World Politics | International Politics
Dual Bachelor in International Studies and Law
Bachelor in Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

Spring 2021

Dr. Iasmin Goes
Email: igoesara@clio.uc3m.es
Office: 18.2.E.10
Office hours: Thursdays 1:15–4:00 pm (online)

Meeting Times

Lectures: Tuesdays 6:00–7:30 pm (online)

Seminars:

• Thursdays 4:15–5:45 pm (ED, Group 118, Aula 4.1.08)
• Thursdays 6:00–7:30 pm (PPE, Group 55, Aula 15.0.15)
• Thursdays 7:45–9:15 pm (PPE, Group 53, Aula 15.0.16)
• Thursdays 7:45–9:15 pm (ED, Group 18, Aula 9.2.4 w/ Fernando Nuño, fnuno@clio.uc3m.es)

Course Description and Objectives

This course will examine how interest groups, voters, bureaucrats, policy-makers, ideas, and power politics interact to shape policy outcomes at the global level. During the lectures, we will examine theories and empirics of international relations. During the seminars, we will add more nuance to these theories and empirics, developing analytical tools to help you think like a social scientist. Still, there is no single correct answer to the questions we will discuss. The objective of the course is to help you evaluate the validity of competing answers and discuss what evidence you would need to see in order to gain confidence in one answer and reject others. You are welcome – even encouraged – to disagree with the answers proposed by the assigned readings. If this is the case, you should be able to formulate an evidence-based counter-argument that convinces your colleagues to reject alternative explanations. This analytical exercise will help you prepare for a career in settings where there are no clear-cut answers, such as consulting, research, finance, public policy, or law.

Assignments

Seminar participation (10%) Preparing for the seminars and engaging in discussion is a requirement for this course, which is why this grade evaluates the frequency and quality of contributions in class. I will not take attendance; if you miss class, I trust that you have legitimate reasons to do so. However, frequent absences might reduce your ability to engage in class discussion, which in turn will affect your participation grade.

Weekly quizzes (20%) Each week, an online multiple choice quiz will gauge your comprehension of the readings. The quizzes are due on Tuesdays (the day of the lecture) at 11:59 pm. At the end of the semester, I will drop the lowest two scores of the twelve quizzes. Since I am dropping the two lowest scores, there will be no make-up quizzes.

Group project (35%) Teams of 4–5 students will be formed at the beginning of the semester. You will work together on the three following assignments, which represent major documents that are part of the research or policymaking process.
• Dissenting opinion (15%) Pick one of the three big paradigms (realism, liberalism, or constructivism) that you disagree with. Now suppose you are a scholar writing for an academic audience that is familiar with the literature you are engaging with. In 3–5 pages, develop an argument against this paradigm and present evidence in support of your argument. You can use the readings from Part 1 of this course, but you are also free to add additional references from the international relations literature. Due Tuesday, March 9, followed by a presentation on Thursday, March 11.

• Press release (10%) Suppose you work for an international organization that is releasing the results of an in-depth study addressing one of the issues discussed in Part 2 of this course (international organizations, international conflict, human rights and peacekeeping, or environmental politics). How would you summarize the findings to the press in 800 words or less? You can use press releases from the OECD or the World Bank as a reference. Due Tuesday, April 13, followed by a presentation on Thursday, April 15.

• Policy brief (10%): Suppose you work for a Member of Congress who must be briefed on one of the issues discussed in Part 3 (globalization and trade, money and finance, sovereign debt, or foreign direct investment). The Member of Congress is a busy person who is looking for background information and policy recommendations, but has time to read 1–2 pages at most. How would you summarize the findings to a policymaker, and what course of action would you advise them to take? Here are some guidelines to write an actionable policy brief, courtesy of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Due Tuesday, May 11, followed by a presentation on Thursday, May 13.

For each assignment, please include an annex with the sources you used. All team members are expected to deliver equal contributions and will receive the same grade.

