INR2002 International Relations Theory & Practice (3 credits)
School of Politics, Security, and International Affairs

Summer B 2026
6/24/26 – 7/31/26
W – Asynchronous Online

Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Uchenna Hillprieston Okwara	**Term:**	Summer B 2026
Phone:	(407) 823-2608	**Course Modality:**	W - Asynchronous Online
Email:	uchennahillprieston.okwara@ucf.edu Webcourses@UCF.edu Inbox	**Office Hours:**	Monday 12pm-2pm via Zoom or by appointment*

*Please note that all meetings must be previously scheduled using the following link: https://calendly.com/okwara
If you wish to meet outside my office hours, please email me to schedule an appointment.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of how states and people interact and to equip them with the analytical tools needed to think critically about complex international issues. The first goal of the course is to communicate the key concepts and theories of international relations, with a focus on building a foundational understanding of the major paradigms: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The second goal is for students to grasp lessons from major topic areas in international relations: international security, international political economy, and international law. The final goal of the course is to provide students with an understanding of some of the major issues in contemporary international relations, including human rights, transnational and non-state actors, unipolarity, foreign policy, and nuclear warfare. Throughout the course, students will discuss the applicability of IR theory to real-world and hypothetical issues. Through theoretical, historical, contemporary, and hypothetical lessons, students will develop their ability to evaluate key international issues and apply major IR lessons to contemporary public policy issues, in addition to developing policy writing skills.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Define the major theories of international relations and levels of analysis.
2. Explain fundamental facts about the development of the international system and major historical events.
3. Evaluate current and future events using the theoretical frameworks from international relations history.

Important Dates:

Drop/Swap Deadline on myUCF	Tuesday, June 30, 2026 (11:59 PM)
Withdrawal Deadline	Friday, July 17, 2026 (11:59 PM)
Quiz #1	Available during Week 2 (closes Sunday, July 5, 2026)
Memo	**Due Sunday, July 5, 2026** (11:59 PM)
Midterm Exam	**Available during Week 4** (closes Sunday, July 19, 2026)
Quiz #2	Available during Week 6 (closes Friday, July 31, 2026)
Final Presentation	**Due Friday, July 31, 2026** (11:59 PM)
Classes End	Friday, July 31, 2026

Textbook (hard copy or digital):

- (Required) Jon C. Pevehouse & Joshua S. Goldstein. *International Relations* (12th edition). New York: Pearson (2019).

Note that there are many different editions of the Pevehouse/Goldstein text; the pages in this syllabus will be specific to the 12th edition, so if you choose to use a different edition, you will have to approximate the page numbers to match that version. You can use digital copies (available via multiple avenues for varying rental lengths or purchase options, including the Pearson site and VitalSource) or hard copies (via the UCF bookstore or other retailers).

Additional course materials:

Required non-textbook materials will all be linked via Webcourses@UCF in the appropriate modules. Students should pay close attention to the syllabus to know the course materials required for each module and are expected to complete all required readings in their completion of a given module. These readings reflect some of the more 'classical' pieces in IR literature; we will discuss up-to-date responses and emerging research trends in class. The readings are subject to change with advance notice.

Graded Assignments:

Class Engagement (20%)
Quizzes (15%)
Memo (15%)
Midterm Exam (25%)
Final Presentation (25%)

Class Engagement (200 points):

Because this is an asynchronous 'W' format course, students are expected to independently manage their engagement with the course material. **This will include viewing required lecture videos, engaging in discussion board assignments, completing required readings, and submitting assignments on time** (please note that I can see if you watch the required lecture videos and will use this criterion to grade your class engagement). Class engagement will be evaluated based on the degree to which you satisfy each of these components, in addition to your completion of a syllabus quiz to demonstrate academic engagement (for financial aid dispersal).

Quizzes (150 points):

Students will take two timed virtual quizzes on WebCourses. The first quiz will be taken during the Week 2 Module, the second quiz will be taken during the Week 6 Module. Each quiz is worth 75 points and will cover two weeks of reading and mini lectures.

Memo Assignment (150 points):

Students will submit one 2-page policy memos over the course of the class that evaluate a contemporary international policy issue through one of the theoretical approaches discussed in class. The instructor will assign both the theory and the issue to be evaluated. The assignment will be distributed in class along with memo-writing guidelines, following the lecture on proper methodology for policy memo writing.

