

International Relations

POLS 5341.060

Dr. Robert Sterken

Professor of Political Science

Email: rsterken@uttyler.edu

Office: Arts & Sciences 116

I will be in my office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11a to 2:00p and from 3:30 to 5p. We can also meet by appointment and on Zoom.

More about Dr. Sterken: <https://works.bepress.com/robert-sterken/about/>

Author: <http://amazon.com/author/robertsterken>

Course Description: This is an introductory course on international politics and the relations between actors in the global political system. This course aims to systematically study international interactions between actors with different interests and ideas. In this course, we will explore topics, encounter puzzles, examine theories, and evaluate evidence to try to gain a greater understanding of world politics. The overarching goal of the course is to understand how the contemporary global political system originated and what historical processes and actors drove its development and change.

Course Expectations and Goals:

Theory is not separate from the world; it constructs what we see.

The goals of this course:

1. Give you a solid grounding in historically informed International Relations.
2. Introduce the concepts, vocabulary, and theories of International Relations.
3. Use these concepts, vocabulary, and theories to analyze issues facing political leaders and societies. This is a heavily analytical course; critical thinking is required equipment.

My intent is not to teach you ‘facts’ or measure your ability to commit facts to memory by rote. While some dates and actors will be of significance, of far more importance will be your ability to take the concepts and theories we discuss in class and use them to analyze issues confronting societies and the policy responses mounted by political leaders. The only exception to this general claim pertains to geography. Where states are located and who their neighbors are (i.e., their geography) are important aspects of international relations. To this end, I expect you to have a good general idea of where states are located, and you will be graded on this knowledge.

Five Objectives for Students:

1. Analyze and understand the major themes of international relations and global politics.
2. Develop an appreciation of the theory and its utility in studying and practicing International Relations.
3. Improve critical thinking and writing skills.
4. Demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior and the global system.
5. Use knowledge of international affairs in a practical problem-solving way to address issues of immediate international concern.

Required Course Readings:

The course is a primary opportunity to develop a firm foundation in IR theory and concepts. We will be making use of this excellent textbook:

The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations - REQUIRED

Baylis et al, 9th, paper, 9780192898142.

Judgment at Tokyo - REQUIRED. Gary Bass. ISBN: 9781101971079.

Assignments and Assessment of Learning:

World Map Assignment	5%
Case Study Policy Memos (from textbook)	30%
Mid-Term & Final Examinations	25%
Judgment in Tokyo Review	15%
Policy Memo & Video Presentation	26%

1. World Map Assignment:

1. Print and then label (by hand) the map below with each country's name. Take care to make it presentable.

I found the blank map here

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/63/A_large_blank_world_map_with_oceans_marked_in_blue.svgLinks to an external site.

2. Color the ten countries you would like to visit. Use a bright color - the more attractive your map, the higher your grade.

3. Take two (2) photos of your map: 1) A photo of just your completed map, and 2) a photo of you holding your completed map and smiling.

4. Post those two photos in this assignment here in Canvas.

2. Case Study Policy Memos:

After reading the chapter and viewing required videos, you will apply concepts and theories from class to address a contemporary policy problem. The format should generally be the following: a short introduction to the problem (what, where, why, when, and who). A brief discussion of current policy. Your proposed solution is written in such a way as to flag how you are incorporating class concepts, ideas, and theories. This should be oriented toward a policymaker who does not have explicit knowledge of IR theory and concepts (e.g., do not write “realism/liberalism/constructivism says X” but instead use ideas and concepts from the theories to make your case).

3. Final Policy Memo and Presentation:

You will develop a longer policy paper, providing greater detail than the short papers on the problem (precisely, greater effort at explaining why it is a problem), the current measures addressing it, and your proposed solution.

International Relations Policy Memo Presentation

For this assignment, you will be creating a voice-over PowerPoint presentation of your international relations policy memo. This presentation will serve as a way for you to showcase and summarize the key points of your memo concisely and engagingly.

