

3RD EDITION

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PERSPECTIVES & CONTROVERSIES



Keith L. Shimko

# International Relations

## Perspectives and Controversies

THIRD EDITION

Keith L. Shimko  
*Purdue University*

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Controversies, Third Edition**

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# Preface

As is probably the case with most textbooks, *International Relations: Perspectives and Controversies*, Third Edition, has grown out of many years of teaching the course for which it is intended—introductory international relations. Like others who teach in this area, I have struggled to find the right balance of fact and theory, current events and historical background, as well as breadth and depth of coverage. I am always looking for ways to make complicated ideas accessible without resorting to caricature or talking down to students. I constantly need to remind myself that even though the latest theoretical fad or methodological debate may interest me, it is usually of little interest or value to my students. And though many issues might be old and settled for those of us who have been immersed in the discipline for decades, they can still be new and exciting for students. One of the hardest things about teaching introductory international relations is placing oneself in the position of a student being exposed to the subject for the first time. Undergraduate students are not mini-graduate students, and most do not intend to make the study of international relations their life's ambition. Thus, I begin my class and this text with the assumption that most students are interested in international relations in order to become reasonably informed and thoughtful citizens who are able to think about issues that affect their lives in a manner that goes beyond the superficial coverage of daily headlines. My objective is to help them achieve this goal.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to introducing students to international relations in one semester is the sheer volume of material. There is so much history that seems essential, so many issues that one can cover, and so many theories that try to make sense of these issues. Choices have to be made. It is simply not feasible to provide all the history and cover every possible issue from every conceivable perspective. It is always easy to find material to add but nearly impossible to identify anything that can be eliminated (a fact that anyone who has ever tried to write a textbook knows well!). The problem is that quantity can sometimes be the enemy of quality. Students presented with an endless catalog of facts, names, theories, and perspectives can drown in a sea of detail. Being exhaustive and comprehensive is certainly desirable in the abstract, but in practice it can become overwhelming. In trying to teach everything, we find that our students end up learning nothing.



## Goals

I have always found it useful to remember that the fundamental goal of this course is getting students to think about international relations. The point is not to provide students with an encyclopedia of facts and theoretical snippets, but rather to instill an appreciation for ideas and the nature and structure of argument. If students can convey, explain, and critique the fundamental arguments for and against free trade, it is not essential that they know the details of every WTO meeting or the results of every GATT round. The debate over the WTO might be a useful entry point into the more enduring questions over free trade, but it is the ideas and arguments that are critical. I am always asking myself whether certain facts are necessary or useful for students to understand the underlying ideas. If they are not, there is no reason to include them.

The danger of overwhelming ideas with facts and detail is not the only challenge. Ideas need to be presented in ways that will allow students to truly engage in the critical issues, not merely be aware of them. It is not enough, for example, that students are able to provide a paragraph summary of balance of power theory. They need to understand its basic assumptions and be able to follow the arguments through its various stages, twists, and turns. They should be able to identify the theory's strong and weak points and do the same for alternative theories. For students to achieve this level of mastery, ideas and theories must be developed at some length so that they can see how the elements of the arguments come together.

## Approach

The approach of *International Relations: Perspectives and Controversies* embodies these assumptions. Chapters 1 and 2 are fairly traditional, providing the basic historical and theoretical foundations for thinking about international relations. The remaining chapters are framed in a different manner from those in most other texts. Each chapter is organized around a basic question that embodies an important issue of controversy in international relations:

- Does international anarchy lead to war? (Chapter 3)
- Are democracies more peaceful than other societies? (Chapter 4)
- Is war part of human nature? (Chapter 5)
- Is free trade desirable? (Chapter 6)
- What are the obstacles to economic development? (Chapter 7)
- Is globalization eroding national sovereignty? (Chapter 8)
- Does international law matter? (Chapter 9)
- Should the international community undertake humanitarian interventions? (Chapter 10)
- Is nuclear proliferation a bad thing? (Chapter 11)
- How should we respond to terrorism? (Chapter 12)
- Is the global commons in danger? (Chapter 13)

