



POSC 210: International Relations

Term: Fall 2026

Credits: 3.0

Lecture Times & Location: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30–10:45 a.m., Lovell Hall 130

Modality: In-Person

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Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Dr. Omar Farouk (Assistant Professor of Political Science)
- **Email:** ofarouk@university.alkimi.ai
- **Office:** Lovell Hall 266
- **Office Hours:**
 - Monday & Thursday: 2:00–3:30 p.m. (In person, Lovell Hall 266)
 - Friday: 9:00–10:00 a.m. (Virtual via Zoom; link posted in Canvas)
 - Also available by appointment.

Course Description

Realist, liberal, and constructivist theories of world politics, war and peace, international institutions, the global economy, and human rights. POSC 210 provides a comprehensive theoretical and empirical investigation of the modern international system, interstate relations, and global governance. Students analyze the central paradigms of international relations—realism, liberalism, constructivism, and critical theories—to interrogate questions of war, peace, security, and cooperation. The course explores international security, nuclear proliferation, international political economy (IPE), human rights, international institutions, and contemporary global challenges, including environmental degradation and the rise of multipolar geopolitical competition.

Prerequisites

POSC 101 or POSC 105.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of POSC 210, students will be able to:

1. **Evaluate International Relations Theories:** Apply classical and structural realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and social constructivism to explain interstate conflict and cooperation.
2. **Analyze Causes of War and Security Dilemmas:** Examine structural, domestic, and cognitive causes of interstate and intrastate war, nuclear deterrence dynamics, and asymmetric conflict.
3. **Assess International Institutions and Law:** Evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of international organizations (UN, WTO, IMF) and international legal frameworks in resolving global crises.
4. **Examine International Political Economy:** Analyze the politics of international trade, financial globalization, sovereign debt, and development from mercantilist, liberal, and structuralist perspectives.

5. **Formulate Foreign Policy Strategy:** Author concise, evidence-based policy briefing memos that evaluate geopolitical risks and propose realistic diplomatic solutions.

Required Course Materials & Approximate Costs

1. **John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, eds. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 8th ed., Oxford University Press, 2020.** Approx. \$45 digital rental, \$85 print purchase.
2. **Alkimi International Relations Primary Document & Crisis Simulation Packet.** Free digital access provided via Canvas.
3. **Total estimated cost:** \$45 to \$85.

Generative AI Policy (AI Level 2: AI Permitted with Disclosure for Specified Tasks)

In accordance with Alkimi University Academic Policies (Student Handbook §5.8), POSC 210 operates under **AI Level 2**.

- **What is permitted:** You may use generative AI tools to look up international treaty chronologies, review definitions of international relations theories, and check grammar or formatting on essay drafts.
- **What is prohibited:** You may not use generative AI to write foreign policy crisis memos, compose theoretical comparison essays, formulate diplomatic simulation strategies, or complete examination questions.
- **Disclosure:** All submitted essays and policy memos must include an AI disclosure note detailing any generative AI tools consulted for background research or proofreading.

Grading Components and Weights

- **Midterm Examination:** 20% (In class, Thursday, October 8)
- **International Relations Theory Essay:** 20% (Due Friday, September 25 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Foreign Policy Crisis Memo & Position Paper:** 25% (Due Friday, November 20 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Weekly Global Affairs Responses:** 15% (Weekly short analytical responses to international relations theoretical readings submitted in Canvas on Mondays at 11:59 p.m.; lowest score dropped)
- **Diplomatic Crisis Simulation Participation:** 5% (Active participation in multilateral treaty negotiations and crisis simulation debates)
- **Comprehensive Final Examination:** 15% (Tuesday, December 15, 2026, 8:00–10:00 a.m.)

Grading Scale (Alkimi University Standard)

- **A:** 93–100% | **A-:** 90–92%
- **B+:** 87–89% | **B:** 83–86% | **B-:** 80–82%
- **C+:** 77–79% | **C:** 73–76% | **C-:** 70–72%
- **D+:** 67–69% | **D:** 60–66% | **F:** Below 60%
- **Extra credit:** No extra credit assignments are offered in POSC 210. Students are evaluated based on their performance across assigned papers, responses, simulations, and examinations.

