

POSC172: Introduction to International Relations

Professor Pete W. Moore

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Course Objectives:

This course aims to introduce major bodies of theory concerning cooperation, conflict, and power in the international system. In a setting characterized by political heterogeneity and economic inequality, how can the actions of states be understood and compared? POSC 172 seeks to answer this question by exploring theory and applying it to historical and contemporary examples.

The first half of the course focuses on power, states, and war. In the second half, we exam the role of the US in the world, revolution, and global crises. We will not be able to cover every part of the world, but we will engage important debates and topics of international concern.

Vigorous debate and criticism are encouraged. Debate expressed in a civil tone is an important way to get a fuller and more truthful picture of something, in our case global politics. This is not only a fundamental democratic right and a basic citizenship skill; it is essential to interpreting information and making good policy. Rights not used are easily lost.

Assignments:

1.	Class Exam (week 6)	25%
2.	Essay (week 12)	25%
3.	Participation	10%
4.	Final Essay	40%

Grades are rendered as raw points (i.e., 15.7/20). There is no “rounding up” final grades.
< 59 F, 60-69 D, 70-79 C, 80-89 B, 90 > A

Class exam will be given during week 6. It will be comprised of short answer questions focused on the previous weeks’ readings and lectures on power and states.

An essay will be assigned and due during week 12. This essay will come as part of a class simulation about modern revolution.

Participation during simulation week will be graded in terms of the simulation groups.

A final essay will be assigned and **due on the last day of class**.

Classroom and University Policies:

- *Please have all readings for a given week available during class.
- *Laptops and other electronic devices should only be used for notes and reference to readings.
- *At this time, I am **not allowing** the use of any Artificial Intelligence tools for course assignments.
- *During the semester, 3 absences will be allowed. Any excess absences will require appropriate documentation.
- * In accordance with federal law, if you have a documented disability, you may be eligible to request accommodations from Disability Resources. In order to be considered for accommodations, you must first register with the [Disability Resources office](#).
- *Students at Case Western Reserve University are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards of academic conduct. Academic integrity addresses all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, obstruction, and submitting without permission work to one course that was completed for another course. Please review [the complete academic integrity policy](#). Any violation of the policy will be reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards.

THEMES AND SCHEDULES

Week 1 Introduction (to Poly Crisis)

8/28-30 Brown University's *Cost of War* (Please look through this project site and the different ways to calculate and visualize the costs of recent wars)

Adam Tooze, "Defining polycrisis - from crisis pictures to the crisis matrix."

Adam Tooze, "Welcome to the World of Poly Crisis," *Financial Times*, 28 October 2022

Week 2 Concepts and Debates: One of the great debates of international politics centers on what constitutes political power, social order, and their sources. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Arendt, and Scott exemplify strongly contrasting positions on these questions. For these readings and the following weeks also pay attention to political and social assumptions deployed to make the arguments.

9/4 *Labor Day*

9/6 Thomas Hobbes, "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning their Felicity and Misery" in *Leviathan*, Collier Books, 1962

John Locke, *Two Treaties of Government*, **focus on pages 330-334 and 347-348**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Impossibility of Representation," in *The Social Contract* **pages 51-59**

Week 3: Violence, Consent, and Power of the Powerless: How do we understand these important concepts and start to apply them to a global context?

9/11-13 Hanna Arendt, “On Violence” in *On Violence*, Houghton1/21 Mifflin Harcourt, 1970 (**Focus on her conceptions of power, consent, and violence**)

James Scott, “Behind the Official Story” in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, 1992 (**Note: be prepared to discuss Scott’s use of the “Elephant Story”**)

“A Video Mocking a Vietnamese Official’s Lavish Meal Has Landed Its Maker in Prison” *NYT*, May 26, 2023

Week 4 The most powerful as well as the most dangerous political association in the world is the modern state. What is the state and how do we understand its origins and capacities to transform the world? Note the focus here is on the building of European states.

9/18-20 Charles Tilly, “How war made states and vice versa,” in *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 900-1990*, Basil Blackwell, 1990.

Alexander Gerschenkron, “Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective” in *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Belknap Press, 1962. (**Focus on his argument for how Russia, France, and Germany caught up to UK industrialization**)

Suggested:

Hendrik Spruyt, “The Origins, Development, and Possible Decline of the Modern State” *Annual Review of Political Science*

Week 5 Late Development in the Middle East, East Asia, and Latin America: Similar to Europe, the building of states, economies, and social power was deeply intertwined. However, the global context of state building in these parts of the world was quite different than in Europe. How are states engines of social change but also competitive obstacles?

9/25-27 Ian Lustick, “The Absence of a Middle Eastern Great Power: Political ‘Backwardness’ in Historical Perspective” *International Organization* 51:4, Autumn 1997

Richard Doner, Bryan Ritchie and Dan Slater, “Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective” *International Organization* 59:2 (Spring 2005)

Marcus Kurtz, 2009. “The Social Foundations of Institutional Order: Reconsidering War and the ‘Resource Curse’ in Third World State Building,” *Politics and Society* 37 (4), pp. 479-520.