Final exam (35%): As scheduled by the university, the final exam will take place on Saturday, May 22 noon–3pm. The exam will consist of 10 questions and you are expected to provide short essay answers. In order to pass the class, you must pass the exam (that is, you must score at least 5 points out of 10).

Course Policies

Communication: The most reliable way to get in touch with me is via email. You should expect a response within 48 business hours.

Readings: Our main references will be the following textbooks:


Additional readings will consist of articles in scientific journals or book chapters, all available on Aula Global. Readings can also be downloaded from the library website.

Beyond class: While not required, I encourage you to keep up with current events in economics and politics by reading reputable newspapers and magazines (e.g. New York Times, Washington Post, Financial Times, The Economist, The Guardian, El País, etc). Please check your emails regularly, as I may share pertinent articles with the class every week. I also encourage you to share news with your colleagues using the Aula Global discussion board.

Access and accommodations: Your experience in this class is important to me. If you experience any physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, systemic, or other type of condition that requires any accommodation, let me know what accommodations would be helpful so that we can plan together for you to succeed. You do not need to share private information about your condition with me. If you require any accommodation, please contact me prior to the date of the assessment. I cannot make grade adjustments after the fact.

Grievances: If you are unhappy with your grade on an assignment, please wait 48 hours after the assignment is returned before contacting me. This provides the opportunity to let the initial emotions subside and think more clearly about the issue at hand. After 48 hours, you can contact me with a one-page written explanation of why you feel your grade should be different. “I worked hard” is not a good explanation; I can only grade the quality of the work that you give to me!
Based on this petition, I will decide whether to re-grade your assignment. However, be advised that your grade may move upwards or downwards.

Course Outline

Feb 4 (Seminar): Introduction
No readings

Part 1: Theoretical Foundations

Feb 9 (Lecture): The Three Big Paradigms in International Relations

Feb 11 (Seminar): The Problem With the Three Big Paradigms

Feb 16 (Lecture): Realism and the Nation State
- Goldstein and Pevehouse [pp. 42–81, “Chapter 2 – Realist Theories”]

Feb 18: (Seminar): Black Panther and the Failure of (Wakandan) Realism

Feb 23 (Lecture): Liberalism and the Emergence of International Regimes

Feb 25 (Seminar): Liberalism and Colonialism

Mar 2 (Lecture): Constructivism
Mar 4 (Seminar): Marxism

- Baylis, Owens, and Smith [pp. 142–153, “Chapter 9 – Marxist Theories of International Relations”]

Part 2: Institutions, Norms, and Conflict

Mar 9 (Lecture): International Organizations and Global Governance


Dissenting opinion due

Mar 11 (Seminar): Presentations

No readings; teams present their dissenting opinions

Mar 16 (Lecture): Conflict


Mar 18 (Seminar): War and Gender


Mar 23 (Lecture): International Law and Human Rights


Mar 25 (Seminar): The 2003 Iraq War


Apr 6 (Lecture): Environmental Politics


Apr 8 (Seminar): Both Sides Bias

Part 3: International Political Economy

Apr 13 (Lecture): Globalization and Trade
- Jackson and Sørensen [pp. 159–175, “Chapter 6 – International Political Economy: Classical Theories”]

Press release due

Apr 15 (Seminar): Presentations
No readings; teams present their press releases

Apr 20 (Lecture): Money and Finance

Apr 22 (Seminar): The Wizard of Oz and the Gold Standard

Apr 27 (Lecture): Sovereign Debt

Apr 29 (Seminar): Greece's 2010 Debt Crisis

May 4 (Lecture): Foreign Direct Investment

May 6 (Seminar): Multinational Corporations and Developing Countries
Conclusions

May 11 (Lecture): Can We Trust What We Know About the World?


Policy brief due

May 13 (Seminar): Presentations

No readings; teams present their policy briefs

May 18 (Lecture): Counterfactuals and “What-If” Scenarios