

CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ISSUES

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Shortened Syllabus

Spring 2018

Purpose of the Course

This course provides students with an introduction to what is known as the Contemporary Global Issues Discourse. It is designed to be of value to students who wish to immerse themselves in the basic problems in the field and who intend to take subsequent classes in the field especially at the masters level, and who wish to establish a strong foundation for that additional class work.

The class has three goals:

- To provide students with concepts and ideas needed to address the core, or enduring questions of the field of IR: what are the causes of international war and the conditions for world peace?
- To provide a basic understanding of international political-economic affairs;
- To attain a firm grasp of important new international policy problems.

Requirements and Grading

There are four graded elements of the course. The elements, and their percentage weightings in the final grade, follow:

- Weekly In-Class Tests (15%)
- Participation (PowerPoint Presentations) and Discussion (15%)
- Mid-Term In-Class Examination (15%)
- Term Paper (20%)
- FP Essay & Future Vision Presentation (10%)
- Final Exam (25%)

The numerical scale for each graded element of the course is listed below. The letter grades will be calculated on the basis of the weighted average score across the four

elements of the course. Please note that the weighted average score will not be rounded up.

90-100	A
82-89	B
75-81	C
67-74	D
60-66	E
<60	F

Mid-term and Final Examination. The mid-term and final examinations will be closed-book.

Paper. Students will write a (maximum of 10 pages, double-spaced) in which they will respond to **ONE** enduring question based on the literature to be discussed in advance.

Required Readings

Joseph Grieco, G. John Ikenberry, and Michael Mastanduno, *Introduction to International Relations: Enduring Questions and Contemporary Perspectives* (Palgrave 2015).

Chris Brown, *Understanding International Relations* 5th Edition (Palgrave 2009).

Part I: General Concepts and the Problem of War

Week 1 (Feb. 9)

- ❖ **Topic 1: An Introduction to the Contemporary Global Issues Discourse**
 - Global Issues as a part of everyday life
 - Building blocks for the study of international relations
 - Basic terms
 - Levels of analysis
- ❖ **Topic 2: The many elements of International Relations**
 - Enduring Questions of international relations As the Framework for the Global Issues Discourse
 - Viewing the world from differing perspectives
 - Recognizing great-power centrism
 - Recognizing cleavages in the international system

❖ **Topic 3: Making connections in International Relations**

- Connecting theory and practice
- Connecting past and present
- Connecting aspiration and reality

Week 2 (Feb. 16 & 23)

EQ: How did a fragmented world become a global, integrated system of states for which order is an ongoing problem?

❖ **Topic 1: Formation of the international political system, 1500–1900**

- The international system in 1500
 - The world in 1500
 - The primary powers (empires) and their motives
- The rise of a state system
 - How a state system came to be
 - Brief history of European states, feudalism, and the wars that gave rise to modern states
 - The Peace of Westphalia and its significance
- Imperialism and the pursuit of empire (1500–1900)
 - European expansionism and the race to expand (Sub-Saharan Africa, India, the Americas)
 - Mercantilism, imperialism, colonization
 - Resistance to European expansion (China, Japan, Ottoman Empire)
 - The world as it came to stand in 1900 (Europe, Ottoman Empire, USA, etc.)

❖ **Topic 2: World War I and World War II, 1900-1945**

- The path to War, 1900–1914
 - The world in the first decade of the 20th century
 - The conditions that led to war and why war broke out
- World War I and its aftermath
 - World War I
 - Treaty of Versailles
- The path to war, 1920–1939
 - Failed global reconstruction
 - The Great Depression
 - The rise of dictators
 - War breaks out again
- World War II and its aftermath
 - World War II
 - The world in 1945

❖ Topic 3: The Cold War and the Contemporary International Order

- The beginning of the Cold War
 - The world in 1945
 - The conditions that gave rise to animosity between the US and USSR
 - The early stages of the Cold War (Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan)
 - Tragic mistake or inevitable conflict?
- The Cold War heats up
 - Korea
 - Cuban Missile Crisis
 - Vietnam
- The rest of the world reacts
 - Nuclear proliferation
 - The “View from the South”
 - Decolonization
 - NAM
 - NIEO
- The end of the Cold War
 - Gorbachev, *perestroika*, and *glasnost*
 - The collapse of the Soviet Union
- The contemporary international order
 - US unipolarity
 - Constraints on US power
 - International Institutions

