



IR297 CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
IES Abroad Shanghai

DESCRIPTION:

The course offers an overview of important issues in contemporary international relations. In the course, we will use case studies to explore in detail various international issues, conflicts and controversies.

The course consists of the following four inter-related parts: the first part (the first two weeks) is an overview of contemporary international relations, comprising the concepts of international system, international society and international actors. The second part (weeks 3-8) provides case studies on a range of issues, such as climate change, environmental conflicts, human rights abuse, ethnic conflicts, and terrorism. The third part (weeks 9-10) presents analyses on the roles of non-state actors in international relations, i.e. the role of multi-national corporations (MNCs), and that of the emerging yet enhancing role of global/alpha cities. In the last part (weeks 11-12), we will study state actors in international relations by examining the possible coming of a new Cold War between the US and China and the implications of it for the world.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The course is to be conducted with a mixture of lectures, PowerPoint presentations and discussions, quizzes, and writing assignments. Frequently, we will use video clips to illustrate further key concepts and issues in different sessions of the course.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Class Participation - 10%
- Oral Presentation - 20%
- Quiz - 15%
- Mid-Term Exam - 25%
- Final Essay - 30%

Class Participation

To be prepared for class participation, students will be assigned approximately 60 pages of academic reading each week, although this workload will be reduced during preparation for midterm and final assessments. Since this course stresses the importance of your interpretation and analysis of the textual data, you will find beneficial to: 1) read the texts carefully; 2) underline the passages, sentences and words that you think are significant; 3) select several quotes that you believe are central to the works; 4) raise important ideas and/or questions in the seminar that have occurred during your reading.

Participation Rubric

A: Excellent participation

The student's contributions reflect an active reading of the assigned bibliography. Skillfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material. Demonstrates, through questions and comments, that he or she has been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his or her own life experience. The student makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons. He/she respectfully states his/her reactions about other classmates' opinions and can contribute to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities.



B: Very good participation

The student's contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were not properly reflected upon. The student can construct others' contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. He/she is respectful of others' ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy.

C: Regular participation

The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. He/she tries to construct over others' ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand.

F: Insufficient participation

Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way and shows lack of interest in constructing over others' ideas.

Oral Presentation

Each student is required to make one oral presentation.

Presentation consists of: 1) presentation summary handout (one page), including list of works consulted, to be distributed to the instructor and other students before the presentation takes place; 2) oral presentation of about 15 minutes, with questions to the audience in the end; and 3) comments from other students and the instructor, and response from the presenter.

The ABC criteria for delivery a good presentation: 1) your analytical skills shown in the presentation, referring to the logic and nuance of your arguments, as well as your ability to get others involved (an effective way of achieving so is presenting questions in the end of your presentation) (40%); 2) your build-up for the presentation, which can be seen from the data you carefully selected (they need to be significant and up-to-date) (40%); and c) the coherence of your presentation (20%)

Presentations could either be a review on the week's reading or a self-selected topic relating to the week's topic. Students should sign up for the presentation in the first two weeks of the course.

Quiz

Four quizzes are administered in the course. Each quiz consists of three parts as follows: reading an article about 5 pages (10 minutes), oral Q & A focusing on the content of the article (10 minutes), and discussion (10 minutes). You will get the article in the beginning of each respective class. All the articles are chosen to reflect the latest development in contemporary international relations.

Midterm Exam

For the mid-term evaluation, each student is required to submit an essay of at least 1500 words. The topics of the essay could be chosen from the following two: 1) "Analyzing the different interpretations of human rights in China and the West: why the differ and what come as a result?"; and 2) "Examining the Thucydides trap: Is war between the US and China inevitable?" After choosing the topic, you might need to narrow down the exact title of your essay (though it should be closely related to your chosen topic), for the reasons spelt out in the "Criteria for being a good essay" below.

Final essay

Final essay should be at least 2000 words. The topics of the essay could be chosen from the following two topics: 1) "China and the US war on terror;" and 2) "Reflection on Shanghai as a global/alpha city." After choosing the topic, you might need to narrow down the exact title of your essay (though it should be closely related to your chosen topic), for the reasons spelt out in the "Criteria for being a good essay" below.