Once the question is posed and some essential historical and factual background provided, the chapter presents and develops alternative answers to the question. The questions and the general “debate” format provide a focus that helps sustain student interest. To help students move beyond what they often see as abstract debates and theories and illustrate the real-life relevancy of these ideas, each chapter concludes with a Points of View section containing two primary source documents that bring to life the major issues or positions discussed in the main body of the chapter. For example, the debate about the relationship between democracy and war can be very academic and technical, focusing on conflicting definitions and questions of measurement and methodology. In the chapter dealing with this issue, the Points of View documents debate whether more democracy in the Middle East will bring peace. Given that much of the justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq rested on the benefits of democratizing the region, this should help students appreciate the real-world implications of theoretical arguments.

My hope is that students will then be able to think about the implications of ideas, critically analyze their own views and those of others, and make better sense of the world around them long after current events have faded into history. Many of the facts and details may be forgotten, but the ability to think about international relations should remain.

## Features

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Students will learn about the history of international relations in Chapter 1, followed by an explanation of the various perspectives in international relations in Chapter 2. Beginning in Chapter 3, students will notice a standard set of pedagogical features that will guide their studies of the controversies present in international relations.

- An **opening abstract** introduces students to the chapter’s topic and lays the groundwork for the issues and views surrounding the subject at hand.
- An **introduction** gives historical background and perspective to the issues discussed in the chapter.
- **Key terms** are boldfaced where they are first introduced in the chapter. The terms are defined in the margins and are listed at the end of the chapter.
- The **Points of View** section includes two readings related to the chapter’s issues, often presenting both sides of the debate. An introduction to the readings provides questions for students to ponder as they read the selections.
- A **chapter summary** provides a brief review of the chapter.
- **Critical questions** ask students to apply the concepts they learned in the chapter.
- **Further readings** provide citations of additional sources related to the chapter material.
- Related **Web sites** give students the opportunity to explore the Internet for more information.

## Highlights of This Third Edition

*International Relations: Perspectives and Controversies*, Third Edition, has been thoroughly updated. Key revisions include the following:

- New and updated Point of View sections include the following: new POV question and two new readings on the future of American power (Chapter 3); new reading about democracy in the Middle East (Chapter 4); new POV question and two new readings on whether free trade helps or hurts American interests (Chapter 6); new POV question and two new readings exploring humanitarian intervention in Myanmar (Chapter 10); and new POV question and two new readings regarding global prospects for dealing with climate change (Chapter 13).
- Chapters are revised to include the recent conflict between Russia and Georgia (Chapter 4 and Chapter 9), effectiveness of NAFTA (Chapter 6), current global financial crisis and recent surge in oil prices (Chapter 8), nuclear testing and debate about weapons development in North Korea and Iran (Chapter 11), and global prospects for dealing with climate change and population growth (Chapter 13).
- Updated statistics throughout the book.
- New and updated Web links throughout to provide useful resources in exploring chapter-related issues beyond the text.
- New and updated end-of-chapter critical questions to prompt deeper student analysis and engagement with the concepts.

## Instructor Resources

*International Relations: Perspectives and Controversies*, Third Edition, offers the following ancillary materials for instructors:

- The **Instructor's Resource Manual**, prepared by the author, includes discussion questions and sample lecture outlines.
- The **Test Bank**, also prepared by the author, features a combination of multiple-choice, identification, true/false, and essay test questions. These Word files are available from your Cengage sales representative.

## Student Resources

The text's **student Web site**, accessible at [www.cengage.com/politicalscience/shimko/internationalrelations3e](http://www.cengage.com/politicalscience/shimko/internationalrelations3e) includes ACE Practice Tests, flashcards, Web links, and sample answers to the end-of-chapter questions in the book.



