



Political Science 2231E (570)
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS Fall/ Winter 2026-2027
SYLLABUS FOR FALL 2026

Instructor: B. Muller (Fall 2026); E. Hannah (Winter 2027)

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Mode of Instruction: in-person

Calendar Description:

This course surveys contemporary world politics and examines contending theories used by scholars and policymakers to make sense of international affairs. It also provides the conceptual tools and theories to interpret the international system.

Antirequisite(s) at Main campus, King's campus: Political Science 2131, Political Science 2231W/X, Political Science 2531F/G, Political Science 2532F/G. **Antirequisite(s)** at Huron Campus: Political Science 2131, Political Science 2231W/X.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 Political Science course(s) at the 1000-level.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 1.00

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: POLISCI

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no antirequisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees if you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

POLITICAL SCIENCE 2231E – INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
King's University College
Fall – Winter 2026-27

Time & Location: See Brightspace Page

Instructor (Fall 2026): Benjamin J. Muller, PhD

Email: bmuller@uwo.ca

Office Hours: <https://calendly.com/bmuller/new-meeting> [This link allows students to schedule a meeting time on Zoom or in-person]

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to global politics and the academic discipline of International Relations (IR). The course will be taught by Dr. Muller in the Fall 2026 semester, and Dr. Hannah in the Winter 2027 semester. There will be significant connections between the two semesters; however, in terms of materials and assessments, they will operate separately. **This course outline strictly addresses the Fall 2026 semester.** You will receive a new course outline for the Winter 2027 semester when you begin in January. The Brightspace page will remain the same throughout academic year.

The Fall 2026 semester is organized in three parts. **Part I** focuses on the current crisis of both global politics and the academic discipline of IR, as well as the ways politics in the world and the academic study of IR are connected. **Part II** goes back in time, tracing the evolution of the academic discipline of IR over the course of the 20th century. Finally, **Part III** considers the persistent challenges faced by IR from within and without, and its struggle to contend with failure and crisis both in global politics and in the academic discipline.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the origins and evolution of the discipline of International Relations;
- Identify and understand current global politics in historical context;
- Understand critically how theories of International Relations have influenced politics in our world, both historically and in the present;
- Understand the multitude of methodological and epistemological tools that are used to generate and construct knowledge about global politics and the impacts of those truth claims.
- Systematically apply key concepts, ideas, and theoretical paradigms within the social sciences to the study of historical and contemporary global politics and their societal, political, and economic impacts.
- Develop, enhance, hone, and apply critical thinking skills.
- Develop, enhance, hone, and apply critical writing skills.
- Develop, enhance, hone, and apply professional communication skills.

Grading

A+ >90%	Giddy up! This is excellent! Well Done.
A >80%	Extremely good. You're working hard and the work is paying off.
B 70-79%	Very Good work at this level of university; Mostly exceeds expectations.
C 60-69%	Satisfactory work; Average; You did what you had to do, but likely neither you nor I are not overly excited with it.
D 50-59%	Subpar. This is a big reason why I have office hours, so let's chat to facilitate improvement.
F <49%	Oops. It's obvious that there is a problem unless this was the result of a careless error in judgement. Let's work together to get you on track for success in your future assignments and assessments. Alternatively, Go on, Git!

Required Texts

There is **no textbook** for this course. Readings will be linked and/or provided through Brightspace. Students are, however, responsible for completing an oral book review from a list that will be provided in the first few weeks of class. These texts may be available in the library or electronically online, and/or available for purchase through publishers and booksellers.

Course Requirements and Evaluation (These assignments total 100% of your grade for the Autumn Semester, totaling 50% of your overall grade for 2231E):

Assignment	Value	Date
Tutorial Thursdays	15	Ongoing
Jigsaws (3 x 5% = 15%)	15	1 Oct; 29 Oct; 26 Nov
In-Class Mid-Term Test	20	27 October 2026
Oral Book Review	20	Appointments 1-8 Dec 2026
December Exam	30	December Exam Period (Dec 2026)

Format (In-Person)

This course involves one **2-hour lecture** period per week on Tuesdays and a **1-hour tutorial** session on Thursdays, for a total of **3 hours per week**. To successfully complete this course, students are required to attend both the lecture and tutorial. As much as is possible, lectures and tutorials will generally be interactive, involve Jigsaw exercises, debates and discussion, think-pair-share, writing workshops, and so on. Lectures will involve student engagement, but will focus on key concepts, ideas, theories, cases, to give students the tools necessary to both understand the foundations of the interdisciplinary field of International Relations and empower students to recognize and critically engage with the shortcomings of the field and transformative alternatives.

Students are also expected to stay up to date with current global affairs. To remain current, students are encouraged to consult **reputable** media sources (namely, TikTok or syndicated eye candy with little to no editorial oversight from the US masquerading as "news" are **not** reputable sources aka FOX News, etc.). Here are some ideas, but this is not exhaustive: *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Monocle's "The Globalist"*; *The Guardian*; *The Economist*; *The Globe & Mail*; *The Conversation*; *Al Jazeera English*; *Council on Foreign*

Relations; Reuters; The New Yorker Magazine; The New York Times; Foreign Affairs; and many others – if you're unsure, raise it in class, as this is a great exercise for us to ascertain the reliability of a source.

