

# Virginia Western Community College

## PLS 241

### Introduction to International Relations

#### **Prerequisites**

ENG 111 or Department Consent

#### **Course Description**

Provides an introduction to the causes of international conflict and cooperation. Focuses on the modern state, diplomacy, war initiation, crisis bargaining, international terrorism, nuclear strategy, interstate economic relations, economic growth, international law, human rights, and environmental politics. Lecture 3 hours per week. 3 credits.

To enable students to demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge of international relations; foster creative thinking about pressing global issues; and, to foster critical thinking and cross-cultural understanding to guide them in that process.

**Semester Credits: 3**

**Lecture Hours: 3**

#### **Required Materials**

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Canvas

#### **Textbook:**

Blanton, Shannon L. and Charles W. Kegley. World Politics: Trend and Transformation. Mass.: Cengage Learning, 17<sup>th</sup> ed., 2021. ISBN: 978-0-357-14180-9

#### **Other Required Materials:**

None

## **Course Outcomes**

**At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

### **Civic Engagement**

- Explain the importance of citizen engagement, ways Americans can influence and become engaged in government, and factors that might affect people's willingness to become engaged in government.

### **Critical Thinking**

- Explain the benefits and the consequences of failure associated with maintaining order through diplomacy.
- Explain the contributions of international governmental and non-governmental organizations and international law and their complex relationships with individual nations.
- Differentiate among the various views and approaches to governance and international relations theory.
- Discuss the varying impacts of the globalization of trade and communications.
- Explain how events led to a focus on the individual in the post-WWII era and assess the impact of those changes on how global issues are addressed.
- Compose a 1500-2000 word essay, using peer-reviewed sources, critically evaluating a contemporary international political issue and differentiating the various state perspectives.

### **Professional Readiness**

- Participate in collaborative assignments and presentations in the classroom or online.
- Adhere to classroom attendance and behavior requirements.
- Timely submission of assignments.
- Identify career opportunities within the federal government.

### **Quantitative Literacy**

- Interpret and communicate quantitative information using language appropriate to the context and intended audience.
- Use appropriate quantitative methods to analyze international demographic and economic data
- Read and interpret graphs and descriptive statistics.

### **Scientific Literacy**

- Identify and understand the underlying factors and potential consequences of climate change.
- Explain several political science research methods

### **Written Communication**

- Compose an essay, using peer-reviewed sources, critically evaluating a contemporary international political issue and differentiating the various state perspectives.
- Compose written short essays addressing the topics addressed in the Critical Thinking section.

**The Making of the Modern World/ Introduction**

- Explain the meaning of a state and evolution of the modern state system.
- Recognize the connection between international relations as a field and their personal lives.

**Diplomacy**

- Explain the meaning and significance of international and interstate diplomacy.
- Discuss the importance of diplomacy in regulating the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

**Many Actors**

- Describe how the contemporary view of international relations has been expanded to include relationships between all sorts of political entities, including nations, international organizations, multinational corporations, societies, and citizens.
- Explain how the national level of analyses may affect what is considered the desired outcome.

**International Relations Theory**

- Identify and define the various forms and philosophies of governance (-isms) including the influence of Marxist-Leninist thought through 20th century international politics.
- Explain liberal theory, realism, constructivism, and their evolution.
- Explain the positivist and post-positivist views in international relations theory.
- Describe how these approaches are practiced by nations and international organizations.

**International Law**

- Define international law and the importance of international law.
- Identify what issues are addressed in international law.
- Identify who makes international and to whom it applies.
- Explain how international law is implemented (e.g., the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and the European Convention on Human Rights.)

**International Organizations**

- Explain what defines international governmental organizations (IGO), international non-governmental organizations (INGO), and hybrid international organizations.
- Describe how international organizations shape our world.

**Global Civil Society**

- Explain how globalization links distant communities and opens up spaces for new social actors.
- Identify several conditions for international activism.
- Explain global civil society as a response to international exclusion (to addresses issues such as climate change, financial instability, disease epidemics, intercultural violence and global inequalities).

**Global Political Economy**

- Identify various approaches to global political economy.
- Explain liberal approaches to the global political economy.
- Explain the impact of individuals and state and multinational corporations.
- Describe the trends toward an increasingly global economic environment (global, regional, and bilateral trade agreements).

**Religion and Culture**

- Explain how religion and culture have become increasingly important in international relations.
- Describe and differentiate between the elements of religion and culture.

**Global Poverty and Wealth**

- Explain what poverty is.
- Describe how poverty is measured and identify some practiced methods of reducing poverty.
- Explain how globalization might affect the wealth-poverty dynamic.

**Protecting People**

- Explain the various positions in the debate over the protection of individuals.
- Describe the international norms (protection of civilians, human rights, and international criminal law) of individual protections that have emerged since World War II.
- Detail some problems and challenges in protecting people.

**Connectivity, Communications, and Technology**

- Describe the effect of the internet on commerce and communication.
- Explain the problems associated with reliance on digital technology for communications.
- Describe the limitations of the internet in terms of censorship and control.

**Voices of the People**

- Analyze the impact of globalization and communication in bringing about protests, revolution, migration, and change.

**International Terrorism**

- Define international terrorism.
- Explain the motivations and goals of international terrorists.
- Detail the activities of various terrorist groups.
- Explain how international terrorist organizations are organized and ways they are funded.
- List ways in which international terrorist organizations might be countered.

**Environmental Issues**

- Explain some of the relationships between international relations and environmental issues.
- Explain common pool resource theory.
- Explain the idea of the global environment as a global commons.
- Discuss the conflict between global rights and domestic environmental policies and politics.
- Discuss the potential role of an international organization to address environmental issues.

**Feeding the World**

- List some of the factors resulting in hunger.
- Describe the impact of chronic hunger on civic participation.
- Describe the impact of chronic obesity on health.
- Explain how low wages affect food security
- Describe how land dispossession affects hunger.

**Managing Global Security**

- Describe the evolution of the U.S. from an isolated nation to a global superpower.
- Explain the impact of the U.S. standing “global watch’ (Pax Americana) on the international order.
- Explain the impact of a single nation bearing the bulk of the financial burden of maintaining order in a world with increasing troubles.
- Discuss some potential alternative paradigms for managing global security.

**Major Topics to be Included**

1	Civic Engagement
2	Critical Thinking
3	Professional Readiness
4	Quantitative Literacy
5	Scientific Literacy
6	Written Communication
7	The Making of the Modern World/ Introduction
8	Diplomacy
9	Many Actors
10	International Relations Theory
11	International Law
12	International Organizations
13	Global Civil Society
14	Global Political Economy
15	Religion and Culture
16	Global Poverty and Wealth
17	Protecting People
18	Connectivity, Communications, and Technology
19	Voices of the People
20	International Terrorism
21	Environmental Issues

22	Feeding the World
23	Managing Global Security

**Notes to Instructors**

None