## Acknowledgments

The process of writing an introductory international relations text has been a rewarding, yet at times frustrating, experience. I suspect this is the case in any field. Although my name is on the cover, the end product involved the input of many people. First and foremost are all those people who have read and commented on various drafts along the way. Many friends and colleagues at Purdue University, specifically Berenice Carroll, Harry Targ, Louis René Beres, and Aaron Hoffman, have made valuable suggestions for improving several chapters. Cynthia Weber of Leeds University provided useful input on my discussion of international relations theory, especially feminism. Although my debts to Stanley Michalak of Franklin and Marshall College go all the way back to my undergraduate days, for this text he read numerous chapters that are now much better as a result of his insightful, considerate advice and friendly criticism. Stanley was also one of my main sources of encouragement at times when I wondered whether the world really needed another introductory international relations text. Randy Roberts also gave valuable advice on navigating the maze of textbook publishing.

In addition to these friends, there is a list of reviewers for this edition arranged through my editors at Cengage:

Linda Adams, Baylor University

Mark Sachleben, Shippensburg University

Patrick Haney, Miami University

Richard Pearlstein, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Though it was obviously not possible to incorporate all of the ideas and suggestions provided by these reviewers, I can honestly say that this is a much better book as a result of their input.

Finally, this book is dedicated to my mother and father, Riitta Shimko and Leonard Shimko. My mother passed away halfway through the writing of the first edition. Although she was not here to see the final product, I know she would have been happy that after many years of talking about it, I finally got off my duff and wrote it. I only regret that she was not here to see it. My father saw the first edition but passed away just before writing the second edition. I miss them both terribly.

**Keith L. Shimko**



# Introduction: The Study of International Relations

## You and the World

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Stories of conflict in the Middle East, famine and poverty in Africa, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, international economic summits, and treaties to slow global warming decades in the future often seem far removed from our daily lives. Given this apparent remoteness, students sometimes wonder why the average person should concern herself or himself with international affairs. Sometimes it is relatively easy to answer this question. Periods of war and conflict in particular bring home the significance of international affairs in dramatic fashion. Anecdotally, it appears that enrollments in international relations courses tend to rise during international crises, probably reflecting an increased awareness of the need to understand what is going on in the wider world. The events of the last few years conform to this pattern. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the 2003 war in Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein, and ominous stories about North Korean nuclear weapons filled the evening news with an almost unending parade of international crises. In such a charged environment there is an almost intuitive sense that all of this matters, even if most people have some difficulty putting their fingers on exactly how these events affect their daily lives.

But even in more tranquil times, when international affairs recede into the background, our lives are touched by events beyond our shores. Whether the United States is at peace or at war, almost one in five of your tax dollars goes to defend the nation's security, even when no one is quite sure what the threat is. A peacetime army in excess of 1 million troops is the norm. If you are a farmer or work for a company that exports its products, your livelihood may very well depend on continued access to international markets; as a consumer, you pay prices for food and clothes from abroad that are influenced by how much access other nations have to our markets. A crisis on the other side of the globe may require you to shell out more money for the gas you pump into your car. And if you or a loved one is a member of the armed forces, international affairs can literally become a matter of life and death at any moment. Indeed, in the wake of September 11, 2001, Americans now know

something people in less secure parts of the world have always known—one need not be wearing a uniform to become a casualty. More civilians died on September 11 than all the American soldiers killed in battle since the end of the Vietnam War. There was a time before bombers, ballistic missiles, and the global economy when the geographical isolation provided by two oceans and the peace of mind that comes from having two weak and friendly neighbors allowed Americans to ignore much of what happened around the world. Very few people and nations have enjoyed this luxury. But that world is long gone. Today we are reminded at almost every turn that our lives are affected, sometimes dramatically, by what goes on thousands of miles from home.

