

IR 101xgw International Relations

The International Relations of Middle-earth

Spring 2017 | Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30-1:50 p.m. | SAL 101

Instructor

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Teaching Assistants

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Course Blackboard Site

This site will contain basic information that is useful for the course and class announcements. Students should check it on a regular basis.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the principles of International Relations, a subject of general interest that also happens to be an academic discipline. International Relations focuses on cooperation and conflict between and among nation-states and other entities. It affects many aspects of our everyday lives, often in ways that are not easy to understand. The course is intended to make International Relations more intelligible through a review of basic principles, with significant attention also to the great issues of the day. This experience also should help to develop your critical reasoning and analytical skills.

The main textbook for the course is [The International Relations of Middle-earth](#), published in 2012 by the University of Michigan Press. Since its publication over a half-century ago, [The Lord of the Rings](#) book series ([LOTR](#)) has become one of the most popular novel series of all time. Its major themes – good versus evil, human agency versus determinism, and various others – remain just as relevant today to the human condition in general and International Relations in particular. [LOTR](#) is a timeless story set in an imaginary world, but with enough parallels for us to see the great questions of

our time asked in different and thought-provoking ways. In the new millennium, LOTR is more prominent than ever, with all three of Peter Jackson's movies standing among the top 25 of all time in box office revenue.

LOTR has been chosen to help convey the principles of International Relations for several substantive reasons – not just its popularity. One, as will become apparent, is that it tells a story about war and peace that helps to bring out many concepts important to the study of International Relations as an academic discipline. Another is that Tolkien's imaginary world is perhaps the most credible among those created in literature – a point emphasized by various critics for a long time. Thus it is well-suited for application to the study of politics in the real world.

The mid-term examination will take place on February 21 and will have an essay format. The final examination, on May 10, also will have an essay format. Study guides will be provided so you can prepare effectively for each respective exam. All of the material from the lectures, assigned readings and discussion sections will be tested on the exams. The final exam will have a primary emphasis on material covered after the midterm.

Class participation is very important. I expect everyone to read the assignments that appear for each date prior to class that day. This will allow you to better understand the in-class activities and take notes. According to educational research, students who take notes earn, on average, a half-letter grade better as their final grade than those who do not.

Participation will be graded on the basis of your contribution to discussions in class and during sections. We will provide themes for discussion sections one week ahead of time on Blackboard. The themes will connect the lectures and readings, in a tentative way, to material from LOTR. Your task will be to elaborate and derive further connections between and among lectures, LOTR and events in the real world of international relations, especially contemporary ones.

The term paper is due on April 27. There is a 1500 word limit. We will provide you with an instruction sheet on how to prepare your term essay during the second half of the term. A librarian will visit our class as well to offer further insight into completing the paper. The basic goal is to use a character or story line from LOTR to carry out a comparison with some person or event from the real world of international relations. An excellent paper will do this in the context of the curriculum from the class – making a connection to ideas from the academic field of International Relations.

We will show the three movies for extra credit. The movies are an especially good idea if you have not seen them for a long time (or not at all). You can earn one point if you (a) attend a showing of the movie and (b) submit a 150-word commentary (i.e., maximum length) to your TA by 1 p.m. the next day. Thus you may obtain a total of three points in extra credit if you watch all three movies and do each extra credit commentary. Three points of extra credit is the maximum for the class and that also can be obtained via

TIRP or JEP. These opportunities will be explained by visitors to our class during the first week.

The textbook contains appendices that cover the basic story of LOTR. If you will be watching the movies for the first time (i.e., as part of the extra credit), do not read the appendices ahead of time. The appendices are provided to provide the most essential details of LOTR and can be used as a quick reference at any stage of the class.

All assignments are subject to change as noted in class, although none are expected at this time.

Be sure to back up all of your computer files. Do not turn in your only copy of any requirement.

The grading scale is as follows: 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 (63-66) D- (60-62); F (< 60).

Discussion Sections

The discussion sections are designed to help students keep up with class lectures and readings. There will be no lectures during discussion sections and no new material will be presented. Students should come to discussion sections prepared with any questions or problems they may have with any of the class materials and be ready to discuss them. Attendance at discussion sections is required. This will be an intense class with a lot of material to cover in a short amount of time, so attendance is essential.

Make-up Requirements

There will be no make-up assignments or tests for unexcused absences. Acceptable excuses, meaning medical or family emergencies and official university-related business, must be provided either to me or your teaching assistant in writing before an absence (only afterwards in the case of emergencies) in order to be considered. Students who are unable to complete a requirement for legitimate reasons that do not qualify as excused under university guidelines, and who notify me ahead of time may, at my discretion, complete a requirement belatedly.

Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to observe all rules of proper classroom conduct. In order to insure an appropriate environment conducive to learning by all:

1. Refrain from talking or other disruptive activity during class; even one or two conversations quickly create distractions for other students and the instructor.
2. No cell phone calls, incoming or outgoing, are allowed in this class; turn off your cell phone. Text messaging and all other use of your phone also is prohibited.

3. If you want to use your computer to take notes, that is fine. But it must not be used for any other purpose during the class.
4. Do not come to class late. From the second day of class onward, no one will be admitted to the class once the door is closed. Also, please do not leave class early; if you must do so, tell me beforehand and arrange to sit near the door so your exit will be less disruptive.

Policy on Academic Ethics and Honesty

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult your teaching assistant.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776 and the website is: <https://dsp.usc.edu/>.

Required Textbook

Abigail Ruane and Patrick James, The International Relations of Middle-earth: Learning from the Lord of the Rings. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Course Requirements

Mid-term Examination, February 21 (essay exam)	20%
Final Examination, May 10, 2-4 p.m. (essay exam)	40%
Term Essay (due April 27)	25%
Classroom and Section Attendance and Participation	15%
Extra Credit (potential)	3%

Associated Reading Requirement

A high-level familiarity with contemporary world events is required of USC students as global citizens. Students should be familiar with the major news of international political and economic consequence on daily basis. The professor will incorporate some of them in lectures. Some credible English language online sources of information are as follows:

www.nytimes.com/ (The New York Times)
www.washingtonpost.com/ (The Washington Post)
www.time.com (Time Magazine)
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/ (BBC World Service)
www.guardian.co.uk/ (The Guardian)
www.foreignpolicy.com/ (Foreign Policy online)
yaleglobal.yale.edu/ (Yale Global)
www.politico.com/ (Politico)
www.aljazeera.com/ (Al Jazeera)
www.vox.com/ (Vox)
www.npr.org/ (National Public Radio)

Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

Jan.	10	Overview of Course
		Concepts
	12	Order and Justice, I
		Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 1-13
	17	Order and Justice II
		Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 14-31
	19	Worldviews, Paradigms and Theories, I
		Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 32-42
	24	Worldviews, Paradigms and Theories, II
		Reading: Thucydides – The Melian Dialogue
	26	Worldviews, Paradigms and Theories, III
	31	Great Debates, I
		Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 43-53
Feb.	2	Great Debates, II
		Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 53-75
		Reading: Mearsheimer – The Anarchic Structure of World Politics

- 7 Levels of Analysis and War
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 76-85
Study guide for mid-term examination available today
- 9 The War of the Ring
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 85-97
- 14 The Long Peace and World War I
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 97-104
- 16 Study Session for Mid-term Examination
- 21 Mid-term Examination
No reading assignment
- 23 Paper Workshop
- 28 War in Iraq and Its Aftermath, I
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 104-108
 Reading: Byman and Pollack – The Syrian Spillover
- March 2 War in Iraq and Its Aftermath, II
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 109-112
 Reading: Keck and Sikkink – Transnational Activist Networks
- 7 In-Class Exercise
- 9 International Political Economy and Globalization, I: Trade
 Reading: Frieden, Lake, & Schultz – International Trade
- 14, 16 March Break – No Class
- 21 International Political Economy and Globalization, II: Finance
 Reading: Frieden, Lake, & Schultz – International Financial Relations

- 23 International Political Economy and Globalization, III: Development
 Reading: Frieden, Lake, & Schultz – Development: Causes of the Wealth & Poverty of Nations
 Reading: Milanovic – The Two Faces of Globalization
- 28 Middle-earth and Feminist Theory
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 113-138
- 30 Middle-earth and Feminist Analysis of Conflict
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 139-162
- April 4 International Institutions
 Reading: Keohane and Martin – International Institutions
 Reading: Finnemore and Sikkink - International Norm Dynamics and Political Change
- 6 Middle-earth as a Source of Inspiration and Enrichment, I: Cyber
 Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 163-191
 Reading: Nye – Power and National Security in Cyberspace
- 11 Middle-earth as a Source of Inspiration and Enrichment, II: Human Rights
 Reading: Mertus – Human Rights and Global Governance
 Reading: Goldstone – The Pursuit of International Justice
 Reading: Chesterman – Humanitarian Intervention and R2P
- 13 Middle-earth as a Source of Inspiration and Enrichment, III; Health
 Reading: Harman – Global Health Governance
 Reading: Innes – National Security and Global Health Governance
- 18 Middle-earth as a Source of Inspiration and Enrichment, IV: Environment
 Reading: Hardin – The Tragedy of the Commons

Reading: Hoffman – Climate Change

20 Middle-earth as a Source of Inspiration and Enrichment, V: Migration

Reading: Koser – Refugees and Migration

25 International Relations and Our Many Worlds

Reading: Ruane and James, pp. 192-203

Study guide for final examination available today

27 Review Session

Term Paper is due

May 10 Final Exam (2-4 p.m.)