1. Review your international relations policy memo and identify the key points and recommendations that you want to highlight in your presentation.
2. Create a PowerPoint presentation that includes slides with key information from your memo, such as background information, analysis, and recommendations.
3. Record a voice-over narration for each slide, explaining the content and providing additional insights and context.
4. Aim for a presentation length of approximately 5-7 minutes, ensuring that you cover all key points effectively.
5. Once your presentation is complete, upload it to Canvas for submission.

Your presentation will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Clarity and coherence of the presentation structure
- Depth of analysis and critical thinking demonstrated
- Effectiveness of communication and delivery
- Use of visual aids and supporting materials
- Overall presentation quality and professionalism

Submission Deadline: Please submit your completed presentation on Canvas by December 12, 2025.

Additional Notes:

- Make sure to practice your presentation before recording to ensure a smooth and engaging delivery.
- Feel free to use visuals, graphs, and other multimedia elements to enhance your presentation.
- Remember to focus on the most important aspects of your policy memo and communicate them clearly and effectively.

I am looking forward to your presentation!

4. Examinations:

There will be a midterm and a final. The final exam is cumulative, although at least half of the exam will be on the material covered since the midterm.

5. Book Review Assignment

Judgement in Tokyo by Gary J. Bass will provide you with a brilliant look at international law and international relations. I know that you will enjoy it. It is available in audio and is exceedingly well done.

For this assignment, you are required to read Gary J. Bass's book "Judgement in Tokyo: The Japanese War Crimes Trials" and write a 1200-word review of the book. The book delves into the aftermath of World War II in the Pacific and the trials of Japanese war criminals that took place in Tokyo.

In your review, please address the following points:

1. Provide a brief (about a paragraph) summary of the book, outlining the key events and arguments presented by the author.
2. Analyze the author's approach to the topic of war crimes trials and the impact of these trials on international relations in the post-World War II era.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Tokyo trials in achieving justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of the war.

4. Reflect on the relevance of the book's themes and lessons for contemporary international relations and the pursuit of justice in cases of war crimes.

Your review should be well-structured, clearly written, and supported by evidence and examples from the book. You are encouraged to engage critically with the material and offer your own insights and interpretations. I want to hear your voice in your review.

Please submit your review here in Canvas.

If you have any questions or need clarification on the assignment, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Course Schedule:

This is an asynchronous online course. See “Modules” in Canvas for the complete course schedule.

There are due dates for each assignment; late assignments **will be docked one letter grade.** However, you can elect to work ahead of the scheduled due dates if that works best for your schedule.

The course requires a great deal of reading and writing, so please plan accordingly.

I am looking forward to reading your work! Please email with questions or concerns, or meet me in my office or Zoom (see Zoom Link in Canvas announcements).

UT Tyler Students Resources, Rights, & Responsibilities

[Student Resources](#)

[University Policies and Information](#)

Student Resources:

Faculty can update student resources to provide additional supports appropriate for each course.

Resources to assist you in the course

- UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource (SAR) Office (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- UT Tyler Writing Center
- The Mathematics Learning Center
- UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center
- UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction
- Upswing (24/7 online tutoring) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas
- Robert Muntz Library and Library Liaison.
- Canvas 101 (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
- The Career Success Center
- UT Tyler Testing Center
- Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- UT Tyler Counseling Center (available to all students)
- MySSP App (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)

- Student Assistance and Advocacy Center
- Military and Veterans Success Center (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry
- UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships
- UT Tyler Student Business Services (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)
- UT Tyler Registrar's Office
- Office of International Programs
- Title IX Reporting
- Patriots Engage (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information

Withdrawing from Class

Students may withdraw (drop) from this course using the Withdrawal Portal. Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions on using the Withdrawal portal.. Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule. CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. CAUTION #3: All UT Tyler Athletes must check

with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. CAUTION #4: All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the Military and Veterans Success Center.

* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade

roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average. The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the

Registrar's Form Library.

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic

illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.utt Tyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@utt Tyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@utt Tyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and

Discipline policy in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy

5.2.3. The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for University Events or Activities as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excuse absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the

Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form.

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.