## International Relations

What is *international relations*? At first glance this appears to be a relatively straightforward and easy question, at least until we try to answer it. We could adopt a fairly narrow view of international relations as the study of state behavior and interaction. In this formulation *international relations* is synonymous with *interstate relations*. Those inclined to this somewhat restrictive definition often prefer the label *international politics* instead of *international relations*. Today the more commonly used *international relations* connotes a much broader focus. Although no one denies that state behavior is *a*, and maybe even *the*, central focus of international relations, few believe this one focus defines adequately the boundaries of the discipline. An emphasis on state behavior is fine, but not to the exclusion of all else. There are simply too many important actors (e.g., multinational corporations and religious movements as well as inter- and nongovernmental organizations) and issues (e.g., terrorism and global warming) that do not fall neatly into a statecentric vision of the world.

If a very restrictive definition will not suffice, how much should it be expanded? As we begin adding more and more to what we mean by international relations, it is hard to know where to stop. The line between domestic and international politics blurs as we realize that internal politics often influence a state's external conduct. The distinction between economics and politics fades once we recognize that economic power is an integral component of political power. We also find ourselves dabbling in psychology to understand decision makers, sociology to explain revolutions, and even climatology to evaluate theories of global warming. It may be easier to specify what, if anything, does *not* fall within the realm of international relations. Once we include all the relevant actors and catalog the multitude of issues that can conceivably fall under the general rubric of international relations, we may be tempted to throw up our hands in frustration and define it as “everything that goes on in the world.” Though offered somewhat in jest, this definition is not much off the mark of a typically expansive description of international relations as “the whole complex of cultural, economic, legal, military, political, and social relations of all *states*, as well as their component populations and entities.”<sup>1</sup> Such a definition covers an awful lot of territory.

Fortunately, there is no reason we must settle on any final definition. Though it might be an interesting academic exercise to do so at length, it serves no useful



purpose at this point. It is enough that we have a good idea of the subjects that would be included in any reasonable definition. It is hard to imagine a definition of international relations that would not, for example, encompass questions of war and peace, sovereignty and intervention, and economic inequality and development. As an introductory text, this book deals with perspectives and issues that almost all agree fall well within the core of international relations, not near its ambiguous and shifting boundaries.

## Learning and Thinking About International Relations

The landscape of international relations is in a state of constant flux. Issues, conflicts, and people prominent in today's headlines quickly become yesterday's news. Casual observers are often overwhelmed by the complexity of the subject. The challenge for any introductory text or course in international relations is to bring some order to the confusion by providing you with the necessary tools to make sense of international affairs beyond the level of current events. If the objective were simply to discuss today's most pressing issues, little of lasting value would be gained. Current events may be interesting, but they do not stay current for very long. The goal is to help you think systematically and critically about international affairs in a way that allows you to understand today's headlines as well as yesterday's and, more important, tomorrow's. Once you are able to see familiar patterns in unfamiliar situations, identify recurring puzzles in novel problems, and recognize old ideas expressed in new debates, international relations ceases to be a disjointed and ever-changing series of "events." The names and faces may change, but many of the fundamental problems, issues, and debates tend to reappear, albeit in slightly different form.

The first step in thinking systematically about international politics is realizing that our present is the product of our past. What happened today was influenced by what happened yesterday, and what happens today will determine what happens tomorrow. Even unanticipated and surprising events do not just occur out of the blue: there are always antecedent developments and forces that produced them. The outbreak of World War I, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, or the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, cannot be understood apart from their historical roots. There is simply no escaping the weight of history. A historical perspective on current events contributes to a deeper understanding of international relations in several respects. First, it allows us to evaluate the significance of today's events in light of historical experience. Without history we would have no way of judging whether a proclaimed "new world order" is really new or merely a mildly updated version of the old world order. Second, knowledge of history helps us move beyond a mere *description* of international relations to the more difficult task of *explanation*, because we begin to wonder about not only *what* happened but *why*. And if we do not move from description to explanation, we cannot make the next move to prescription. If we want to know how to solve or deal with a problem, we need some idea of what causes it in the first place. It is useful to think in terms of an almost logical intellectual progression from description to explanation to prescription.