Criteria for writing a good essay: you need to keep in mind the following criteria. 1) Your analytical skills, referring to how deep your analysis can reach (normally we do not encourage students to write on a very broad topic, for that would under most circumstances

sacrifice the depth of your analysis) (40%); 2) originality of your views (20%); 3) your application of data, which could include the course reader, online sources, and (for some topics) interviewing Chinese people and IES faculty, etc.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Develop a critical understanding of the foundation and content of contemporary international relations.
- Challenge existing Western and Chinese views on different issues related to the course.
- Enable students to compare and contrast, on the one hand, between the Chinese (including the instructor’s) and Western interpretations of contemporary relations; on the other, between various western analyses.
- Present (both vocally and in written form) their views on those issues of contemporary international relations, by means of classroom activities (discussions, quizzes, and presentations), and written assignments.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to have completed each week’s required reading assignments before the class. Participation in discussions is an essential part of the class. Attendance will be taken by the professor in the beginning of each class. Any unexcused absence will result in students’ grade being lowered one half-grade (i.e. from a B+ to a B). Proper documentation MUST be provided for all absences.

CONTENT:

	Content	Assignments
Week 1	<p>Introduction to Contemporary International Relations</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International system and its main features • The origin and definition of international society • World system theory and global power shift • A comprehensive competition between the US and China • Trump’s Asian policy: Will Trump triumph in dealing with China? • The US-China trade war: Merely for trade imbalance? • Rise of China: The Thucydides trap? • Hot spots of East Asia: North Korea, Taiwan and South China Sea-battle fields for US-China confrontation? • BRI vs. QUAD: playing ground for China-US geopolitical competition? (Video clip on BRI) 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bova. How the World Works: A Brief Survey of International Relations, pp. 3-38 • Frieden. World Politics: Interests, Interactions and Institutions, pp. 40-79 • Xi. “China’s Diplomacy Must Befit Its Major Country Status,” pp. 479-483 <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betts. Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace, pp. 1-53 • Young. “Western Theory, Global World: Western Bias in International Theory,” pp. 29-31

	Content	Assignments
Week 2	<p>International Actors</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anarchy and state actors Order and norms in an anarchic international system Necessities for cooperation between states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Quiz 1</u>: article to be selected before class begins <p>Required readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin. International Organizations and Institutions. Risse. Transnational Actors and World Politics. O’Brian. “What Makes International Agreements Work?” https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7839.pdf <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mearsheimer. “The False Promise of International Institutions,” pp 5-49 Keohane. “The Concept of Cooperation,” pp. 49-64 Karreth. “International Institutions and Civil War Prevention,” pp. 96-109 Xi. “Towards a Community of Share Future for Mankind,” pp. 588- 601
Week 3	<p>Environmental degradation and international conflict</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start-up questions for discussion Human and the environment Overview of environmental conflict Major courses of conflict over natural resources Conflict provention for environmental conflict <p>(Provention: conflict prevention + development promotion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Note</u>: Lecture is closely aided with questions (for discussion) and video clips 	<p>Required readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raleigh, Clionadh. “Climate change, environmental degradation and armed conflict,” pp. 674-694 Theisen. “Climate wars? Assessing the claim that drought breeds conflict.” UNEP (2004), UNEP (2004). “Conflict and the Environment”. See http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/sudan/04_conflict.pdf Schreurs, “Transboundary Cooperation to Address Acid Rain: Europe, North America, and East Asia Compared,” pp. 89-116).
Week 4	<p>The United States, China and the Paris Climate Change Agreement</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change Consequences of the US withdrawal from the Agreement Will China be the leader in the global fight against climate change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Quiz 2</u>: article to be selected before class begin <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Klein et al. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Analysis and Commentary, Chs. 3 and 22.

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Week 5	<p>Human rights and the responsibility to protect</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretations, levels and types of human rights • Human rights and responsibility to protect • State sovereignty and humanitarian intervention • Humanitarian intervention-failed and outdated? • Cases of human rights and responsibility to protect-China and Iran, Tibet and Xinjiang 	<p>Required readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frieden. World Politics: Interests, Interactions and Institutions, pp. 408-443 • Bellamy. "The Responsibility to Protect – Five Years On." Ethics and International Affairs, pp. 143-169 • Angle. "Human Rights and Harmony," pp. 76-94 <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weiss. Humanitarian Intervention. • Morris. "Libya and Syria: R2P and the spectre of the swinging pendulum," pp. 1265-1283 • Bhattacharya. "China and its Peripheries: Strategic Significance of Tibet"
Week 6	<p>Ethnic conflicts: the case of the Rohingya and beyond</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-emergence of ethnic conflicts in the post-Cold War era--former Yugoslavia and Rwanda • The case of the Rohingya and the alleged cleaning they face in Myanmar • The broader discrimination the Rohingya faces in Southeast Asia • The global reaction to the Rohingya case 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ibrahim. <u>The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide</u>. Introduction, Conclusion and Epilogue • Chaudhury and Samaddar. <u>The Rohingya in South Asia: People without a State</u>. Introduction, Epilogue and Afterword <p>Deadline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term essay to be e-mailed to the instructor