Week 3 (March 2)

EQ: *How do theoretical traditions in international relations differ on how to understand actors and their behavior on the global stage?*

❖ Topic 1: Introduction to IR theories and Realism

- Introduction to IR theories
- Realist assumptions
 - States operate in a world of anarchy
 - States are the main actors in IR
 - States are reasonably rational actors
 - Security is the central problem of international politics
 - The search for security is a competitive endeavor
- Realist propositions
 - Balance of power
 - Alliances
 - Security dilemmas
 - Relative gains
 - Power transitions

- Nationalism

❖ **Topic 2: Liberalism and Marxism-Leninism**

- Liberal assumptions
 - The world is in an ongoing process of modernization
 - Individuals and groups are the main actors in IR
 - Individuals have deep incentives to trade, cooperate, bargain, and negotiate for joint gain
 - modernization and advancement tend to take societies toward democracy and market society
 - progress exists
- Liberal propositions
 - Commercial liberalism
 - Democratic peace
 - Liberal institutionalism
 - Transnationalism
 - Cosmopolitanism
- Marxist assumptions
 - Economics shapes politics
 - Socioeconomic actors are the main actors in IR
 - The modern state is organized to serve the interests of the capitalist class
 - Class conflict will increasingly define the relations between workers and capitalists
 - Revolution is the great source of political change
- Marxist propositions
 - States will act in ways that protect and advance the interests of capitalism and the capitalist class
 - Transnational business will be a salient feature of world politics

❖ **Topic 3: Constructivism and Feminism**

- Constructivist assumptions
 - The interests of individuals, groups, and states are not set in stone
 - Interests are shaped by the identities of actors
 - Identities are molded by a variety of ideational factors – culture, religion, science, and normative beliefs
 - Elite individuals in both society and the state are the main actors in IR
 - Communication plays an important role in shaping and changing identities
- Constructivist propositions
 - “The world is what you believe it is”
 - States operate within a global civil society

- Normative change is a major way in which world politics evolved from era to era
- State elites exist within and are influenced by strategic culture
- Feminist assumptions
 - Women play a role in the world economy and geopolitical system primarily as subordinate and undervalued laborers
 - States and international relations have “gendered” structures of domination and interaction
 - The dominating views of world affairs ignore the standpoints of the weak and powerless
- Feminist Propositions
 - Critique of male-oriented assumptions, particularly realism
 - Challenge the reduction of women’s roles and capabilities in IR due to gender bias

Week 4 (March 9)

EQ: Which factors most influence the foreign policies of states?

❖ Topic 1: Connections to International Relations and Core Concepts

- The study of International Relations and the analysis of foreign policy
- Foreign policy interests
- Foreign policy Strategies: objectives and instruments
 - Instruments of persuasion
 - Diplomacy
 - Economic incentives
 - Instruments of coercion
 - Economic sanctions
 - Covert operations
 - Propaganda
 - Coercive diplomacy
 - Military force

❖ Topic 2: The Sources of Foreign Policy

- Sources of foreign policy at the individual level of analysis
 - Leaders and their beliefs
- Sources of foreign policy at the state level of analysis
 - Institutions and politics within national governments
 - Dynamics between executives and legislatures
- National politics and societal actors
 - Public opinion and elections
 - News media and foreign policy

- Interest groups
- Sources of foreign policy at the international level of analysis
 - Geography and foreign policy
 - Relative economic development
 - Relative national capabilities
- ❖ **Topic 3: How and why states change their foreign policy**
 - Sources of foreign policy change at the individual level of analysis
 - Leadership learning and changes in foreign policy
 - Leadership turnover
 - Sources of foreign policy change at the state level of analysis
 - Domestic regime change and shifts in foreign policy
 - Non-Governmental Organizations and changes in foreign policy
 - Sources of foreign policy change at the international level of analysis
 - External shocks
 - Changes in relative power

Week 5 (March 16)

EQ: Why is war a persistent feature of international relations?

