

# POLS 268: Threats to World Order

Spring 2014  
MWF 10:30-11:20  
Classroom: Oldfather 308  
Offices hours: MWR, 11:30 to 12:30 or by appointment

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## Required texts

Acemoglu & Robinson: *Why Nations Fail*  
Patrick: *Weak Links*  
(other readings as assigned)

## Overview and Purpose

Bulletin Description: Variety of global crises and challenges that pose threats to world order. Population growth; scarcities of food, energy, and non-fuel materials; vulnerability of industrial states to resources scarcities; nuclear proliferation; arms racing; and terrorism.

To understand possible threats to the current world order, we must first understand the nature of the current world order. Despite the rise of important transnational organizations, the current world order remains based on a system of sovereign states. This course will focus on the theoretical and diplomatic basis of the rise of the current state system, the reasons for the unequal development of states and state failure, and the threat (or lack thereof) posed by failed states to world order. Also, working under the assumption that democracy is a normative good (an assumption you are welcome to challenge), we will compare proposed methods for developing stable democratic institutions in fragile states.

## Course Requirements

All students are expected to do the assigned reading and work, attend class, and participate. Quizzes will be based on both the readings and lectures, and the themes of those assignments will be a major part of our in-class discussions. Therefore attendance and class participation are vital.

There will be a total of 1000 points for the course. Grades will be made up of class participation, a short writing assignment, a reaction paper, two quizzes, and a final exam. They will be weighed as follows:

- Attendance and Participation: 100 points
- Midterm exam: 200 points
- Country analysis: 200 points
- Reaction Paper: 200 points
- Final exam: 300 points

The points for each assignment will added together and the decimal point shifted one to the left to get the final grade. For example, a total of 756 points for all assignments represents a final grade of 75.6; a C.

## **Participation**

The bulk of the participation grade will be for attendance. Every student starts the semester with 100 participation points, but loses 5 points for each unexcused absence. An attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of class. If you come to class late, it is your responsibility to sign in at the end of class. Participation in class discussions will be periodically noted and points added to your participation grade. Since participation will be noted periodically, the only way to assure that your participation will be credited will be to participate consistently. Any participation points over 100 will be counted. That is the only extra credit that will be given in the course.

## **Midterm and Final Exam**

The exams will be a mixture of multiple-choice, true-false and short answer (5-10 sentences) questions. The midterm will be in-class and online. You should bring your fully-charged laptop computer or other device to class on the day of the exam. If you bring a tablet to take the exam, you are recommended to bring a keyboard attachment to facilitate typing. If you do not have a laptop, you can check one out from the media center at Love Library. The time limit for the midterm will be 50 minutes.

The final exam will be comprehensive. However, it will slightly emphasize the material not covered by prior testing (that is the material covered after the midterm). The final exam will also be in-class, online, closed-book, closed-note. It will be from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Love Library does not rent laptops during exam week, so please make other arrangements if you do not have access to a laptop or speak to your instructor.

The goals of the exams are to gauge the level of understanding the student has of the material covered. They are designed to encourage proper study skills, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning.

## **Country analysis**

The country analysis will be a detailed exploration of a single nation. Since a focus of this class is on understanding state fragility, you should choose a country in table 1.6 on pages 46-49 of *Weak Links* or South Sudan. Since part of the paper will include recommendations for US policy towards the country, you should limit yourself to a nation in which the US has at least one stake (based on table 1.6).

The paper will be a maximum of 5 full pages (single spaced, 10-point Times New Roman font, normal margins). An additional page or two will be allowed for notes and a bibliography (no Wikipedia, APA style preferred). There is no need for a cover page; place paper title and student information in the header. The ideal paper starts as an eight-page first draft and is trimmed down to five by cutting fluff.

One page of the report should be on the basic information of the country (population, borders, territorial disputes, economic information, political system, etc.). That information may be provided in bullet format. The bulk of the paper should be an assessment of the country, including internal and external sources of conflict, sources of state weakness, institutions and resources. The final page should offer a near term (within the next ten years) projection of what will happen in that nation and what you believe would be the best US policy towards that nation based on what you have learned.

There are numerous sources of basic information on nations from which you can draw, including the CIA World Fact Book, the Freedom House, the World Bank, Transparency International, Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, and Amnesty International, among numerous others.

You will be asked to list the country you chose on Friday, January 23. The final paper must be submitted, via Safe Assign on Blackboard, any time by 11:59 PM on Wednesday, March 18.

