

POE116-F04 2019 Syllabus



Introduction to International Relations

David Last, PhD

Course description

This course introduces students to the field of international relations (IR). Students will be able to describe the relationships among actors, levels of analysis and events. It introduces theoretical approaches to international relations and the utility of these approaches for describing and analyzing historical and contemporary international events. Learning Outcomes are to recognize the study of international relations within political science; recognize the relationship between events and concepts; describe the key concepts in International Relations and outline the connection between events and IR theory. (RMC Undergraduate Calendar, 2019-2020)

Learning Objectives

This course is part of the mandatory common core at RMC because a professional officer must be able to understand and explain the implications of international events, and to assess critically the explanations of others. Seeking to understand the significance of events and issues in international relations should engage you throughout your career. You won't learn everything you need in one course. The course should permit you to do several important things as a leader and "manager of violence":

- Describe the relationships among actors, levels of analysis and events. This will help you to make sense of the world around you, using the information available.
- Recognize the study of IR within the field of political science. This will help you to expand your professional knowledge over time by reading with discernment. Political science does not exist in isolation. It connects to all the social sciences and humanities.
- Recognize the relationship between events and concepts. "...there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*)
- Describe the key concepts in international relations. This will be language and a toolset that you will rely upon in your professional discussion, but it will need to be constantly updated and expanded.
- Outline the connection between events and IR theory. Do theories explain events, or do events drive theory? Is it both?

Where it fits in the RMC program

International relations is a common core area of study for all cadets taking degrees at RMC. It will normally be taken early in the program for students in arts, and may be taken in later years for students in science and engineering.

Textbook

Shirayev, Eric B. and Vladislav Zubok (2016) International Relations. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0199746516

Other readings will be provided online to augment your understanding of concepts, events, issues, and cases.

Course requirements

- You will complete written assignments to the satisfaction of the instructor. I will provide a marking guides for each assignment.
- You are expected to attend all classes or their online equivalents unless excused by the professor; you will be objectively assessed on work completed in class and/or online
- The final exam will be held in-hall during the college examination period. There will be a common exam for all sections.
- Academic regulation 10.2 is in effect: "The instructor may refuse a student permission to write a final examination in a course if the requirements with regard to course work have not been met."

Evaluation (common to all sections)

30% Quizzes (2 quizzes, 15% each)

20% Written assignments (including marks for class coordinator roles)

50% Final exam

Quizzes, assignments, and exams

Detailed instructions for each evaluated item are on this site.

Course content

Individual sections may vary the order and content of the weekly headings. Professors may assign additional reading. Engaging students in the understanding of current events is an important part of the course. Course syllabus for Dr. Last's section is posted online. The online syllabus will be updated as the course advances, and supersedes information in this document, which will not be updated.

Outline of classes (see also Calendar page)

Topic 1. Introduction

Topic 2. Skills, theories, and methods

Topic 3. Power and influence in the international system

Topic 3. Events: violence in the international system
Topic 4. Events: economic change
Quiz 1 identify 10/15 terms
Topic 5. Events: diplomacy
Topic 6. Issues: system formation and fracture
Topic 7. Fall break (no classes 14-16 October)
Topic 8. Visiting Defence Fellow Panel (common)
Topic 9. NATO Burden Sharing Simulation and Arctic Simulation (common)
Topic 10. Issues: state formation and fracture
Quiz 2 identify 7/10 terms and answer 1 of 2 analysis questions
Topic 11. Issues: human impacts, social change
Topic 12. Revisiting theories, sources, methods, and analysis
Topic 13. Exam review
Final exam during exam routine, in hall, closed book.

Academic integrity

The college policy on academic integrity governs all work submitted. Written work will be submitted through Turnitin.

Pedagogy

1. Normally, I will facilitate, not lecture. Lectures will be provided on request.
2. We will use Moodle to manage collaboratively.
3. We will share decisions about learning.
4. We will focus on skills, not content: your ability to read about, write about, understand and explain the essential material for the course.
5. You are responsible for your learning and the learning environment.
6. You will make decisions each week about your learning.

(Weimer, M. 2002. Learner Centred Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice. John Wiley and Sons.)

Websites

While the course is running, the primary means of communication and dissemination of course materials will be Moodle (the RMC learning management system). The professor's web site will be used as an alternate, for when students do not have access to Moodle, or for guests and visitors to the class. Moodle is like an extension to the classroom. The professor's website is like a bulletin board. Please remain connected to both.