- ❖ **Topic 1: Wars between countries and the underlying causes of war (individual level of analysis)**
 - Wars between countries
 - Types of military conflicts between countries
 - Conflicts of interest and the stakes in international military conflicts
 - Incidence of international military conflicts
 - Lethality of international wars
 - Underlying causes of war: the individual level of analysis
 - Misperception and crisis escalation
 - The role of stress and “motivated biases”
 - Social psychology of small groups: groupthink
 - Risk taking by leaders
 - Over-optimism of leaders
- ❖ **Topic 2: The underlying causes of war (state and international levels of analysis)**
 - Underlying causes of war: the state level of analysis
 - Domestic economic systems and war
 - Domestic political institutions and governmental processes
 - Underlying causes of war: the international level of analysis
 - Anarchy as a permissive condition for war
 - Anarchy as a propellant of international conflict

❖ **Topic 3: Internal Wars and their Causes**

- Internal wars and international peace and security
- Internal wars: types and trends
- Causes of internal wars
 - The individual and internal war
 - The state and internal war
 - The international system and internal war

Week 6 (March 23)

EQ: What factors make it more likely that states will resolve their differences and live in peace?

❖ **Topic 1: Peace, the international distribution of power, and state strategies**

- The international distribution of power as a condition for peace
 - Balance of power
 - Hegemony
- State strategies for achieving interstate peace
 - Diplomacy
 - Power balancing

❖ **Topic 2: International law and institutions as mechanisms for peace**

- Essential features of international law and institutions
- Three experiences with international law and institutions
 - Collective security and the league of nations
 - The United Nations: a modified collective security system?
 - The rule of law and institutions: the case of the European Union

❖ **Topic 3: Transnational mechanisms for peace**

- Economic interdependence
- A possible international community of democratic nations
- Peace movements and global civil society

Week 7 (March 30)

EQ: How have nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction changed the practice of international relations?

❖ **Topic 1: Nuclear weapons and the Nuclear Revolution**

- Nuclear weapons
 - Who has them?
 - How do they work?

- The nuclear revolution: deterrence and statecraft
 - Assured destruction and the peculiar logic of MAD
 - Should governments prepare to fight nuclear war?
 - Living with MAD: arms control efforts
 - Does MAD still exist today?
- ❖ **Topic 2: Nuclear Proliferation and Efforts to Halt It**
 - Obtaining nuclear capability: difficult but not impossible
 - Why do states want nuclear weapons?
 - How dangerous is nuclear proliferation?
 - Efforts to halt proliferation: the grand bargain
- ❖ **Topic 3: Other Means of Mass Destruction**
 - Chemical weapons
 - How they work and efforts to control them
 - Biological weapons
 - How they work and efforts to control them
 - Comparing nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons
 - The emergence of cyber warfare
 - Nuclear weapons and terrorism

Mid-term Examination – April 10
FP Analysis Essay – April 10

Part II

States, Markets, and the International Political Economy

Week 8 (April 13)

EQ: How is the world economy influenced by international politics?

- ❖ **Topic 1: Basic elements of international trade**
 - Building blocks for analysis: consumption and production
 - Comparative advantage
 - The gains from trade
 - Why do countries protect themselves from trade?
- ❖ **Topic 2: Basic elements of international money**
 - National exchange-rate systems
 - Flexible exchange-rate systems

- Fixed exchange-rate systems
- Fixed vs. flexible exchange rate systems: benefits and risks
 - Advantages of fixed rates
 - Fighting inflation
 - Seeking an edge in trade competition
 - Risks of fixed rates
 - Surplus vs. deficit countries

❖ **Topic 3: Multinational enterprises and the institutions of the world economy**

- Definition and characteristics of multinational enterprises
- Importance of MNEs to the world economy
- Political issues surrounding MNEs
 - MNEs and national autonomy
 - The environment and worker rights
 - Domestic political consequences of MNEs
 - Human rights and democracy
 - MNEs and international peace
- The institutions of the world economy
 - International trade
 - From ITO to GATT to WTO
 - International finance
 - Why is IMF so controversial?
 - Global governance
 - From G-7 and G-8 to the G-20

Week 9 (April 20)

Chapter Nine: Power, Politics, and the World Economy

EQ: How do governments use international economic relations to further national political objectives?

