



## Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](#) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education ([www.cool4ed.org](http://www.cool4ed.org)). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

### Introduction to International Relations



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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Format

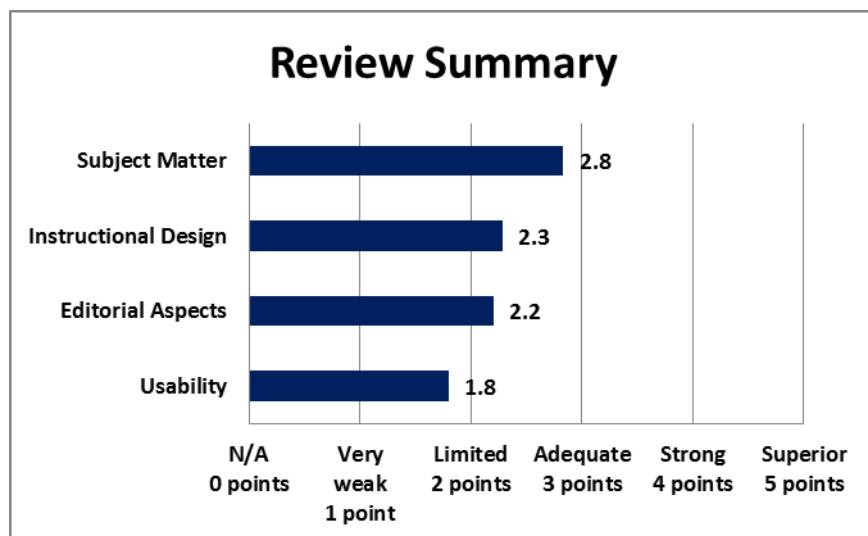
Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:

December 2015



### California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [POLS 140](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?				X		
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?				X		
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?				X		
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?			X			
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?				X		
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include				X		

examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						
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Total Points: 17 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- I am skeptical of using a course put together by Saylor.org. The course outline and material are, for the most part, similar to what I have taught in an intro IR course over the last 15 years at Texas A&M and UCSB. However, it is not necessarily set up for a student who has no background in international relations. Some segments are fine, then some are either too dated (Singer's levels of analysis material) or too advanced for students with no background (Slantchev's slides in the first unit).
- It needs a test bank. It also needs images and slides in one central place (see below). Right now this course is very unwieldy and would frustrate both students and instructors.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?			X			
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)				X		
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?				X		
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?				X		
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?				X		
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)	X					
Is the textbook searchable?			X			

Total Points: 16 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- In a nutshell, I don't like the design of this module. It is dated, does not address a lot of the recent scholarship in international relations, and it is all over the map. It uses too many links to other courses at other universities, and there is always the chance that websites go down, are updated, etc. I would encourage the designers to make a self-contained course in which slides/lectures, etc. are archived on a single site. This design as it stands now leaves too much to chance. I would encourage an instructor from CSU/UC to develop a course from scratch, integrate a current textbook, and keep the course archived on one site.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?				X		
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?				X		
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)	X					
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)				X		
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)			X			

Total Points: 11 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook:

- First of all, in the first unit, the creators credit an author from the University of Indiana. It is Indiana University. It may be a slight error, but such errors are found throughout the course module. Citations are garbled at times, and do not necessarily draw from the most recent scholarship in international relations. I would encourage the designers to pick up a mainstream IR textbook and utilize it as a framework.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?					X	
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)					X	
Can the textbook be printed easily?	X					
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?	X					
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?		X				

Total Points: 9 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook:

- There is no central textbook; rather it is a cobbled together course based on other people's websites/lectures/slides. If I were to devise this course, I would utilize my past experience and place original articles/book chapters online and record/upload lectures based on one textbook (Goldstein and Pevehouse being my personal preference) and integrate the readings with the textbook. This class attempts too much for an introductory course in IR. The students need one central textbook with supplements; not a hodge-podge of articles and presentations cobbled together.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?		X				
	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	X					

Total Points: 1 out of 10

## Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- I find very little of this module to recommend to colleagues. It is a set of links to other persons' lectures and notes. I would refer colleagues instead to other works that provide a cohesive framework rather than a course that is cobbled together from so many disparate sources. That is fine for an upper level course, but not at the introductory level.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- It needs to eliminate the foreign policy section. That is a fully separate course.
- The section on the European Union is better suited to a comparative politics course, or integrate it into a section on international organizations.
- It needs some discussion of international currency cooperation, and separate it from the section on international trade.
- I would also include a section on terrorism and insurgency separate from the unit on international conflict, and eliminate the section on international development if space were needed.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)  
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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