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<p>Week 7</p>	<p>Terrorism as international conflict</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources and origin of terrorism • Multiple and conflicting definitions for the term of terrorism • The Chinese, European and US approaches to anti-terror • American war on international terrorism • Chinese war on domestic terrorism 	<p><u>Quiz 3</u>: article to be selected before the class begins</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buena de Mesquita. "Terrorism and Counterterrorism" • Conrad. "International Cooperation, Spoiling, an Transnational Terrorism," pp. 453-476 • Brookings Institute. "Combatting International Terrorism" • https://www.brookings.edu/research/combating-international-terrorism/ <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gal-Or. <u>International Cooperation to Suppress Terrorism</u>. Global Terrorism Database https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/ • Wang. "Terrorism and Violence in and from Xinjiang," pp. 308-315 (2015, pp. 308-315), • Tukmadiyeva. "Xinjiang in China's Foreign Poliy Toward Central Asia," pp. 87-108 <p><u>Possible Field trip</u> (2-5 PM, Friday): Visiting Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, which features on the theme of "city, human, environment and development"</p>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Crises in the Middle East</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security complex in the Middle East • Identity and conflict in the Middle East: the case of the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict • Energy politics in the Middle East--parties involved • Geopolitical competition in the Middle East--the case of Saudi Arabia and Iran • Syrian war--actors involved and consequences (eg. Refugee crisis) 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause. "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War," pp. 1-27 • Garver. "China and Iran: An Emerging Partnership Post-Sanctions"

	Content	Assignments
Week 9	<p>Role of multi-national corporations (MNCs) in international relations: the case of Huawei</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the role of MNCs in international relations • Huawei and “Made-in-China 2025” • Huawei as a focus of US-China economic and technological competition • Broader international responses to US sanction against Huawei 	<p><u>Quiz 4</u>: article to be selected before class begins</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voita, “The power of China’s energy efficiency policies,” pp. 1-54
Week 10	<p>Role of Global/Alpha cities in international relations</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence and significance of global/alpha cities for the world economy • Role of global/alpha cities in international relations • Definition of global/alpha city • Selective and significant pairs of global/alpha cities: • Shanghai vs. Hong Kong: competition for being shipping centers • Hong Kong vs. Tokyo: competition for being financial centers • London vs. Frankfurt: contest for being post-Brexit financial centers 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sassen. “The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier” • GaWC. “The World According to GaWC 2016,” explore rankings and website • A.T. Kearney. “Global Cities 2017” • Knight Frank Research. “Global Cities Survey”
Week 11	<p>A new Cold War between the US and China?</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid economic and military rise of China • Is the US containing China now? • Will the US-China competition lead to a new Cold War • Watching the video “The Coming War on China (2016) (John Pilger’s documentary) 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allison. <u>Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap?</u>

	Content	Assignments
Week 12	<p>Future of China and international relations</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenarios of China’s future economic and political outlook implications for international relations 	<p><u>Deadline:</u> final essay to be e-mailed to the instructor</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Witt. “Prepare for the US and China to Decouple”

