

# POLS 389: International Law and Organization

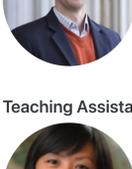
M/W 12:30-1:45 | DuSable 348 | Dr. Ches Thurber

MODIFIED  
September 5, 2023

## Key Course Info

- **TOPIC:** This course covers the subfield of international relations that focuses on international law, international organizations, and global governance.
- **MODALITY:** This is an in-person course that meets twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30-1:45 in DuSable 348. Attendance is **required**.
- **CREDITS:** 3 credit hours. The course counts toward the Political Science major and the degree emphasis in International Politics
- **ASSESSMENTS:** Major assessments consist of a midterm exam, participation in simulation activities, and writing assignments related to those simulations.
- **PREREQUISITES:** None! Students at all levels and from all majors are encouraged to enroll!
- **MATERIALS:** Students are required to obtain access to three books. Rental and used prices total \$30-\$50 and library options are available for some texts as well.

## Instructor



**Dr. Ches Thurber**

- 📍 414 Zulauf Hall
- ✉️ [cthurber@niu.edu](mailto:cthurber@niu.edu)
- 🕒 Office Hours: M/W 9:30 - 11:00 am
- 📅 [Schedule an appointment](#)

## Teaching Assistant



**Titik Firawati**

- 👤 Ph.D. Candidate (ABD)
- ✉️ [tfirawati@niu.edu](mailto:tfirawati@niu.edu)

## What is this course about?

Is international law a joke? If there are no police, no jail, and no consistent means of enforcement, is it really law at all? And what about international institutions? Do they really have an impact on the world, or are they just, as one American politician put it, “debating societies”? These questions will be the heart of this course. In the big picture, we will evaluate how effective the effort to build a system of international laws and organizations has been in promoting global cooperation. In the process, we will examine the main principles of international law as well as some of the most prominent international institutions. Issues of war, peace, and human rights will receive special attention in the second half of the course. The class includes a series of simulations of the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council.

## What will you learn in this course?

In this class, you will become familiar with major debates in international relations about the effectiveness of international law and institutions. You will also become familiar with several key legal concepts and how they have been applied to historical cases. You will also develop insights into the “behind the scenes” work of professional international lawyers, diplomats, and foreign aid workers.

I am not a lawyer, and this is not a formal law course like you would take in law school. We will learn legal concepts, cases, and precedents, and even practice some legal writing and argumentation through simulations. But, in the liberal arts tradition, I am interested not just in the specific legal knowledge you acquire, but the skills you develop that you will use in your professional careers (law or otherwise) and as engaged public citizens. There will a strong emphasis on building logical arguments, and backing up those arguments with evidence—a skill that is central to careers in law, business, and public policy.

## How will the class run?

This will be an in-person class with required attendance. In addition to weekly readings, you will contribute to a weekly discussion board and take a weekly reading quiz.

### Stay on track!

Attendance and active participation in class discussions is *required*. It is essential that you come to class having completed the readings and ready to participate in discussion every class period.

## How can you contact me?

Please feel free to email me or the course teaching assistant, Titik Firawati, at any time. We will try to respond within about 24 hours during the week. I will be holding office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays between 9:30 and 11:00. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this; since we don't have class in person, this is the best chance I have to get to know you! Sign up for an appointment at [this link](#). Enter your NIU email address and Calendly will automatically set up a Teams meeting for the two of us at the time that you selected.

## What Materials Do You Need?

The required textbooks for the course are:

- **David L. Bosco. *Five to Rule Them All: The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World*. Oxford University Press, 2009.**
  - Currently backordered at the bookstore.
  - Used and new copies available on Amazon [here](#). \$8-\$22
  - Copy available on reserve at the library for 2-hour in-library use.
  - First used in class November 6th.
- **Kenneth Cain, Heidi Postlewaite, and Andrew Thomson. *Emergency Sex and Other Desperate Measures: True Stories from a War Zone*. Ebury, 2006.**
  - Currently backordered at the bookstore. Hasn't arrived in the past.
  - Used and new copies available on Amazon [here](#). \$3-\$22
  - Can be requested via inter-library loan for 2-3 weeks (?).
  - First used in class Nov. 27th.
- **J. Martin Rochester. *Between Peril and Promise: The Politics of International Law*. Sage, 2012.**
  - Currently available at bookstore as an ebook rental for \$25.
  - Used and new copies available on Amazon [here](#). \$26-\$59
  - Immediately needed for class.