Midterm exam (250 points):

Students will take a timed virtual midterm exam during the Week 4 Module covering topics from the first half of the course. The instructor will provide information on the specific format and topics surveyed prior to the Midterm.

Final Presentation (250 points):

In lieu of a final exam, students will submit a 5-min presentation (including their presentation slides) on a contemporary international policy issue of their choice that provides a policymaker

with a review of the issue, lessons from IR theory that relate to the issue, and recommendations for future action related to the issue. More information on the assignment and submission guidelines will be announced in class.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Total points
A	93%-100%	925-1000
A-	90-93%	895-924
B+	87-89%	865-894
B	84-86%	835-864
B-	80-83%	795-834
C+	77-79%	765-794
C	74-76%	735-764
C-	70-73%	695-734
D+	67-69%	665-694
D	64-66%	635-664
D-	60-63%	595-634
F	0-59%	0-594

Course Format:

This course will be delivered asynchronously online, via weekly Modules that are released each Monday and conclude the subsequent Sunday. It will last for 6 total weeks, meaning that weekly workloads and expectations will be roughly double what they might be in a typical semester week; students should plan to spend anywhere between 6-18 hours of work on this course per week (as guided by UCF's Credit Hour Policy, available at https://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=18&navoid=1600).

Because the field of international relations is so wide-ranging, it's essential that learners manage their time and plan to progress through the course material every single week. It is nearly impossible to skip one week in the term—the equivalent of skipping 2 weeks in a regular 4 semester—and catch up in time to successfully complete the course. If you think your schedule might make completing this course hard, or if you thought you'd try completing this requirement in an online format and then discovered it's not for you, that's okay—this is a hard one to get through in an online format! Just be sure and note the Drop/Swap deadline (Friday June 27) and the Withdrawal deadline (Friday July 18) and make whatever choice is most strategically beneficial for you.

Instructor Contact Information:

As indicated above, Office Hours are available by appointment—at any point that students have questions or concerns, all they need to do is send a Webcourses@UCF message to the instructor and they will set up a time to connect via Zoom. Note that for all communications, the instructor will reply within 48 hours (unless otherwise indicated in advance).

UCF CORE SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

This section contains course policies that are standardized across all UCF courses and are supplemental to all UCF course syllabi.

Academic Integrity:

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at <https://scai.sdes.ucf.edu/student-rules-of-conduct/>. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in

1. Unauthorized assistance: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
2. Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
4. Falsifying or misrepresenting the student's own academic work.
5. Plagiarism: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.
6. Multiple Submissions: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.
7. Helping another violate academic behavior standards.
8. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements.

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating:

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule* <https://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript. Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Please note: In asynchronous courses like this one, students are not allowed to use GroupMe, WhatsApp, or any other form of technology to exchange course material associated with a graded assignment, quiz, test, et cetera. The completion of graded work in an online course should be considered a formal process: Just because you are not in a formal classroom setting being proctored while taking a quiz or test does not mean that the completion of graded work in an online course should not be treated with integrity.

The following is not all inclusive of what is considered academic misconduct. These examples show how the use of technology can be considered academic misconduct and could result in the same penalties as cheating in a face-to-face class:

- **Taking a screen shot of an online quiz or test question, posting it to GroupMe or WhatsApp, and asking for assistance is considered academic misconduct.**
- **Answering an online quiz or test question posted to GroupMe or WhatsApp is considered academic misconduct. Giving advice, assistance, or suggestions on how to complete a question associated with an online assignment, quiz, or test is considered academic misconduct.**
- **The use of outside assistance from another student or by searching the internet, Googling for answers, use of websites such as Quizlet, Course Hero, Chegg Study, etc. is considered academic misconduct.**
- **Gathering to take an online quiz or test with others and sharing answers in the process is considered academic misconduct.**

If a student or group of students are found to be exchanging material associated with a graded assignment, quiz, or test through any form of technology (GroupMe, WhatsApp, etc.), or use

outside assistance (Googling answers, use of websites such as Quizlet, Course Hero, Chegg Study, etc.), they could receive anywhere from a zero grade on the exercise to an "F" in the course depending on the act.

