Diablo Valley College – ONLINE – Fall 2026
POLS 250 – 5282 / International Relations / 3 Units
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Hello Everyone,

Again, welcome to the class! This document will serve as your guide to understanding how the class will be run on a day-to-day basis. The class will ultimately combine elements of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, and our meetings for each class will be designed primarily to amplify and clarify the various texts and videos you have been studying independently. Our meetings will be a great time for you to ask questions, make comments, or just listen in on the conversation. These meetings will be held each class, but I will be staggering the times that you visit, to make communication on Zoom a bit more manageable.

First, although I maintain a Canvas page, the vast majority of your time spent online will be on my own personal website, noted above in red. I will use Canvas for the following:

1. Announcements (which will also be on my website)

2. Journal Responses

3. Discussion Boards for Video Responses

4. Research Papers (uploaded to Turnitin)

On Canvas, you'll be able to keep track of how you're doing grade-wise, on the various things you turn in for a grade. Everything else that you'll need will be available on my website.

Next, you'll see that when you go to our class page, you'll notice that each lecture incorporates 6 tasks that you should complete for that particular lecture. They will be numbered as follows:

Task 1. Instructions for Lecture: Open this link to get the specific instructions for the night's class plus any other information I decide to share or impart.

Task 2. Text Reading: Open this link to read the supporting text materials for that night's lecture.

Task 3. Lecture Presentation: Open this link to watch the lecture presentation for that night's lecture.

Task 4. Journal Response Question: Open this link to read the necessary materials for your journal response. The journal response can be found at the top of each section on the link titled “Lecture / Discussion Page.” After opening this link, you will see the required question for that particular lecture highlighted in yellow. Follow the instructions for writing a proper journal response.

Task 5. Video Presentation: Here you will find the documentary video that accompanies each lecture. Open the link and watch.

Task 6. Discussion Board: This link will typically have a question related to the video, to which you will give a short, one paragraph response, and then a response to two other student responses. You can make a comment (keep it *respectful*) about the other student’s comment on the video, or you could ask them a question. This will constitute our peer-to-peer requirement for the class.

After Task 6 you will find a link to that lecture’s PowerPoint presentation (without my explanations and descriptions) to use as a reference if you need it, and a series of articles relating to that lecture that you can read at your discretion, time permitting.

Now, in addition to these above requirements, you will be working on a college-level research paper, the instructions for which you will find on the website. To access the question, open the link titled “POLSC 250 Fall 2026 Research Project.” Here you’ll find the question to be responded to, along with very explicit instructions on how to proceed. Below the link to the question will be dozens of resources, from various points of view, that you can use as data to answer your research question. Naturally, you can find some of your own data to use and you will be duly rewarded grade-wise for doing so. I want to encourage independent research skills, since these will be the skills necessary to do well on future research papers that you will undoubtedly be asked to do in your junior and senior years at the university. So, I want you to be good and ready, ya know whatta mean?

OK, I think that pretty much gives you a basic outline of how to pace yourself week to week. There’s a lot to do here so develop skills to keep you focused since the material is coming at you pretty fast, and by all means, attend the Zoom classes so I can help you if you feel stuck, confused, overwhelmed…or all of the above. Finally, this is my first real online class, so any tips or ideas or other forms of support you can give to me will be greatly appreciated.

With that, let’s dig in people. IR is a fascinating subject. And although you might see it as just a class, in fact I think you’ll eventually see that *our very lives* might depend on having a solid understanding of it.