

**POLSCI 362 / PUBPOL 319: International Security**  
**Duke University (Fall 2025)**  
*Last Update: August 19, 2025*

## Instructors

*Primary Instructor*

Prof./Dr. Rachel Myrick  
Associate Professor of Political Science  
rachel.myrick@duke.edu

*Teaching Assistant & Grader*

Ying Chi  
PhD Candidate in Political Science  
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**Course Time:** Tuesday/Thursday from 10:05-11:20am in Gross Hall 270

## Office Hours:

*Instructor:* Thursdays from 1:30-3:30pm in 204J Gross Hall or on Zoom. In order for me to accommodate both in-person and virtual options, please sign up for office hours in advance at: <https://calendly.com/rmmyrick/office-hours>

*TA:* Tuesdays from 1:00-3:00pm in the political science graduate student cubicles on Gross Hall second floor.

## Course Overview

This course focuses on the causes, processes and impacts of international conflict in contemporary global affairs. The course is divided into three units. The first unit focuses on the causes and consequences of international conflict. The second unit outlines the factors that make international conflict and cooperation more or less likely. The third unit emphasizes contemporary and non-traditional security threats and discusses solutions for how to resolve them. There are no formal prerequisites for this class, although POLSCI 160 (Introduction to Security, Peace, and Conflict) is recommended.

## Course Requirements

*Readings*

The best way to succeed in this course is to come prepared to lecture having done the readings. All readings are available on Canvas. There are no textbooks to purchase for this course.

*Attendance & Quizzes*

To incentivize attendance and engagement, there will be six short quizzes at the beginning of class dispersed throughout the semester. These will be roughly 5-10 minute quizzes that will simulate the multiple choice and short answer questions on the exams. The purpose of the quizzes is three-fold: (1) make sure you're coming to lecture, (2) check if you've been doing the assigned reading, and (3) prep for the exams. Of course, life happens, and there are days you may miss class. To account for

this, only your best 5 of 6 quizzes are factored into your final grade. You do not need to notify us if you miss a quiz.

If you are sick or would like an excused absence because of extenuating circumstances, you have two options:

- Skip the quiz and count it as one of your two “missed” quizzes.
- Write a 1-2 page reading response (single-spaced) summarizing and critically engaging with at least one reading from the class you missed. To qualify for this option, you must:
  1. Notify your TA via email that you will not be attending class before class begins. You are not able to write a makeup reading response if you know that a pop quiz has already happened.
  2. Submit your completed reading response via email before the next lecture. Your reading response does not count if it’s later than that.

### *Exams*

In the past, this class primarily had out-of-class written assignments. Because we are all adapting to a new world of AI, the political science department advises that mid-size and large-size lecture courses largely move to in-class exams. This class will have three in-class exams: two midterms and one final exam. Both exams will take place in person and test your knowledge of the readings and lectures.

- **Midterm #1 (Thursday, September 25):** This exam will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions that tests content in Unit 1.
- **Midterm #2 (Tuesday, November 4):** This exam will be an essay exam that is a mix of multiple choice and one longer essay question that tests content in Unit 2.
- **Final Exam (Thursday, December 11 at 2pm):** This exam will be a cumulative exam that is a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and long essay that tests content in Units 1-3.

The exam takes place in person, and there are no alternative date options, so please make travel arrangements for winter break accordingly.

### **Major Due Dates**

Below are the major due dates for this class. If you do not submit assignments by the due date at the beginning of class, your grade is subject to reduction by one “letter step” grade (i.e., A to A-, A- to B+) for every 24 hours past the due date. Because life happens, you can submit any 1 of the 2 writing assignments (proposal or final paper) up to 24 hours late with no grade penalty and no questions asked. You do not need to notify us when you elect to take this option.