Course Schedule (Fall 2026)

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 1	Aug 27	The Evolution of International Society and the State System: Historical evolution of international society: Peace of Westphalia, the balance of power system, imperialism, and the origins of the modern state system. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 1–3</i>	<i>First day of classes: Wed Aug 26.</i>
Week 2	Sep 1, 3	Realism: Anarchy, Power, and the Balance of Power: Classical realism (Morgenthau, Carr) vs. neorealism/structural realism	<i>Wed Sep 2: Add/section change deadline.</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
		(Waltz); anarchy, the security dilemma, offensive vs. defensive realism. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 6</i>	
Week 3	Sep 8, 10	Liberalism, Institutions, and Interdependence: Liberalism, commercial pacifism, democratic peace theory, and neoliberal institutionalism (Keohane); regimes, cooperation, and collective goods. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 7–8</i>	<i>Mon Sep 7: Labor Day (no classes). Wed Sep 9: Census date (last day to drop without a W).</i>
Week 4	Sep 15, 17	Social Constructivism: Norms, Identity, and Culture: Social constructivism (Alexander Wendt); identity, norms, intersubjective meaning, socialization, and 'anarchy is what states make of it.' <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 9</i>	—
Week 5	Sep 22, 24	Critical IR Theory, Post-Colonialism, and Gender: Marxist and critical theories, World Systems theory (Wallerstein), post-colonialism, and feminist international relations; Theory Essay due Friday. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 10–12</i>	International Relations Theory Essay due Fri Sep 25 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 6	Sep 29, Oct 1	The Causes of War and Conflict Escalation: Levels of analysis, misperception, arms races, alliances, asymmetric conflict, and structural vs. individual causes of military escalation. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 14</i>	—
Week 7	Oct 6, 8	Nuclear Weapons, Deterrence, and Midterm Examination: Nuclear deterrence theory, second-strike capability, arms control agreements, proliferation regimes, and non-state WMD threats; Midterm Exam in class. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 26</i>	Midterm Examination (in class).
Week 8	Oct 15	International Law and the United Nations (Fall Break Week): Origins of international law, the UN Charter, the Security Council, peacekeeping operations, and the International Court of Justice (Fall Break week). <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 19–20</i>	<i>Oct 12–Oct 13: Fall break (no classes). Fri Oct 16: Midterm grades due.</i>
Week 9	Oct 20, 22	International Political Economy and Global Trade: Mercantilism, liberal trade theory, the WTO, monetary stability, IMF, World Bank, and post-Cold War financial crises. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 28</i>	—
Week 10	Oct 27, 29	Regionalism and the European Union: European Union integration, supranational governance, Brexit, regional trading blocs (USMCA, ASEAN), and sovereign resistance. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 23</i>	—
Week 11	Nov 3, 5	Human Rights and Humanitarian Intervention: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Criminal Court (ICC), humanitarian intervention, and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 31–32</i>	<i>Fri Nov 6: Last day to withdraw (W) or elect Pass/No Pass.</i>
Week 12	Nov 10, 12	Transnational Terrorism and Asymmetric Security Threats: Evolution of transnational terrorism, counter-terrorism strategies, hybrid warfare, private military contractors, and insurgencies. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 25</i>	—
Week 13	Nov 17, 19	Global Environmental Politics and Resource Conflict: Global climate governance, the Paris Agreement, common but differentiated responsibilities, and resource conflict; Crisis Memo due Friday. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 24</i>	Foreign Policy Crisis Memo & Position Paper due Fri Nov 20 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 14	Nov 24	Great Power Rivalry and Hegemonic Transition (Thanksgiving Week): Power transition theory, hegemonic decline, US-China strategic rivalry, and the Thucydides Trap (Thanksgiving week). <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Ch. 5</i>	<i>Nov 25–Nov 27: Thanksgiving break (no classes).</i>
Week 15	Dec 1, 3	Cyber Warfare and Weaponized Interdependence: Cyber warfare, critical infrastructure vulnerability, informational sovereignty, disinformation campaigns, and weaponized interdependence. <i>Reading: Selected articles on Canvas</i>	—
Week 16	Dec 8	The Future of Global Governance and Course Synthesis: The liberal international order in question, rising nationalism,	<i>Wed Dec 9: Last day of classes. Thu Dec 10: Reading Day.</i>