The move from description to explanation, however, is rarely easy. Anyone who has ever taken a history class knows that knowledge of the “facts” does not necessarily translate into consensus on explanation. Historians might be in total agreement about exactly what happened before and during World War I—who assassinated whom, which nation declared war first, and who won what battles—yet nonetheless disagree about what “caused” the war. And everyone knows that the United States and the Soviet Union never directly fought each other during the Cold War, but there is intense debate about *why* and *how* they managed to avoid war. These debates occur because historical facts do not speak for or explain themselves. Explanation requires that events be interpreted and linked together in a meaningful whole. Unfortunately, there is almost always more than one plausible interpretation of an event, and it is this proliferation of interpretations that makes the study of international relations both frustrating and fascinating.

Competing interpretations result from people’s preexisting beliefs. These beliefs act as lenses or filters enabling people to *look* at the same things yet *see* them differently. This applies in all aspects of life, not just international relations. Psychologists have long known that people tend to see what they expect and want to see. Firm believers in UFOs, for example, require little evidence to convince them that every flickering light in the sky is a spacecraft carrying visitors from another world. If the facts are ambiguous and open to several plausible interpretations, people will usually accept the interpretation that is consistent with their beliefs instead of one that challenges them. As a result, understanding international relations requires knowledge of not only the “facts” but also the belief systems through which people interpret and understand them. If a sufficient historical background is the first prerequisite for thinking systematically and critically about international relations, an appreciation of the various intellectual frameworks that lead to differing interpretations, explanations, and prescriptions is another. Only then is it possible to understand, for example, why some see the United Nations as an invaluable institution for creating a more civilized world and others dismiss it as a pompous and ineffective debating society. International relations is marked not only by conflicts among nations but also by conflicting worldviews.

An appreciation of these competing worldviews is also an essential aspect of critical thinking, which is much more than merely being critical. Critical thinking entails looking at issues and problems from many perspectives, and doing this requires an understanding of, and ability to convey fairly, points of view with which you might personally disagree. This is why students in debating clubs and societies are often required to adopt and defend positions regardless of their personal opinions. Presenting and defending positions other than your own is an intellectual exercise that aids critical analysis, encourages you to think about the structure of argument and the nature of evidence, and makes you aware of the strengths and weaknesses of your own position. Someone who cannot understand or faithfully present an opponent’s point of view can never really understand his or her own.

Thus, in order to cultivate systematic and critical analysis, a textbook needs to accomplish at least three tasks. First, it must provide a foundation of knowledge enabling you to think about current events in a broader *historical context*. Second, it has to make you aware of the differing worldviews that influence people’s analyses of

international affairs so they can analyze events in a broader *intellectual context*. And third, it should examine issues from multiple perspectives so that you can get into the habit of seeing international relations from many different angles.

## Plan of the Book

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With these objectives in mind, this text begins (chapter 1) with a survey of the development of international relations over the last approximately five hundred years, focusing on the emergence and evolution of what we call the modern state system. Although any attempt to summarize more than five centuries in a single chapter inevitably requires that much detail be sacrificed, it is still possible to get a good sense of the most significant elements of change and continuity in international history. This historical survey is followed by an introduction to the major perspectives or worldviews that offer alternative ways of explaining and understanding international relations (chapter 2). Some of these perspectives (e.g., realism, liberalism, and Marxism) have been around for quite some time, whereas others (e.g., feminism and constructivism) have only recently begun to influence our thinking about international relations.