Week 6 Old Wars and New Wars

10/2 **Exam**

10/4 Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 1-32.

Stephanie Savell on the Millions of Indirect Deaths Caused by the Post-9/11 Wars (podcast interview)

Week 7 Conflict in Africa and the Middle East: Global conflict and violence varies in type and intensity. We look at debates about conflict in Africa and the Middle East. And we start to reconsider the concept of PolyCrisis as we bring in political legacies of racism and colonialism.

10/9-11 Robert Jackson and Carl Rosenberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist," *World Politics* (October 1982) **Focus on page 12 to conclusion. Note this is an old article with some "antiqued" language to categorize African states.**

Toby Jones, "America, Oil, and War in the Middle East," *The Journal of American History*, (June 2012).

Mahmood Mamdani, "Beyond Native and Settler as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism" *Society for Comparative of Society and History* (2001)

Week 8 Humanitarian Intervention from Africa to the Middle East: Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, the US undertook a series of military interventions animated by humanitarian concerns. We examine some of the debates around these interventions and their costs.

10/16-18 Samantha Power, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, New York: Basic Books, 2002, pp. xi-xxi, 503- 516. (Consider/skim the entire chapter on Rwanda)

Stephen Wertheim, "A Solution from Hell: The United States and the Rise of Humanitarian Interventionism, 1991–2003," *Journal of Genocide Research* 12 (3-4), pp. 149-172

Jason Brownlee, "Can the US Nation Build?" *World Politics*

Suggested: Marilyn B. Young, "Bombing Civilians: From the Twentieth to the Twenty-First Centuries," *Making the Forever War: On the Culture and Politics of American Militarism*

Asli Bali and Aziz Rana, "The US Debt to Syria," *Boston Review*, August 15, 2018

Week 9 **Fall Break: Tying together the week on African politics and external powers, we will watch a documentary.**

10/25 *The Ambassador*

Week 10 **Is the US an Empire? A Hegemon? Global politics has been dominated by the United States, but is it a modern empire? How should we understand how the US acts on the world?**

10/30-11/1 Max Boot, "American Imperialism? No need to run away from label," USA Today, 5/5/2003 (see also Max Boot, "The Democrats need a new foreign policy," Washington Post, 26 December 2018)

Tony Judt, "Dreams of Empire," *New York Review of Books*, 11/4/2004

Noam Chomsky, "Imperial Grand Strategy," in *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*. New York: Basic Books, 2006

Financial Times Special, "Rise of the Middle Powers"

Suggested: Daniel Nexon, "What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate,"

Week 11 **One of the most consequential forms of political opposition at the global level is Revolution (and Counter Revolution). What is a successful social revolution? What are the powers and politics that impedes such movements?**

11/6-8 Hannah Arendt, "The Meaning of Revolution," in *On Revolution* (Viking Press, 1963) **Focus on the sections up to page 40**

Samuel Huntington, "Revolution and Political Order," in *Political Order and Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, 1968

Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?" *Comparative Politics*, April 1973 (selection)

Fred Halliday, "Counter Revolution," in *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*

Suggested:

Vivienne Matthies-Boon "Trauma as a Counterrevolutionary Strategy," *MERIP* (Fall/Winter 2019)

Week 12 **Revolution Simulation: This week we undertake a team simulation about modern revolution.**

11/13-15 Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence," in *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 35-95

Hannah Arendt, "The Meaning of Revolution" (Reprise previous Arendt chapter and focus on what she sees as the role of violence)

Suggested: Frazer and Hutchings, "On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon," **focus, pp. 102-106.**

Week 12	Poly Crisis: War, Health, and the Environment (Thanksgiving Week)
11/20-22	<p>Ghassan Abu Sittah, Omar Dewachi, Nabil Al-Tikriti "The Evolution of Conflict Medicine in the Middle East – An Interview with Ghassan Abu Sittah," <i>Middle East Report</i> 297 (Winter 2020).</p> <p>Kali Rubaii "Birth Defects and the Toxic Legacy of War in Iraq," <i>Middle East Report</i> 296 (Fall 2020).</p> <p>Jan Selby "On Blaming Climate Change for the Syrian Civil War," <i>Middle East Report</i> 296 (Fall 2020).</p>
Week 13	Global Democracy: How should we understand modern democracy and its crises? Our initial discussions of power prefaced this question, but we now put it in a global context.
11/27-29	<p>Adam Przeworski, "Minimalist conception of democracy: a defense" Focus on pages 31-33 and 43-50</p> <p>Lisa Wedeen, "The Limits of a Formalist Account," in <i>Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen</i>, pp. 105-113.</p> <p>Steve Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 13 (April 2002)</p> <p><i>Suggested:</i> Phillipe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is...and is Not," <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, (Summer 1991)</p> <p>Patrick Kingsley, "On the Surface, Hungary Is a Democracy. But What Lies Underneath?" <i>NYT</i>, December 25, 2018</p>
Week 14	Final Week
12/4-6	<p>TBA</p> <p>Final Essay Due</p>