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
		multipolarity, course synthesis, and final examination review. <i>Reading: Baylis et al., Review</i>	
Finals	Dec 15	Comprehensive Final Examination: Tuesday, December 15, 2026, 8:00–10:00 a.m., Lovell Hall 130.	Scheduled during the university final examination period in Lovell Hall 130.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Class meetings in Lovell Hall 130 feature regular diplomatic simulations and intense theoretical debate that depend on student attendance. You are permitted two unexcused absences; each subsequent unexcused absence results in a deduction of one-third of a letter grade from your final course grade. Missing more than five class meetings results in a failing grade. Students who miss the first two class meetings without notifying the instructor may be dropped. Students may miss class for religious observance without penalty if they notify the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by Wednesday, September 9, 2026). Absences for university-sponsored activities (athletics, performances, conferences) are excused with a letter from the sponsoring office at least one week in advance.

Late Work Policy

Policy memos and theoretical essays lose one-third of a letter grade for each calendar day they are late and will not be accepted after four days past the deadline. Reading responses cannot be submitted late.

Final Exam Policy

The final examination (Tuesday, December 15, 2026, 8:00–10:00 a.m.) is scheduled by the University Registrar and can't be moved without the Dean's written approval (Faculty Handbook §5.5). A student with three or more final exams on the same calendar day may reschedule one of them. Requests go to the instructor of the middle exam by the last day of classes. For this term, send the request by Wednesday, December 9, 2026 (Student Handbook §6.4).

Academic Integrity

Alkimi University is an academic community devoted to rigorous scholarship, open intellectual inquiry, and uncompromising ethical conduct. All students are subject to the regulations of the Alkimi University Academic Integrity Policy. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of empirical data, and unauthorized submission of academic work generated by artificial intelligence—undermines the integrity of the university and carries severe disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions range from a failing grade on an assignment or exam to an administrative course failure recorded as an 'XF' on the official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion. Suspected violations are formally investigated and resolved through the Office of Academic Integrity in accordance with Faculty Handbook §6. For detailed information, consult the Office of Academic Integrity, Lovell Hall 315, (555) 555-0163, integrity@university.alkimi.ai.

Accessibility Services

Alkimi University is committed to providing equitable educational access and reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities, including physical, sensory, psychological, learning, and chronic health conditions. Students requesting academic accommodations must formally register with the Office of Accessibility Services, Harlan Hall 204, (555) 555-0155, access@university.alkimi.ai. Once approved, students will receive an official Faculty Accommodation Letter detailing approved accommodations. Students should present this letter to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and at least one

week prior to any exam or assignment requiring accommodation. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

Student Wellness and Mental Health

Your physical health, psychological well-being, and mental health are essential to your academic success. If you experience heightened stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, personal trauma, or academic burnout, free, confidential counseling and medical care are available through the Hollis Health & Counseling Center, located in the Hollis Center. Routine appointments are available Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. during the semester by calling (555) 555-0190 or emailing health@university.alkimi.ai. Urgent, 24/7 crisis psychological counseling is accessible immediately at (555) 555-0199.

Campus Student Support Services

- **Academic Advising Center:** Lovell Hall 101 | (555) 555-0158 | advising@university.alkimi.ai
- **Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Free consultations on papers, reports, and research projects at any stage.
- **Whitcombe Library:** Whitcombe Library, Main Floor | (555) 555-0170 | askalibrarian@university.alkimi.ai
- **Hollis Health & Counseling Center:** Hollis Center | (555) 555-0190 | 24/7 Counseling Line: (555) 555-0199 | health@university.alkimi.ai
- **The Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Consultations on policy memo structure, executive formatting, and Chicago-style citation.