

*High School International Relations*

**Course Syllabus 2014-15**

**Course Description**

High School International Relations is an exciting course that focuses on issues of real-world significance. It serves as an introduction to the nature of the international system, drawing on concepts and research methods used by political scientists to understand and explain the historic and current realities of how different states, international organizations, and non-state actors interact globally. The questions posed in international relations thus help us come to a better understanding of how the world works. Why do countries go to war? Why is the United States the world’s dominant power and is China really going to become a challenge to it? Why do some countries get rich while others remain poor? This course provides a set of conceptual and analytical tools that will us uncover the answers to such questions and many more.

**Course Expectations**

International Relations (IR) is a challenging course. Given the rigorous nature of the curriculum, thorough preparation for class is absolutely essential and will be strongly predictive of one’s final results. You are expected to complete all assigned readings and assignments prior to class and to stay up to date with global current events through supplemental readings.

**Course Assessment and Grading**

Students will be required to submit all work online in one of two formats, depending on the assignment. Many written assignments, such as chapter outlines, essays and drafts, and so on, will be submitted using **Google Documents via Google Drive**. Assignments will not be accepted using other document formats (e.g., .doc, .pdf., etc.). Students will also be expected to create and continually update a **website**, which will be used to publish essays, video projects, a reflective blog, and chapter outline syntheses of both the text and the corresponding study guide chapters. Students will receive detailed instructions in class as to how exactly work will be submitted. The website will be worth 20% of the course grade.

Student **participation** in a course of this nature is crucial and will comprise 10% of the course grade.

**Tests and quizzes**, worth 20% of the grade, will be regular features of classroom life and will be structured to help students develop their critical thinking skills, primarily through in-class essay writing. Small **projects**, such as (but not limited to!) maps, posters, presentations, and so on, will make up 20% of the grade. A **Quarterly/Semester Exam** will be worth an additional 10%.

The largest portion of the quarterly mark, 25%, will be based on a **Culminating Activity** that will require considerable research, analysis, critical thinking, and creativity. This assignment will take several weeks to complete each quarter and will challenge students to demonstrate deep understanding of the course curriculum. It will be scaffolded to be submitted in at least three stages, and students will receive and be expected to incorporate descriptive feedback to improve their final product. In Quarter 1, the Culminating Activity will be a **research essay**, and in Quarter 2 it will be a **video project**.

All student work is expected to be completed in a timely manner, respecting all stated deadlines. **Work that is submitted late will lose 10% per school day, and will receive a zero after three days**. Late work will only be excused if a medical or compassionate explanation has been accepted by the school administration. In such cases, it will be the student’s responsibility to get a note from the school office justifying the late submission. Of course, any and all writing may be required to be submitted to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). **Plagiarism** is a serious academic offense and will automatically result in a zero grade as well as further administrative penalties.

In summary, the mark scheme for the course is as follows:

**Tests/Quizzes: 20%**

**Website: 20%**

**Projects: 20%**

**Participation: 10%**

**Quarterly Exam: 10%**

**Culminating Activities: 25%**

**Course Materials**

Students will be expected to use multiple print and online sources. Each student must purchase the following two books at the beginning of the course.

**Text**: Pevehouse and Goldstein (2012)*. International Relations (10th Ed.)*. New York: Pearson Longman.

**Supplemental Readings:** You are expected to access online supplemental readings such as the Economist, BBC News, the New York Times, the Guardian, Al-Jazeera, China Daily, and so on. Additional readings will also be provided.

**Course Outline**

**Unit 1—Evolution of the International System**

*Weeks 1-4: August 25 – September 19*

This unit will provide a broad overview of the development of the international system from 1648 until the present. Students will analyze and critique dominant theories of international relations. The summative assessment will examine the changing nature of the international system in the 21st Century, with a focus on the roles and relationship between the United States and China.

* Pevehouse, Ch. 1, “Globalization of International Relations”
* Thucydides, “Melian Dialogue”
* Pevehouse, Ch. 2-3, “Realist Theories” and “Liberal and Social Theories” (selected sections)
* Supplemental Readings

**Unit 2—Conflict and Peace in the International System**

*Weeks 5-9: September 22 – Oct 24*

This unit will examine the causes and types of conflict in the international system, the use of military force, and terrorism. Students will also analyze the roles and limitations of international law and organizations in peacemaking and peacebuilding. The Culminating Activity will be a case study research paper examining efforts to promote peaceful international relations.

* Pevehouse, Ch. 5-7, “International Conflict,” “Military Force and Terrorism,” and “International Law, Organization, and Human Rights” (selected sections)
* Supplemental Readings

**Week 10 Quarter 1 Exams**: *October 24-30*

**Unit 3—Globalization and Environmental Impacts**

*Weeks 10-13: October 27 – November 21*

This unit will explore the causes, nature, and impacts of technological advancement and economic globalization, and their attendant environmental impacts. The summative assessment will require students to conduct a case study analysis of an environmental issue and explore policy alternatives to promote sustainability.

* **Pevehouse, Ch. 8-9, 11, “International Trade,” “Global Finance and Business,” and “Environment and Population” (selected sections)**
* **Supplemental Readings**

**Unit 4—Global Inequality and International Development**

***Weeks 14-17: November 23 – December 18***

**The final unit will analyze the state of global inequality and poverty in the international system from the colonial era to the present, with a focus on pathways to economic and social development. The Culminating Activity will be a video project comparing policy approaches to international development.**

* **Pevehouse, Ch. 12-13, “The North-South Gap,” and “International Development”**
* **Supplemental Readings**

**Week 18 Final Exam:** *January 5 -9*