## Evaluation

**Class attendance, preparation and participation: (15%):** The time we spend in class is for me the most important of this course. As such, punctual attendance is mandatory. But more important than just being present at a desk is that you are actively engaged. I expect that you have done the readings and that you try to participate in discussion each and every class section. You may miss up to 2 classes during the course of the semester without penalty. Beyond that, I ask that you write a brief 1-page summary of the readings assigned for the missed day as make-up work to receive attendance credit. Make-up reading summaries are due by the beginning of the next class.

**Blackboard Discussion Board Posts (15%):** Beginning in Week 3, by the start of **Monday's class**, students are expected to contribute three posts to the Blackboard discussion board. Posts should be about 80 words in length and engage substantively with the question posed or classmates' responses. Completion of the three posts meeting those standards will result in full credit (100%) for that week.

**Reading Quizzes (10%):** Each week, by the start of **Wednesday's class**, you will have an online reading quiz to complete. It will be a 5-question multiple-choice quiz. You may attempt the quiz twice.

**Midterm Exam: (25%):** There will a midterm held in the seventh week of class. I will provide a list of possible exam questions one week before the exam. I encourage you to work with others to plan your answers in advance, but your work on exam day must be your own, produced without the assistance of books or notes.

**ICJ Case Simulation: Written (15%) and Oral Participation (5%):** In October, we will run a series of mock cases before the International Court of Justice. Each student will be assigned the role of an advocate of a party to the dispute or to that of a justice of the court. Each student will independently write a memorial or a decision of approximately 4 pages (single-spaced) in length. Students will also be evaluated on their oral advocacy in the simulation. Students will have the opportunity to participate either in a simulation that involves a “live” oral arguments session, or one in which they may upload their oral arguments by video at a time of their choosing.

**UNSC Simulation: Participation (5%) and Strategy Memo (10%):** In the last week of the semester and during the exam period, we will run a UN Security Council simulations. You will write an 800-word strategy memo prior to the simulation and participate actively in the simulation. Students participating in the NIU Model UN team can count this in lieu of the UNSC simulation and write their reflection memo on their Model UN experience.

### The work, at a glance

#### Weekly work:

- Reading assigned texts
- 3 Blackboard discussion board posts by Monday's class
- Reading quiz by Wednesday's class

#### Major deliverables:

- Midterm Exam
- ICJ Simulation
- UNSC Simulation

## Model UN Option

I encourage you to consider participating in NIU's Model UN club, for which I am the advisor. We meet one day a week during the semester, and then travel to Chicago on the weekend before Thanksgiving (Nov. 18-21) for a conference. This year, we will be representing the Marshall Islands. This includes a mock International Court of Justice case over the legality of nuclear weapons. Students who choose to participate in Model UN may choose to count the Model UN experience in lieu of the class National Security Council simulation.

## What should you do if you are falling behind?

While it is extremely important that you stick to the weekly schedule of this class, I recognize that stuff happens. The most important thing is that you **communicate** with me about your needs. I respect your privacy and will never ask you for personal details of your situation.

If you think you need to delay submitting a written assignment, please talk to me in advance, if possible, and I will try to be accommodating. Any missed exam or written assignment submitted after the deadline without prior authorization will incur a penalty. If you do miss an assignment, still reach out and we will come up with a plan for getting you back on track. There will be a late penalty, but it will be far better than failing to turn in an assignment altogether.

### If you fall behind ... reach out!

Communicating is the most important thing you can do if you are falling behind. It is natural to feel embarrassed and try to avoid the situation. But this is the worst thing you can do in terms of your success in this course. If you reach out, I will respect your privacy, will not pass judgment, and will work with you to come up with a game plan to get you back on track

## Letter Grade Distribution

Percentage	Letter Grade
> 93.00	A
90.00 - 92.99	A-
87.00-89.99	B+
83.00 - 86.99	B
80.00 - 82.99	B-
77.00-79.99	C+
70.00 - 76.99	C
60.00 - 69.99	D
< 60.00	F

## Course Policies

- **Committed to your success:** Beyond all else, I am committed to all of your success in this class. I encourage *everyone* in the class to reach out to me if there is anything I can do in terms of the delivery of the course that would help you to be more successful. For example, our use of YouTube's transcript feature for lecture videos, and the Sunday (as opposed to Friday) deadline, are all the result of prior student requests.
- **Names and Pronouns:** I ask that my undergraduate students refer to me as either Dr. or Professor Thurber. I'm just old-school that way. I usually use the he/him/this pronouns to refer to myself, but am equally comfortable being referred to with they/them/their. Please let me know how you prefer to be addressed, both in name and pronoun, especially if it differs from what is in the college directory. I will make every effort to address you in the way you wish to be addressed. Please try and do the same for your fellow classmates, as well as for other faculty in the department.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act and Non-Discrimination Statement:** If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or [drc@niu.edu](mailto:drc@niu.edu). Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** I understand that college students may experience a range of academic, social, and personal stresses, which can be overwhelming. You are not alone. Well-being at NIU offers resources, programs, and services. If you or someone you know need assistance with comprehensive or crisis mental health support, Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) at 815-753-1206 is ready to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additionally, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 988.
- **Academic Integrity:** Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