Tutorial Participation/ Discussion [15% of Fall Semester Grade]

Your participation grade is derived from several contributions. **Participation is mandatory**, and success in participation or in the course is not possible without full engagement with the material. Everyone has one “freebie”, where your attendance/engagement in a tutorial session will be overlooked. However, more than one absence – and in our environment, absence can also mean lack of engagement and not solely physical absence – will have negative results. Academic counsellors will provide the necessary accommodations for medical or other issues and please notify your instructor of the accommodation. You are encouraged to speak with your instructor about concerns at any time during the semester so we can create plans for your success and avoid problems, when and if we can. Life happens, I get it, but let's try and figure things out so you can thrive.

Marks will be awarded for raising questions and concerns pertinent to the assigned required readings, expressing cogent arguments, and general participation in the discussion that demonstrates some comprehension and critical engagement in the required material covered for that specific session. Talking to fill time and space will not result in positive marks. **Before coming to class, specifically tutorial, students should read, view, and/or listen to the appropriate material listed in the syllabus, and consider the following before attending the seminar: what is the primary argument? What is particularly compelling and/ or relevant about the material? What kind of epistemological and ontological assumptions are made by the author(s)? Attempt to critically evaluate the internal and external logic of the argument(s) presented; reflect on the broader implications for the themes in our course; and raise at least two interesting and provocative discussion questions.**

Jigsaws 15% [1 Oct; 29 Oct; 26 Nov]

A jigsaw exercise is a collaborative learning strategy where students become "experts" on one part of a topic and then share their knowledge with peers. A handout is provided for each Jigsaw exercise, available in the Jigsaw tab on Brightspace. The jigsaw information will be provided **one week in ahead of the scheduled jigsaw**. Please come to class on the Jigsaw Thursday, prepared to present your assigned topic to your peers. You will be placed in small groups with students who have become experts on different topics, and you will present and share your expertise respectively with the members of your group. **Students are required to complete a “jigsaw self-evaluation”** after each jigsaw. These self-evaluations are due **one week after the scheduled jigsaw**. However, **no late penalties will be applied, so long as jigsaw self-evaluations are submitted before the last class on 8 December**.

More specific details and guidance will be provided in the Jigsaw tab on Brightspace.

In-Class Mid-Term Test [20% of Fall Semester Grade]:

The mid-term test will take place during class time on 27 October 2026. The test will cover material from the course readings, lectures, and tutorials. Additional information, including a test review and format, will be provided to students prior to the test date. Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent. Make-up date: November 6th, 2026.

Final Exam [30% of Fall Semester Grade]

The final exam will be scheduled during the December examination period. I have no control over the date of our December exam; therefore, please do not schedule travel until the exam schedule is published.

This will be a closed book written essay exam. Students are required to answer 3 essay questions on the final exam. During our last class in December, students will be provided with 5 or 6 essay questions from which the 3 questions that end up being on the final exam will be chosen.

Final Exam Notes

A student may be debarred from the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. * On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. (This statement is included in the policy pages.)

** Due warning means that the instructor has advised the student in writing/email of the nature of the unsatisfactory performance (i.e. absent too frequently from class), and the consequence of continued unsatisfactory performance (i.e. if another class is missed, the instructor will advise the department and request the student be debarred from writing the final exam).*

Submission Guidelines & Late Policy

There is no need to submit paper copies of any assignment, other than the final exam. All other assignments should be submitted in electronic form via Brightspace. The Professor reserves the right to use plagiarism and AI detection software. Please include your name, the course number, your section number, the instructor's name, and your TA's name at the top of the first page. A title page is not necessary. **Word limits include references. APA or Harvard style referencing is necessary.** If you have questions or concerns about citations, please ask, and/or avail yourself of the excellent support at [The Write Place](#). ***Unless otherwise noted in the syllabus, late assignments will require official accommodations or an application of the academic considerations policy. There is plenty of flexibility in both types of assessment and submission deadlines; if this is insufficient, please speak with me.***

PLEASE NOTE: Further information on academic dishonesty and the use of AI is attached, and more information will be provided on Brightspace and discussed in our first class.

Final Notes

In this course, we will cover challenging and sometimes emotional and controversial material. This will demand your attention, commitment, patience, passion, and attentiveness. Along with a reasonable amount of reading and writing, I hope everyone learns to listen better, realizing how much more there is to know on any given topic, and move towards more clearly articulating your ideas. I can direct you to a series of policies and standards, and contacts for support, etc., which I will obviously make available on Brightspace. However, I want to emphasize a few important points here that I want you to keep in mind throughout the semester.

As someone whose research areas include technology, surveillance and security, I'm intimately aware of Artificial Intelligence: both its capabilities and its limitations. We will discuss this further in class, but the most essential question you need to ask yourself is: Why are you here and what you wish to gain from your experience at university? I will be with you for the entire semester, and I'm passionate about the material we cover in this course and committed to your engagement and success. I also realize it's not 1992, 1967, or 1885, so I'm conscious of the fact that technology is not something we can or ought to avoid or shut ourselves from.

I hope that together, we can learn to manage and harness technology and be infected with a passion for the material we cover in the course – at least some of it or some aspects of it. Part of your job is to discover your specific passion. My purpose here is also to facilitate your success; Never forget this. If at any time material, assignments, etc. seem overwhelming, if you're having trouble, you're unclear about what we're doing, where we're headed, what the readings or assignments are about, please reach out and speak with me. Challenges, problems, the temptation of AI, and a range of difficulties from in the classroom and beyond are a part of life and a part of an undergraduate education. My hope is that together we can navigate these challenges and have a rewarding and inspiring time together.

PLEASE NOTE: All other policies and handouts associated with this class are located on the course Brightspace page.

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of

such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:
<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can

contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports - TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or

not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.