend to this class regularly are not permitted. If you know you will have scheduling conflicts with this class, then you should make other arrangements or post-pone this class until a future semester. Treat this course as you would a professional job in which you cannot miss work; set yourself up for success.
- The instructor may not accept missed exams or quizzes due to family hardship or family medical problems as valid excuses. For example, helping family members move, picking up at the airport, driving family members to medical appointments when you know they conflict with class, and other such activities, will not be permitted as valid excuses. Emergencies such as deaths in the family must be documented, unfortunately.
- Missing any course assessments and work due to vacations and pre-booked travel arrangements are not valid excuses for make-ups. Note the date for the final exam on the course calendar. Moreover, please note that the university has used language on the academic calendar that confuses some students by stating the “last day of classes”, which means last normal class session excluding the final exams. There is a separate final exam calendar for each academic semester and term. See: [Final Exam and Semester Calendars website](#)

Safety and Disruption: It is expected that students will treat the instructor and other students with respect, including refraining from disparaging remarks, personal insults, derogatory comments, and other unprofessional behavior, in person or electronically. Any problem related to rude conduct, or any threats to violence, etc., may result in the student being dropped from the course by the instructor and/or reported to the Dean of Students. Please also note that this course involves discussion of countries hostile to the USA, but it is important to maintain an

objective and analytical approach to this subject matter and not debase course discussions with comments that are racist. There are at least two sides to every dispute.

### Online Netiquette and Effective Communication

This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics. Please avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views. It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered to in all exchanges between class members. Please carefully read the following rules for online etiquette and effective communication:

- Language: Given the absence of face-to-face clues (such as in Discussion Boards), written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language, all capital letters, and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting it, in order to remove any strong language.
- Respect: A web-based classroom is still a classroom, and comments that would be inappropriate in a regular classroom are inappropriate in a Web-based course as well. Treat your professor and your fellow students with respect. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
- Be Forgiving: If someone states something that you find offensive, mention this directly to the professor in an email. Remember that the person contributing to the discussion may be new to this form of communication. What you find offensive may quite possibly have been unintended and can possibly be cleared up with the help of the professor. In cases where students remain in dispute, and this affects the atmosphere of the course or senses of threat, the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCR) will be contacted: [OSCR Website](#). The instructor will not tolerate unprofessional conduct, which will be dealt with swiftly through the University.
- This is Permanent: Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing it. Once sent, there is no taking it back. When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation. Always consider your audience and remember that the instructor and other class members will be reading what you write.
- A Private Environment: Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential within the course. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated and it is at the professor's full discretion to report a student for any inappropriate behavior.

Academic Dishonesty: The instructor follows the university policies on academic honesty concerning cheating and plagiarism. Such acts will not be tolerated. Students will be reported to OSCR. To learn more see the [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#). Here is a list of forms of academic dishonesty:

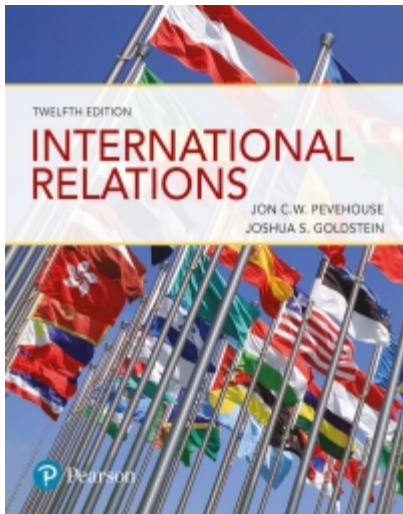
- **Plagiarism:** The use of other people's words, ideas (concepts, sentence or paragraph structure or phrasings), songs, or images without documentation or their consent. The instructor will use anti-plagiarism software to evaluate papers for non-original content. One can avoid plagiarism by being honest and using proper style guidelines concerning citations, footnotes, or endnotes for passages in the text that are borrowed or inspired by other person's works. This course involves exams that are open book. This means that if you use content from our textbook, or other sources, you must cite this source. You should most often paraphrase and use quotations sparingly. When using quotations, you must cite page numbers when available. The vast majority of words in an exam or paper should be one's own; writers need to put work that is cited in a context, such as an argument, and not rely on other authors to provide the argument. If you do not know how to paraphrase properly, please seek help from the University Writing Center. See the paper guidelines for other instructions and tips.
- Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test.
- Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. One example of collusion is preparing a discussion entry for another person or having someone prepare a discussion entry for you. The instructor encourages students to study together and work collectively; however, working together to write any part of a written assignment, research paper, and/or exam is collusion.

### **COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS**

Copyright law protects all the materials used in this course. Course materials are only for the use of students enrolled currently in this course, and only for the purpose of this course, and may not be further disseminated.

### **READINGS**

The information for text for this course is from the UTEP Bookstore: Jon Pevehouse and Joshua S. Goldstein, *International Relations*, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition): Pearson. ISBN: 9780135229255 (abbreviated as P&G below). *International Relations (RRPHE)* \$59.99 Publisher: PH - (Rental Rev Share) IST from 1594 ONLY.



**Figure 1 Image of Textbook Front Cover**

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information see the [CASS website](#); phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106. The Student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions before arrangements need to be made for exams, quizzes, or other needs.

### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

You will need the following software on your computer to efficiently work in this course (your computer may already have some of these programs installed):

- Adobe Acrobat Reader. To get this program, go to <https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/products/pdf-reader.html> and follow the instructions.
- Adobe Flash Player. To get this program, go to <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/> and follow the instructions.
- QuickTime Player. To get this program, go to <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/> and follow the instructions.
- Microsoft Office. If you do not have a word-processing software, go to <https://my.apps.utep.edu>. Using My.Apps interface, UTEP students can access most software offered in student computer labs (including Microsoft Office) from their personal computing devices. Students can use any laptop, tablet, or smartphone with an Internet connection and use the software from anywhere at any time. For more



information, go to <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73740> and follow the instructions.

## **UTEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and Help Desk support at: <http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/>. For a webpage on Blackboard for UTEP Students and what is required for Remote Learning, including topics such as required technology, software, internet access, etc., please see:

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB\\_Students.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB_Students.html)

## **ALTERNATE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES**

Most disruptions to the submission of assignments or participation in the course can be reduced by following the necessary technology requirements to operate online. The instructor promises to be understanding and flexible in cases where there are disruptions and unforeseen problems beyond the control of the student, ranging from the university taking Blackboard offline to a zombie apocalypse. We should often have prior knowledge about planned blackboard maintenance and similar issues. The instructor strongly suggests that students save all of their work as evidence (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup in case there is a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, you can always email the instructor ([crboehmer@utep.edu](mailto:crboehmer@utep.edu)) your back-up document. However, this is just to prove you completed the assignment. The instructor will ask you to resolve your technology issues and submit the assignment via Blackboard once they are resolved.

## **OTHER SOURCES OF HELP**

**University Writing Center (UWC)**: This is an important resource for improving student writing skills, including topics such as how to argue a point in a paper, how to use APA style and cite references properly, and otherwise organize a paper. Note that academic disciplines often have different writing styles, and the social sciences can be different from other areas such as the humanities, such as a strong focus on clarity as opposed to poetic prose. Students can submit papers for assistance with writing style and formatting and ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

**Our Reference Librarians Ms. Angela Lucero and Mr. Jacob Galindo Mr. Jacob Galindo**

**When in doubt, ask Dr. Charles Boehmer, the instructor**