This is an issue I take seriously. Unfortunately, it has increasingly become an issue in my courses. The creation of one's own original work is the core of what a university education is all about. Falsely claiming credit for words or ideas that are not your own undermines that core. I will use software that tracks plagiarism as well as for similarities with classmates' or even your own prior work. When work looks suspicious, I will often use additional measures to identify the original sources of plagiarized text. In this course, academic dishonesty will *always* result in an F on the assignment and a formal misconduct report filed with the university. The recommendation I make in that report (e.g. failure from the course, suspension, expulsion from the community) will depend on the circumstance.

- **Artificial Intelligence:** The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT is not prohibited in this course. However, I highly discourage their use. No doubt, AI will be an important tool for you in the future, and learning it well will be an important skill to acquire. I am not in a position yet to be able to help teach you how best to use AI as a tool because I'm still figuring it out for myself. As of now, I see two major problems: a) AI tools are still very flawed, and you have not yet developed the expertise to decipher when they are producing fraudulent content; and b) I fear that relying on them at this stage of your studies will impede your development of key research and writing skills that you will need to be successful. So with this in mind, I am not banning it per se – there's no penalty for using AI – but you are responsible for the substance of what you submit. If ChatGPT generates incorrect facts, false references, or even plagiarizes, and you use that content in your assignment, you will be penalized just as you would for such infractions without the assistance of AI.

## Class Schedule

Students are expected to read the listed readings before the indicated class session. *BPP* refers to *Between Promise and Peril*.

Topic:	Posted	Assignments
<b>Week 1: Introduction</b>	Aug. 28	Simulation
	Aug. 30	📖 Jacobs, “Opposition to Breast-Feeding Resolution by U.S. Stuns World Health Officials,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2018. 📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 1
<b>Week 2: Law, Institutions, and IR Theory</b>	Sept. 4	Labor Day
	Sept. 6	📖 Snyder, “One World, Many Theories” 📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 2 🕒 Reading Quiz
<b>Week 3: Foundations of International Law</b>	Sept. 11	📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 3
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
<b>Week 4: Human Rights</b>	Sept. 13	📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 4 🕒 Reading Quiz
	Sept. 18	📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 5
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Sept. 20	📖 <i>TBD</i> 🕒 Reading Quiz
Week 5: War and Peace	Sept. 25	📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 6
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Sept. 27	📖 <i>TBD</i> 🕒 Reading Quiz
	<b>Week 6: International Economic Relations</b>	Oct. 2
-		📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Oct.4	📖 CFR, <i>World 101</i> : Trade 📖 CFR, <i>World 101</i> : Monetary Policy 🕒 Reading Quiz
	<b>Week 7: Midterm Week</b>	Oct. 9
Oct. 11		✍️ Midterm Exam
<b>Week 8: The Environment</b>	Oct. 16	📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 8
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Oct. 18	📖 <i>BPP</i> , Ch. 9 📖 <i>TBD</i> 🕒 Reading Quiz
	<b>Week 9: ICJ Mock Cases</b>	Oct. 23
Oct. 25		🕒 ICJ Case #2
<b>Week 10: ICJ Mock Cases</b>	Oct. 30	🕒 ICJ Case #3
	Nov. 1	🕒 ICJ Case #4
<b>Week 11: The UN Security Council</b>	Nov. 6	📖 <i>Five to Rule</i> , Chs. 1-2
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Nov. 8	📖 <i>Five to Rule</i> , Chs. 3-4 🕒 Reading Quiz
<b>Week 12: UNSC II</b>	Nov. 13	📖 <i>Five to Rule</i> , Chs. 5-6
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Nov. 15	📖 <i>Five to Rule</i> , Chs. 7-Conclusion 🕒 Reading Quiz
<b>Week 13: Aid and Intervention</b>	Nov. 20	<i>No Class (Dr. Thurber at Model UN)</i>
	Thanksgiving!	📖 <i>Emergency Sex</i> , First Half
<b>Week 14: Aid and Intervention II</b>	Nov. 27	📖 <i>Emergency Sex</i> , Second Half
	-	📖 Discussion Board Posts
	Nov. 29	🕒 Reading Quiz
	<b>Week 15: UNSC Simulations</b>	Dec. 4
Dec. 6		Simulation Day 2
<b>Finals Week</b>	Dec. 11	Simulation Day 3