

POL396: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Precept Syllabus

Spring 2023
Course Syllabus

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Office Hours:	Tues 2:30-4:30PM	Precept 18:	Thurs 3:30-4:20PM
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Precept Description and Expectations

Precepts for this course will meet weekly for 50 minutes and participation is mandatory, including active involvement in discussions, occasional small assignments and activities. Our course serves as an introduction to the study of international organizations (IOs) - their historical origins, their functionality (or lack thereof), and the rival forces that impact their design and conduct. Each precept will focus on reinforcing the substantive questions and analytical tools covered in lecture the week prior to section.

Precept participation accounts for **25%** of your final grade. Half of that grade (12.5%) will be a function of your submission of weekly questions/answers, and the other half (12.5%) will be based on your active involvement in section. Unexcused absences, minimal involvement, uninformed participation (i.e. not doing the readings or exercises), and failure to complete small written assignments in precept count against your final participation grade.

Each week, you will be responsible for submitting two questions, along with brief answers, that assess the questions and tools covered in lecture the week before. We will also work on mnemonic devices to memorize concepts. More on that below!

Students may not generally use computers or phones in precept. For 50 minutes each week, I ask you to put technology aside and take notes by hand. I will make full use of whiteboard or chalkboard space in the room with diagrams and discussion summaries. [Many studies](#) show that handwriting notes is associated with higher retention and memory of course material. Save your eyes 50 minutes of blue light, and your mind from 50 minutes of texts. I will respect this policy as well.

Important Dates:

1st lecture Tues. Jan 31st
1st precept Thurs. Feb. 9th
Midterm review session (in class) ... Thurs. March 9th
Timed midterm exam (Canvas) Fri. March 9th
Last precept Thurs. April 27th
Timed final exam (Canvas) Latest May 17th

Weekly Multiple Choice Questions & Answers (Q&As)

Each week, you will be responsible for creating two questions from each lecture (Tuesday & Thursday) - for a total of 4 questions per week - that assess the questions and tools covered in lecture the week before. These should be formatted as multiple choice questions, with the correct answer bolded or highlighted. The weekly assignment will open after lecture each Thursday. **They are due every Friday at 11:59PM ET on campus via the assignments tab. No late submissions are accepted. Extensions will not be granted for any reasons.**

The first due date is Feb. 10th, 2023. Your questions and answers should be based on the lectures from Feb. 7th and Feb. 9th, 2023.

Your questions should be specific, answerable questions that could appear on a quiz or exam on course material. Compiling these questions and answers over the semester will allow each section to collectively build a study guide. I will compile them into a google form before the midterm, and again by the final. Submitting is half the work. While your grade is based on submission itself, I will send you a bi-weekly email on your submissions with feedback on your work.

Mnemonic devices - 3 required throughout the semester

Students are encouraged to think of songs, movies, books, or other experiences from their daily lives that may recall class lessons creatively. The aspirational learning goal of the precept assignments will be to engage the students at a level that they will remember throughout their lives. This component is not graded based on the content either. To get credit for this assignment, make sure to turn in your mnemonic devices on Canvas three times during the semester. **The three mnemonic devices should be turned in under the Assignments tab to receive full credit.** The purpose of setting this minimal count is to encourage participation from everyone. **The last day to submit mnemonic devices is Dean's Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2023.** No late submissions will be accepted. Extensions will not be granted for any reasons.

We encourage you to share the mnemonic devices with the class by posting them to the Canvas discussion board. Please post as many times as you come up with ideas. Please post them in the forums as you come up with ideas (even during the lecture!). Students are encouraged to comment on others' posts and have a lively discussion. Just remember to keep discussion clean. Have fun!

For example, in the film [Something Borrowed](#), the main characters Rachel and Dex memorize the requirements for structuring a tort lawsuit using a mnemonic. The requirements are: (D)uty, (B)reach, (C)ausation, and (D)amages. Rachel suggests: (D)eliver (B)y (C)hristmas (D)ay. Dex suggests: (D)on't (B)lame (C)ameron (D)jaz.

Reading strategically

The readings in this course are largely technical chapters and articles from political scientists. That said, you do not need to read every page of every reading closely. We will discuss strategies for reading efficiently, but always take notes with four questions of a reading in mind: (1) what central question are they trying to answer; (2) what is their proposed answer to that question; (3) how do they test this hypothesis; (4) what do they conclude. Some papers are descriptive. In those cases, look for key details: (1) what is this reading covering; (2) who are the key actors/interests/organizations involved; (3) what key terms are defined (and what are those definitions; (4) what is the twitter summary (140 characters) of this summary piece.

Course readings are all located on Canvas under the **Reserves** tab. Search the title in the title box. For some books with multiple chapters assigned there will be one document posted for each chapter. Journal articles can also be accessed view embedded link on the [course syllabus website](#).

Absences

If you will be absent, please contact me **beforehand** to make arrangements for a make-up assignment or to attend another section. If you are unwell, please rest and stay home. Your health, both mental and physical, matter more than any course grade. I am more than happy to discuss necessary accommodations to help you succeed.