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Allison, Graham (2017) *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Angle, Stephen C. (2008) “Human Rights and Harmony.” *Human Rights Quarterly* 30(1), 76-94.
- A.T. Kearney (2017) “Global Cities 2017,” <https://www.atkearney.com/global-cities>.
- Bellamy, Alex J. (2010) *The Responsibility to Protect - Five Years On.* *Ethics and International Affairs* 24(2):143-69.
- Bova, Russel (2016). *How the World Works: A Brief Survey of International Relations.* (3rd ed.). Pearson.
- Brookings Institute (2008). “Combating International Terrorism”. See <https://www.brookings.edu/research/combating-international-terrorism/>
- Buena de Mesquita, Ethan. 2012. “Terrorism and Counterterrorism.” In *Handbook of International Relations.* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Cause, Gregory, “Beyond sectarianism: the new Middle East cold war,” *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper*, No. 11, July 2014: 1-27.
- Chaudhury, Sabyasachi Basu Ray and Ranabir Samaddar (2018), *The Rohingya in South Asia: People without at State.* Routledge India.
- Conrad, Justin and James Igoe Walsh (2014). International cooperation, spoiling, and transnational terrorism. *International Interactions*, 40(4), 453-476.
- Foreign Policy (2016). *10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016.* See <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/03/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2016/>
- Garver, John (2016). “China and Iran: An emerging partnership post-sanctions,” *MEI Policy Focus*, 2016-3: 1-9
- Frieden, Jeffry, David Lake and Kenneth Schutlz (2010). *World Politics: Interests, Interactions and Institutions.* (3rd ed.). W.W. Norton & Company.
- GaWC (2016) “The World According to GaWC 2016,” Geography Department at Loughborough University, <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2016t.html>.
- Ibrahim, Azeem (2018) *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar’s Genocide.* London: C. Hurst.
- International Crisis Group (2016). “Crisis Watch: 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2017” . See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2017>
- Knight Frank LLP (2015) “Global Cities Survey,” <https://content.knightfrank.com/resources/knightfrank.com/wealthreport2015/wealthpdf/04-wealth-report-global-cities-chapter.pdf>.
- Li, Anthony H.F. (2016). “Hopes of Limiting Global Warming? China and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.” *China Perspectives* 1(105), 49-54.
- Martin, Lisa and Beth A. Simmons (2012). “International Organizations and Institutions.” In *Handbook of International Relations.* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- O’Brian, Emily and Richard Gowan (2012). “What Makes International Agreements Work?” Center on International Cooperation: *Overseas Development Institute.* See: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7839.pdf>
- Pape, Robert (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review*, 97(3), 343–61.

- Raleigh, Clionadh, and Henrik Urdal (2007). Climate change, environmental degradation and armed conflict. *Political geography*, 26(6), 674-694.
- Risse, Thomas. (2012). "Transnational Actors and World Politics." In *Handbook of International Relations*. (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Sassen, Saskia (2001), "The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier," India Seminar, <http://www.india-seminar.com/2001/503/503%20saskia%20sassen.htm>.
- Schreurs, Miranda A. "Transboundary Cooperation to Address Acid Rain: Europe, North America, and East Asia Compared," Beyond Resource Wars: Scarcity, Environmental Degradation, and *International Cooperation*, Shlomi Dinar, Ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 89-116.
- Selby, J. (2005). The geopolitics of water in the Middle East: fantasies and realities. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(2), 329-349.
- Theisen, Ole., Helge Holtermann and Halvard Buhaug (2011). Climate wars? Assessing the claim that drought breeds conflict.
- UNEP (2004). "Conflict and the Environment". See http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/sudan/04_conflict.pdf
- UN Office on Genocide Prevention. "Responsibility to Protect". See: <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html>

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Bercovitch, Jacob, ed. (1996) *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Betts, Richard (ed.) (2012). *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*. (4th ed.). Routledge
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- Gal-Or, N. (2015). *International Cooperation to Suppress Terrorism (RLE: Terrorism & Insurgency)* (Vol. 10). Routledge.
- Gleditsch, Kristian S., and Michael D. Ward. (2013) *Forecasting Is Difficult, Especially about the Future: Using Contentious Issues to Forecast Interstate Disputes*. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(1):17-31.
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- McBeath, Jerry and Bo Wang (2008). "China's Environmental Diplomacy." *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 15(1), 1-16.
- Mearsheimer, John (1995). "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19(3), 5-49.
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- Morris, Justin (2013). Libya and Syria: R2P and the spectre of the swinging pendulum. *International Affairs*, 89(5): 1265-1283.
- Mumford, Andrew (2013). Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict. *The RUSI Journal*, 158(2), 40-46.
- Nye, Joseph Jr. and David A. Welch (2012). *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation*. (9th ed.).
- Tukmadiyeva, Malika (2013). "Xinjiang in China's Foreign Policy toward Central Asia." *Connections* 12(3) 87-108.
- Wang, Jay (2015) "Terrorism and Violence in and from Xinjiang." *Shared Destiny*, Geremie R. Barmé and Linda Jaivin, Eds. Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 308-315.
- Weiss, Thomas G. (2007) *Humanitarian Intervention*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Xi Jinping. (2017a) "China's Diplomacy Must Benefit Its Major Country Status," *The Governance of China, Volume II*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, pp. 479-483.
- ---. (2017b) "Towards a Community of Shared Future for Mankind," *The Governance of China, Volume II*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, pp. 588-601.

- Young, Alex (2014) "Western Theory, Global World: Western Bias in International Theory." *Harvard International Review* 36(1), pp. 29-31.