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	GRADE PERCENT
Quizzes (best 5 of 6)	In class, randomly	15%
Midterm #1 (in class)	Thursday, September 25	25%
Midterm #2 (in class)	Tuesday, November 4	25%
Final Exam (in class)	Thursday, December 11 (2pm)	35%

## Grades

Your TA will be your grader in this course. The grades on your exams are final. We do not consider regrade requests except in the case of a clerical error (i.e., a multiple-choice question was marked incorrectly). This course uses a normal 7-point letter grading scale, and A's are reserved for truly exceptional work. Each exam will receive a letter grade that corresponds to the following:

Grade	Percentage	Meaning
A	93-100	Exceptional
A-	90-92	Excellent
B+	87-89	Great
B	83-86	Good
B-	80-82	Above Average
C-Range	70-79	Satisfactory
D-Range	60-69	Poor
F	Below 60	Failure

## Accommodations

If you are in need of accommodations for exams, please ensure that you are registered with the Student Disability Access Office ([access.duke.edu](http://access.duke.edu)) and have informed your TA well in advance of assignment due dates. If you require accommodated exams taken at the Duke Testing Center ([testingcenter.duke.edu](http://testingcenter.duke.edu)), please note that you are in charge of scheduling your exam in the testing center. The Testing Center policy is that students should schedule their exam at least one week in advance. Since exam dates and times are set for this course, we recommend scheduling as early as possible to guarantee space in the Testing Center.

## Availability & Office Hours

For quick questions about course logistics, please check the syllabus before sending an email. For extended questions, please come to office hours or speak with us directly before or after class.

Professor Myrick's office hours are 1:30-3:30pm on Thursdays. You can meet with her in person at 204J Gross Hall or virtually on Zoom. In order to accommodate both in-person and virtual office hours, please sign up for a slot in advance at: [www.calendly.com/rmmyrick/office-hours](http://www.calendly.com/rmmyrick/office-hours).

Your TA (Ying Chi) holds office hours from 1:00-3:00pm on Tuesdays in the political science graduate student cubicles in the second floor of Gross Hall (near Professor Myrick's office). Your TA can be available to go through your exam with you and discuss strategies for improvement.

## Academic Integrity

We take academic integrity extremely seriously. There is a zero-tolerance policy for cheating and/or plagiarism in this course. Students are expected to be familiar with the Duke Community Standard and with what constitutes academic plagiarism (<https://plagiarism.duke.edu/>). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to speak with us about it.

## Readings & Course Schedule

### 8/26: *What is international security, and how can we study it?*

- Blankshain & Stigler. 2020. “Apply Method to Madness: A User’s Guide to Causal Inference in Policy Analysis.” *Texas National Security Review*.
- Drezner. 2024. “How Everything Became National Security and National Security Became Everything.” *Foreign Affairs*.

### Unit 1: Causes and Consequences of International Conflict<sup>1</sup>

#### 8/28: *Why are THEY fighting? (States, the State System, & Non-State Actors)*

- Lake. 2008. “The State and International Relations.” *Oxford Handbook of International Relations*.
- Axworthy. 2001. “Human Security and Global Governance.” *Global Governance*.
- Khong. 2001. “Human Security: A Shotgun Approach to Alleviating Human Misery?” *Global Governance*.
- *Case: Thirty Years War (1618-1648)*

#### 9/2: *WHY are they fighting? (Part I: Anarchy, Security & Power)*

- Mearsheimer. 2001. Excerpt from *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.
- Gilpin. 1988. “The Theory of Hegemonic War.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (pg. 591-610)
- Excerpt from “The Melian Dialogue” by Thucydides.
- *Case: Peloponnesian War (431-405 BCE)*

#### 9/4: *WHY are they fighting? (Part II: Racism & Imperialism)*

- DuBois. 1915. Excerpt from “The African Roots of War.” *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- Kramer. 2006. Excerpts from “Race-Making and Colonial Violence in the US Empire: The Philippine-American War as a Race War.” *Diplomatic History*.
- Zvobgo and Loken. 2020. “Why Race Matters in International Relations.” *Foreign Policy*.
- *Case: Philippine-American War (1899-1902)*

#### 9/9: *WHY are they fighting? (Part III: Ethnicity & Nationalism)*

- Anderson. 1983. Excerpt from *Imagined Communities*.
- Schraeder. 2006. “From Irredentism to Secession: The Decline of Pan-Somali Nationalism.” In *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*.
- *Case: Ogaden War (1977-1978)*

#### 9/11: *WHY are they fighting? (Part IV: Territory)*

- Goemans and Schultz. 2017. “The Politics of Territorial Claims.” *International Organization*.
- *Case: Border Disputes on the African Continent*

#### 9/16: *Why are they FIGHTING? (Part I: Rationalist Explanations)*

- Lake. 2010. “Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory.” *International Security* (p. 7-40 only).
- *Case: Iraq War (2003-2011)*

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<sup>1</sup> The structure of Unit 1 is inspired by Professor Ken Schultz at Stanford University.