❖ **Topic 1: Great eras of globalization and great traditions of thought**

- Two great eras of economic globalization
- States and markets: three great traditions of thought
 - Economic Liberalism
 - Economic Nationalism
 - Marxism

❖ **Topic 2: States and markets in a world of anarchy**

- The two-sided government: managing domestic and international relations
 - Promoting national economic growth
 - Protecting autonomy
 - Pursuing relative and absolute gains

- State building, war, and markets

❖ **Topic 3: Great powers in the world economy and the contemporary world economy**

- Great power and the world economy
 - Leadership and the liberal world economy
- The contemporary world economy: globalization and its challenges

Week 10 (April 27)

Chapter Ten: Dilemmas of Development

EQ: How does participation in the world economy help or hinder the economic development of poorer countries?

❖ **Topic 1: Introduction to development: developing countries and their challenges**

- What and where are the developing countries?
 - What is economic development?
 - Growth experiences of different groups of developing countries
- International relations and challenges to developing countries
 - Failure to develop: a legacy of colonialism?
 - Difficulties in development: a result of specializing in raw materials and agriculture?

❖ **Topic 2: Developing countries and international paths to development**

- Is international trade a path to development?
 - Developing countries and market-controlling trade strategies
 - Import-substituting industrialization
 - International commodity cartels
 - International commodity agreements
 - Developing countries and market-accepting trade strategies
 - Seeking a better path in international trade negotiations
- Is international finance a path to development?
 - International financial flows: meaning, types, and magnitudes
 - Financial flows: opportunities and challenges for developing countries
 - Bank loans, portfolio investments, and risk of financial crises
 - Multinational enterprises: opportunities and concerns
 - Official aid flows: help or hindrance to developing countries?
 - The issue of IMF lending to developing countries

❖ **Topic 3: Development strategies and emerging great powers**

- Brazil
- Russia

- India
- China

Part III

Selected Policy Issues in International Relations

Week 11 (May 4)

Chapter Eleven: Pirates, War Lords, and Terrorists

EQ: Is the state a political actor in decline?

❖ Topic 1: Sovereignty and its Challenges, Part 1

- States, sovereignty, and the Westphalian System
- Challenges to sovereign states
 - Pirates
 - Early piracy
 - Modern piracy
 - Weak states and warlords
 - Afghanistan
 - Sudan
 - Colombia

❖ Topic 2: Sovereignty and its Challenges, Part 2

- Challenges to sovereign states
 - Terrorists with global reach
 - Technology and the privatization of war

❖ Topic 3: The international system and its challenges

- International responses to terrorism, non-state violence, and failed states
 - What defines a failed state?
 - Global responses to failed states
- Wither the state?

Week 12 (May 11)

Chapter Twelve: The Environment and International Relations

EQ: How does the natural environment influence international relations?

❖ Topic 1: Sources of problems for the global environment and natural resources

- Negative externalities
- Tragedy of the commons
- Global deforestation

❖ **Topic 2: Challenges for the global environment and natural resources**

- Problems with the atmosphere
 - Global climate change
 - Ozone depletion
- Damage to the world's water resources
 - Fresh-water contamination
 - Oil pollution in the oceans
 - Threats to marine life
- Damage to the land
 - Deforestation
 - Contribution to global climate change
 - Issue of biodiversity

❖ **Topic 3: Management of international environmental problems**

- Unilateral responses
- Bilateral efforts
- Multilateral approaches

Term Paper – May 11

Week 13 (May 18)

Chapter Thirteen: Facing the Future: Six Visions of the Emerging International Order
EQ: Will the international system undergo fundamental change in the future?

❖ **Topic 1: Models 1 and 2**

- Model 1: a world of geo-economic competition
 - Characteristics of geo-economic competition
 - International trends
 - Contrary evidence and questions
- Model 2: a return to a multipolar balance of power system
 - Characteristics of multipolarity
 - International trends
 - Contrary evidence and questions

❖ **Topic 2: Models 3 and 4**

- Model 3: a new bipolarity
 - Characteristics of a new bipolarity
 - International trends
 - Contrary evidence and questions
- Model 4: a democratic peace
 - Characteristics of democratic peace
 - International trends

- Contrary evidence and questions

❖ **Topic 3: Models 5 and 6**

- Model 5: a clash of civilizations
 - Characteristics of a clash of civilizations
 - International trends
 - Contrary evidence and questions
- Model 6: global fracture-pre-modern, modern, and post-modern zones
 - Characteristics of global fracture
 - International trends
 - Contrary evidence and questions

Final Examination - June