Course Accessibility Statement:

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Campus Safety Statement:

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at <https://centralflorida-prod.modolabs.net/student/safety/index>.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <https://ehs.ucf.edu/automated-external-defibrillator-aed-locations>.
- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <www.getrave.com/login/ucf> and logging in. On the "My Account" tab, fill out the information, including e-mail address and cell phone number.
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video (<https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk>).

Campus Safety Statement for Students in Online-Only Courses:

Though most emergency situations are primarily relevant to courses that meet in person, such incidents can also impact online students, either when they are on or near campus to participate in other courses or activities or when their course work is affected by off-campus emergencies. The following policies apply to courses in online modalities.

- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <www.getrave.com/login/ucf> and logging in. On the "My Account" tab, fill out the information, including e-mail address and cell phone number.
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students:

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Make-Up Assignments for Authorized University Events or Co-curricular Activities:

Students who represent the university in an authorized event or activity (for example, studentathletes) and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange a make-up. No penalty will be applied. For more information, see the UCF policy at <https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4401.pdf>

Religious Observances:

Students must notify their instructor in advance if they intend to miss class for a religious observance. For more information, see the UCF policy at <http://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.020ReligiousObservancesFINALJan19.pdf>.

Title IX Policy:

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu and http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/.

ADDITIONAL SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

Copyright:

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder. Outside of the notetaking and recording services offered by Student Accessibility Services, the creation of an audio or video recording of all or part of a class for personal use is allowed *only* with the advance and explicit written consent of the instructor. Such recordings are only acceptable in the context of personal, private studying and notetaking and are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the separate written approval of the instructor.

Technology Requirements:

You will be expected to have daily access to the internet and email, given that all course content and announcements will be delivered in online asynchronous formats. All students at UCF are required to obtain a Knight's Email account and check it regularly for official university communications. Students are also required to use the Webcourses@UCF communication tools or their Knight's email account to communicate with the instructor; please note that if you use a personal email account, it may be designated as spam.

Campus Resources:

You should be aware that help is available if you are struggling with this course! First see me, your instructor: I want you to understand the material and would be most pleased to help if you are having trouble. Other resources include the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC), for supplemental instruction and academic tutoring, and the University Writing Center.

Academic Activity and Financial Aid:

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. To document that you began this course, please complete the academic activity on Webcourses by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Start Date	Module and Topic	Readings	Tasks to Complete
24 June	**<u>Week 1</u>**: Course Introductions, the Globalization of IR, and Realism	Pevehouse/Goldstein text **Ch 1** (pp. 1-33) and **Ch 2** (pp. 40-65)	- **Academic Engagement** 'Quiz' due June 26 - **Introduction Discussion** due June 28
29 June	**<u>Week 2:</u>** Liberalism, Social Theories, and Foreign Policy	Pevehouse/Goldstein text **Ch 3** (pp. 76-98) and **Ch 4** (pp. 112-131)	- **Memo** due 05 July - **Quiz #1** due 05 July
06 July	**<u>Week 3:</u>** International Conflict, Military Force and Terrorism	Pevehouse/Goldstein text **Ch 5** (pp. 136-167) and **Ch 6** (pp. 172-202)	- **MOD 3 Discussion post** due 12 July
13 July	**<u>Week 4:</u>** International Organizations, Law, Human Rights, and International Trade	Pevehouse/Goldstein text **Ch 7** (pp. 208-249) and **Ch 8** (pp. 254-281)	- **Midterm exam** due 19 July
20 July	**<u>Week 5:</u>** Global Finance and Business, International Integration, Environment and Population	Pevehouse/Goldstein text **Ch 9** (pp. 286-307), **Ch 10** (pp. 318-344), and **Ch 11** (pp. 349-378)	- **MOD 5 Discussion post** due 26 July - **Final Memo and Presentation reminder** (due 31 July at 11:59 PM)
27 July	**<u>Week 6:</u>** The North-South Gap, and International Development	Pevehouse/Goldstein text **Ch 12** (pp. 382-410), and **Ch 13** (pp. 416-430)	- **Final Presentation** due 31 July - **Quiz #2** due 31 July
31 July	**FINAL PRESENTATION DUE VIA WEBCOURSES@UCF AT 11:59 PM EST**		

***Syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.
Any changes will be announced on WebCourses.***