**9/18:** Why are they FIGHTING? (Part II: Domestic Politics Explanations)

- **DUE: Pick Conflict for Research Paper**
- Lake. 2010. “Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory.” *International Security* (pg. 40-43 only).
- Fravel. 2010. “The Limits of Diversion: Rethinking Internal and External Conflict.” *Security Studies* (pg. 308-335 only)
- Cases: *Falklands War (1982)*

**9/23:** Why are they FIGHTING? (Part III: Behavioral Explanations)

- Lake. 2010. “Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory.” *International Security* (pg. 43-52 only).
- Levy. 1983. “Misperception and the Causes of War: Theoretical Linkages and Analytical Problems.” *World Politics* (pg. 76-93 only).
- Case: *The Seven Years War (1756-1763)*

**9/25: Midterm #1 (In Class).**

- This midterm is a mix of multiple choice and short answer, focused on Unit 1.

**9/30:** How Conflicts End

- Quackenbush. 2021. “Outcomes and Consequences of War.” In Mitchell and Vasquez, *What Do We Know About War?*
- Lough 2024. “Four Scenarios for the End of the War in Ukraine.” *Chatham House Briefing Paper*.
- Case: *Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871)*

## Unit 2: Factors Affecting International Cooperation and Conflict

**10/2:** The decline of interstate war and the “better angels” hypothesis

- Mueller. 2009. Excerpts from “War Has Almost Ceased to Exist.” *Political Science Quarterly*.
- Pinker. 2011. “Violence Vanquished.” *Wall Street Journal*.
- Hathaway and Shapiro. 2025. “Might Unmakes Right: The Catastrophic Collapse of Norms Against the Use of Force.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Case: *Austro-Sardinian War (1859)*

**10/7:** The Structure of the International System

- Waltz. 1964. “The Stability of a Bipolar World.” *Daedulus* (pg. 881-887 only).
- Monteiro 2011. “Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity is Not Peaceful.” *International Security*.
- Case: *Crimean War (1853-1856)*

**10/9:** Nuclear Weapons & Deterrence

- Jervis. 1986. “The Nuclear Revolution and the Common Defense.” *Political Science Quarterly*.
- Mueller. 2018. “Nuclear Weapons Don’t Matter.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Tannenwald. 2022. “Is Using Nuclear Weapons Still Taboo?” *Foreign Policy*.
- Narang and Vaddi. 2025. “How to Survive the New Nuclear Age.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Cases: *The Cold War (1947-1991)*

**10/14:** No Class [Fall Break].

**10/16: Regime Type**

- Rosato. 2003. “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory.”
- Slantchev et al. 2005. “Probabilistic Causality, Selection Bias, and the Logic of the Democratic Peace.”
- Kinsella. 2005. “No Rest for the Democratic Peace.” *American Political Science Review*.
- Doyle. 2005. “Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace.” *American Political Science Review*.
- *Case: Kargil War (1999)*

**10/21: Economic Interdependence (Part I: Development & Globalization)**

- Humphreys. 2003. “Economics and Violent Conflict,” Sections I & II (p. 1-8 only)
- Walter. 2021. “The Backlash Against Globalization.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Levy. 2003. “Economic Interdependence, Opportunity Costs, and Peace.” In Mansfield & Pollins, *Economic Interdependence and International Conflict*.
- *Case: Franco-British Relations and the Entente Cordiale (1904)*