The bulk of the text is devoted to enduring and contemporary controversies in international relations. Each chapter focuses on a central issue or debate, ranging from the very abstract and theoretical (e.g., war and human nature) to the extremely concrete and policy oriented (e.g., nuclear proliferation) and everything in between. Some of the issues are obviously ripped from today's headlines (e.g., international terrorism and nuclear proliferation), and others lurk a little beneath the headlines and between the lines (e.g., the relationship between democracy and war). Whatever the specific issue, the format of each chapter is similar: A brief historical and factual introduction is followed by a discussion of competing perspectives or arguments. The chapter on free trade, for example, begins by tracing the historical and intellectual origins of free trade before turning to the major arguments for and against free trade. Another chapter covers the history of nuclear proliferation before examining the debate over how much we need to be worried about the spread of nuclear weapons.

It is, of course, impossible to do justice to every conceivable position on each and every issue. In the real world there are never just two sides to an argument or debate. On trade issues, for example, some people favor free trade, others oppose it, and many (if not most) fall somewhere in between. There are always nuances of emphasis and gradations of belief that lead to slightly different positions. But before we can even start dealing with nuances, we need to appreciate the more basic and fundamental questions that divide people on important issues. Rather than covering the full range of positions on every topic, we will focus on two or three major positions that reflect differences on fundamental questions. Not only does this perspective allow us to concentrate on the most significant points of disagreement, but we are also able to develop arguments and discuss evidence in some depth. This is a crucial task because critical thinking and intellectual engagement are facilitated by exposure to coherent and fully developed arguments rather than an endless series



of short intellectual snippets. It is important to think through ideas and arguments rather than simply reading about them. Once you have mastered the basic ideas, it is easier to think about modifying or combining them to create more nuanced alternative perspectives.

A final element of critical thinking is applying what has been learned in order to think about issues in new ways. You eventually need to make the transition from the classroom to the “real world.” The opportunity to do this is provided by the Points of View section at the end of each issue chapter. The Points of View sections are eclectic mixes of official foreign policy statements, government documents, news stories, debate transcripts, and editorials. Not only are they different in form, but they also fulfill slightly different pedagogical functions.

What are you supposed to get out of these documents? Sometimes they are intended to demonstrate that ideas, which can often appear very theoretical in a textbook, have real-world consequences. It is one thing to be exposed to ideas in a textbook or a professor’s lecture, but something else entirely to hear them come out of the U.S. president’s mouth as he explains why he is taking the nation into war or rejecting a treaty. It is important for you to know that ideas, debates, and arguments about international relations are not confined to the classroom. Other documents require you to think outside the box a little. In order to get across important ideas and debates, professors sometimes have to present them very simply, stripped of complexity and nuance. The real world, however, is not always so simple and tidy. Critical analysis usually involves adding complications and new problems after fundamentals have been taken care of. As a way of introducing complexity, several documents attempt, consciously or not, to reconcile or combine ideas, arguments, and policies that are often presented as incompatible. Here you are supposed to evaluate whether these attempts at synthesis are successful or not. Finally, some documents are straightforward news stories reporting on facts or events relevant to the issue at hand, presenting no necessity to take a position. The objective in these cases is for you to think about the nature of evidence by asking whether the evidence supports or undermines particular arguments.

## After the Final

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Not many of you will make a career of studying international relations. This may be both the first and the last international relations course you will ever take, though I hope it is not. It is also possible you will never read another book about international politics. But whether you like the subject or not, your life will be influenced by international affairs. Long after the exams and quizzes are an unpleasant memory, many of the issues and problems you studied will appear again on the evening news. Even if you do not emerge with a burning interest in international relations and a passionate desire to learn more, I hope you will come away with an appreciation of the important issues at stake. I hope that as you listen to candidates advocate policies you are able to identify and understand the often unstated assumptions and beliefs informing those policies. I hope that you are able to analyze arguments and evidence

rather than accept them at face value. In short, you should aim to become an interested, informed, articulate, and thoughtful citizen of a nation and world in which all of our lives and fates are increasingly intertwined. If this text helps in the slightest, its objective will have been achieved.

## NOTES

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1. Cathal J. Nolan, *The Longman Guide to World Affairs* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1995), p. 178.

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