### Reaction paper

Each student will submit a reaction paper on *Why Nations Fail* and *Weak Links*. The paper will be a maximum of three full pages (single spaced, 10-point Times New Roman font, normal margins). The reaction paper will provide an overview and critique of the books; what aspects of their theory and analysis are strong and what are weak? You may add additional materials, but the main focus of the reaction paper must be the primary books and an additional page with a bibliography of other works cited must be added. There is no need to include a bibliographical entry for *Why Nations Fail* and *Weak Links*. It is due, via Safe Assign on Blackboard, any time by 11:59 PM on Wednesday, April 15.

### Grade Scale

The grade scale for this course will be:

A = 94-100	B- = 80-83	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	C+ = 77-79	D = 64-66
B+ = 87-89	C = 74-76	D- = 60-63
B = 84-86	C- = 70-73	F = 0-59

As noted previously, the points for each assignment will added together and the decimal point shifted one to the left to get the final grade. For example, a total of 756 points for all assignments represents a final grade of 75.6: a C.

### Class Policies

**Make-up assignments:** Should you miss a quiz or the exam, you can schedule a make-up exam with the instructor if you can provide evidence that you missed the class for a valid reason. This would include a doctor's note/bill or a cast on a newly broken arm. Non-valid reasons include, but are not limited to, what you did the night before and how it kept you from waking up the next day.

**Incompletes and Withdrawals:** Students will only be given an "I" (incomplete) for valid reasons, such as verified military deployment or illness, and only if the student has made substantial satisfactory progress in the course. To withdraw from a course, follow UNL procedures; your instructor will not do it for you.

**Laptops and other electronic devices:** Please put away all electronic devices at the beginning of class except those being used for the class. Turn your phone off or put it on silent (not vibrate) mode. The inappropriate use of electronic devices is distracting to you and rude to the instructor and other students.

We will start with allowing the use of laptops, but the instructor reserves the right to later ban their use except for those students with a documented disability. Even when laptops are used exclusively to take class notes, they virtually eliminate eye contact and limit students' mental engagement with the material. You are a student, not a stenographer.

**Disability Policy:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to

provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism and cheating, as defined by the UNL Student Code of Conduct, are not allowed. The in-class punishment schedule for such acts may include a zero for the assignment and failure of the entire course. Major violations will also be reported to the student's department chairperson or head and to the Judicial Office.

**Respect:** Please show respect for the opinions of your fellow students. Students should feel free to express their views without fear of condemnation or harassment inside or outside the classroom. Likewise, students should not seek to use the free and open exchange of ideas as a license to provoke or denigrate others. Clearly, there is a balancing act involved, but it can be achieved if students engage each other and the instructor in a spirit of goodwill.

### Schedule (Subject to modification)

Week	Subject	Readings
Jan 12-16	Theories of the State	Webber (1919) Tilly (2006): pp 1-37
Jan 19-23	Aggregating state power (Monday, January 19 is MLK day)	Kennedy (1987): Introduction, chapters 1, 3 Herbst (2000): Introduction, chapter 1
Jan 26-30	State institutions and prosperity	Acemoglu & Robinson: preface, chapters 1, 2, 3
Feb 2-6	Path dependence and institution evolution	Acemoglu & Robinson: chapters 4, 5, 6
Feb 9-13	Breakthroughs and barriers	Acemoglu & Robinson: chapters 7, 8, 9
Feb 16-20	How institutions can help or hurt	Acemoglu & Robinson: chapters 10, 11, 12
Feb 23-27	State failure and how to avoid it	Acemoglu & Robinson: chapters 13, 14, 15
Mar 2-6	Another view of state weakness <b>(Midterm exam: March 6)</b>	Huntington (1968): chapter 1
Mar 9-13	Another look at the state and state fragility	Patrick: Introduction, chapter 1
Mar 16-20	Terrorism	Patrick: chapters 2, 4 Mallaby (2002) Rice (2003)
	<b>(County analysis due March 18, by 11:59 pm)</b>	

Mar 23-27	(Spring Break)	
Mar 30-Apr 3	International crime and WMD proliferation	Patrick: chapters 4, 3 OECD report (2012) on TOC and fragile states
Apr 6-10	Resource insecurity and disease spread	Patrick: chapter 5, 6 Barnaby (2009) Koubi et al (2014) Optional: Bleakley (2007)
Apr 13-17	Cause of civil war onset and continuance  <b>(Reaction paper due April 15 by 11:59 pm)</b>	Wimmer et al. (2009) Wood (2003) chapter 1
Apr 20-24	Making weak states safe for democracy	Lijphart (2004) Wilkinson (2004): chapter 8 Moser and Scheiner (2012): chapter 9 USAID summary of <i>Designing Democracies in a Dangerous World</i>
Apr 27-May 1	Final Thoughts	Patrick: Conclusions and policy implications Kraxberger (2007)

**(Friday, May 8, 7:30am Final exam)**

Per UNL policy, any change in the exam time must be unanimous with students having the ability to anonymously veto a proposed change.