

International Relations

Instructor: Blake Schmidt

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Spring 2018 Syllabus

Room: K-105

Periods: 5-6*(A-Lunch)

Overview: Students enrolled in International Relations will learn to function effectively in a global community, gain an understanding of the nature of the modern nation state and national goals, and examine how nation states communicate and negotiate to facilitate these goals.

Point Breakdown:	35%	Discussion
	20%	Independent Investigation Progress (IIP)
	20%	Pen Pal
	15%	Research or Assignments
	10%	Current Events (Wildcard)

Each quarter represents 35% of the semester grade and the semester exam represents 30%.

Required Materials: Students will be required to bring:

- A notebook (e.g. composition) dedicated to International Relations and a pen/pencil.
- A *hardcopy* of their Reading Investigation book (every Thursday)
- Optimism, Zest, Curiosity, and Social Intelligence

Discussion: This course will rely heavily on active student participation. The reason for this reliance is twofold: in the first place, discussion will result in a better understanding of the democratic process, and secondly, it will develop open-mindedness by exposing us to a diversity of opinions and justifications. Students are expected to participate **POSITIVELY** toward the investigation, presentation, and discussion of class topics. This not only means talking when appropriate, but also it means expressing opinions without expressing contempt for others. Students will be deducted points for behavior that detracts from a safe and encouraging learning environment.

Independent Investigation: Students will need to conduct an original and independent investigation into an IR topic of their choice. This could include reading a non-fiction NY Times Bestseller of at least 150 pages on a person or topic that will broaden and strengthen our understanding of international relations and current events. It could also be an IR “classic,” such as Machiavelli’s *The Prince* or a specific IR text. Regardless, all topics/books must be approved by the instructor on/before January 18, 2018. Each Thursday after January 18, students will share their progress with their book/topic. These 1-2 minute round-robin style discussions will serve as 20% of each quarter grade. Students will present their findings at the end of each semester with a 14-15 minute presentation that will serve as their semester exam (30% of semester grade).

Research/Assignments: Students will have to complete various research assignments as we investigate International Relations and apply our knowledge to current international and national events. These research assignments will include searching, reading, listening, watching, playing, writing, and presenting. I will try my best to dedicate sufficient class time to research assignments, but students should expect to complete work outside of class as needed. Each “assignment” will have unique guidelines.

Current Events: Staying informed of current events is an important part of being a global citizen. The Quartz Daily Briefing contains many articles covering a wide range of topics. On most Fridays, students will pick an article from the Quartz Daily Briefings and summarize it for the class (you can’t read it to us). Once an article has been discussed, it is no longer available. Therefore, students should come prepared to discuss several articles each Friday, in case their first, second, or possibly even third choices are taken before their turn. This exercise is meant to familiarize us with current events, and it’s fun!

Pen Pal: Students will take part in an international pen pal curriculum through penpalschools.com. This service offers several “lessons” of various lengths (1-6 weeks) where we will read articles and watch videos, complete assignments, and interact with an international pen pal. We will complete several of these programs throughout the semester.

Weekly Schedule: We will attempt to conform to the following schedule.

M:	Pen Pals (penpalschools.com) 04r33t
T:	Article Discussion
W:	Article Discussion or Research
R:	Independent Investigation Round-Robin
F:	Wildcard (each student will share a unique article from the <u>Quartz Daily Briefing</u>)

Website: www.fswchs.weebly.com