**10/23: Economic Interdependence (Part II: Economic Coercion)**

- Byrne 2020. “Panopticons and Chokepoints.” Interview in *The Wilson Quarterly*.
- Crescenzi & Gent. 2021. *Market Power Politics*, Ch. 5 (pg. 94-124 only).
- Kilcrease and Gertz. 2025. “Tell Me How This Trade War Ends.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- *Case: Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait (1990)*

**10/28: International Organizations & International Law**

- Fortna. 2004. “Interstate Peacekeeping.” *World Politics* (pg. 481-502 only).
- Dannenbaum. 2020. “ICC Prosecutor Symposium: Against Modesty at the ICC.” *Opinio Juris*.
- Ba. 2021. “A Truly International Criminal Court.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Taub. 2025. “Duterte’s Arrest Shows Power and Limits of the International Criminal Court.” *The New York Times*.
- *Case: The Football War (1969)*

**10/30: Normative Change & Ethics of Warfare**

- Finnemore. 1996. Extract from “Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention.” In Katzenstein’s (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identities in World Politics*.
- Carpenter. 2011. “Vetting the Advocacy Agenda: Network Centrality and the Paradox of Weapons Norms.” *International Organization* (pgs. 69-92 only).
- *Case: Libyan Intervention (2011)*

**11/4: Midterm Exam #2 (In-Class)**

- *This midterm is a mix of multiple choice and a long essay, focused on Unit 2.*

**Unit 3: Contemporary Threats to International Security**

**11/6: Great Power Politics**

- Brands and Cooper. 2019. “After the Responsible Stakeholder, What Next? Debating America’s China Strategy.” *Texas National Security Review*.

- Pottinger and Gallagher. 2024. “No Substitute for Victory: America’s Competition: America’s Competition With China Must Be Won, Not Managed.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Responses to Pottinger and Gallagher in “Forum: What Does America Really Want from China?” 2024. *Foreign Affairs*.
- *Case: Contemporary US-China Rivalry*

#### **11/11: Terrorism**

- Huff & Kertzer. 2018. “How the Public Defines Terrorism.” *AJPS* (pg. 55-65 only).
- Kydd & Walter. 2006. “The Strategies of Terrorism.” *International Security*.
- *Case: Boko Haram in Nigeria (2009-?)*

#### **11/13: Environmental Security**

- Mach et al. 2019. “Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict.” *Nature*.
- Schmidt et al. 2021. “Climate bones of contention: How climate variability influences territorial, maritime, and river interstate conflicts.” *Journal of Peace Research*.
- “How Climate Change Threatens National Security.” 2024. *Council on Foreign Relations*.
- *Case: War of the Pacific (1879-1883)*

#### **11/18: Infectious Disease & Global Health Security**

- Gingerich & Vogler. 2021. “What the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Plague Tells Us About How Covid Will Change Politics.”
- Brands, Feaver, & Inboden. 2020. “Maybe It Won’t Be So Bad: A Modestly Optimistic Take on Covid and World Order.” In Brands & Gavin, *Covid-19 and World Order*.
- Zelikow. 2023. “How America Lost the COVID-19 War.” *Time Magazine*.
- *Case: Global responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic*

#### **11/20: Polarization & Democratic Backsliding**

- Levitsky and Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*, Introduction & Chapter 1.
- Brownlee and Miao. 2022. “Why Democracies Survive.” *Journal of Democracy*.
- McCoy and Press. 2022. “What Happens When Democracies Become Perniciously Polarized?” Report from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- *Case: Contemporary US Politics*

#### **11/25: No Class [Thanksgiving Break]**

#### **12/2: Emerging Technologies (Cyber Warfare, Information Warfare, and Artificial Intelligence)**

- Kostyuk and Gartzke. 2022. “Why Cyber Dogs Have Yet to Bark Loudly in Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine.” *Texas National Security Review*.
- Kreps and Kriner. 2023. “How AI Threatens Democracy.” *Journal of Democracy*.
- *Case: Russian Information Warfare*

#### **12/4: Course Summary + Exam Review Session**

#### **12/11: Final Exam from 2-4pm in class**

- *The final exam is a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and long essay that covers Units 1-3.*