This course is designed to provide students with a framework for understanding international politics. It introduces major concepts and contending approaches in the field of international relations, examines historical watersheds from which policy makers frequently draw lessons, and surveys contemporary issues in the areas of international political economy, international security, and international law and organization.

We shall take up questions such as the following: What accounts for broad patterns of conflict and cooperation in the international system? How do international conditions – such as the distribution of power, the design of international institutions, or the prevalence of international norms – influence the behavior of states and non-state actors? How do national or individual characteristics – such as culture, type of political regime, or beliefs of individual leaders – affect foreign policy? What does it mean to be a powerful state? How has globalization affected the prospects for global economic development? Why is it so hard to eradicate abject poverty? When humanitarian crises arise, who should intervene, and how? Is nuclear proliferation a stabilizing prospect? How should states respond to international terrorism?

This course will help students to develop analytical skills to understand the actors, goals, and tools that set international politics apart from domestic politics. It is not focused on the study of current events, but we will examine some of the most significant global conflicts and current debates that concern policy makers and publics today. Students will have the opportunity to hone their skills in argumentative writing through papers and essay-based exams.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Grades are based on student participation, one paper assignment, a midterm and a final exam. Students must complete all assigned papers and exams to be eligible for a passing grade in the course.

**Participation:** Informed participation and constructive debate in class are essential for a productive learning experience in the course. You should prepare for class not only by doing the readings, but also by making a habit of writing out, for your own reference, the thoughts and questions you wish to raise in class.

**Exams:** An in-class midterm will cover the first half of the course; a take-at-home final exam will be cumulative. Format for both is a combination of identification terms and short essays.

**Paper:** Students will write one 5-6 page paper due in the second half of the semester. These are argumentative or policy-advocating papers on topics drawn from the course materials. There will be a selection of questions and topics on which to write. Paper guidelines and topics will be distributed by the third week of the course.
Grading:
Class participation = 20%
Midterm Exam = 25%
Paper = 25%
Final exam = 30%

READINGS

Lectures are meant to highlight key aspects of a topic and to complement the readings, so you will be best prepared for class if you have done the readings as indicated in the syllabus, before class, and are ready to discuss them. Many of the readings are sophisticated, theoretically-oriented texts that require close attention and time to process intellectually, and some weeks have heavy reading loads. Please plan accordingly so you can stay on top of the readings.

The books listed below are required for the course. They are available for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore. Additional required readings are available in Blackboard.


ACADEMIC STANDARDS

All academic work for the course must meet the standards of the Honor Code; meaning essentially that all work submitted in the course must be your own. Please be sure you are familiar with the Honor Code and see me if you have questions about how it applies in the course.

Exam and paper due dates are not negotiable, so you should plan ahead to be able to meet them. Late papers will receive a lower grade: one-step grade reduction (e.g., from B to B–) if submitted after class but within 12 hours; 2-step grade reduction if submitted during the next 12-hour period, etc.; papers submitted more than 5 days late receive an automatic F. If you are unable to submit papers to me as due in class, be sure to do one of the following 1) hand them in personally to me or to Ms. Tucker in the Politics Department to have a proper record of the submission, or 2) email me an MS Word version of the paper. Do not slip papers under my office door unless you ok this with me beforehand! Only extreme circumstances, such as medical or family emergencies, may warrant exceptions to these terms.

Attendance: Regular on-time attendance is requisite for the course. I consider 2 unexcused absences, due to illness or extracurricular activities, acceptable; 3 is a stretch; more than this means that you are missing more than 15% of the course, which will affect your final grade in an unfortunate way.

I request that any students with a documented disability needing academic accommodations speak with Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (G-27 Peters Hall) and with me as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.
I. CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Central Concepts in the Study of International Relations

Introduction, T 2/9
- Jack Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories,” in Mingst & Snyder reader (hereafter M&S), 4-11. (If you don’t yet have the reader or are on the waitlist for the course, you can retrieve the article in either the Blackboard site for the course or the library’s EBSCO Academic Search Complete database (it’s from the Nov/Dec 2004 issue of Foreign Policy.)

Anarchy, Order and the International System, R 2/11
- Mingst, ch. 4.

States and Sovereignty, T 2/16
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, “The Real New World Order,” M&S ch. 5.

Nonstate Actors, R 2/18
- P.J. Simmons, “Learning to Live with NGOs,” Foreign Policy (Fall 1998), 82-96. BB

Contending Theoretical Approaches and Their Real-World Applications

Questions to consider as you do the readings in this section: To what extent are the major schools of IR theory compatible? On what issues do they diverge irreconcilably? Do these frameworks seem useful tools for those who practice international politics?

Realism, T 2/23 (guest lecture by Dr. Ji-Young Lee)
- Mingst, pp. 63-68.

Documentary Film Screening on the Origins of WWI, R 2/25
- get into the Nye reading listed for the next session!

Realism in Practice: Balance of Power Politics and the Road to the First World War, T 3/2
- Nye, ch. 3. BB

Liberalism, R 3/4
- Mingst, 59-63.
- Immanuel Kant, “To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” in M&S, 14-17.
Liberalism in Practice: Collective Security and the Road to the Second World War, T 3/9
- Nye, ch. 4. BB
- Recommended: Jack Snyder and Thomas J. Christensen, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” *International Organization* 44:2 (Spring 1990), 137-168. BB

Marxism and Dependency Theory, R 3/11
- Mingst, 68-72.

Constructivism, T 3/16
- Mingst, 72-75.
- J. Ann Tickner, “Man, the State, and War,” in M&S, 118-125.

IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM, R 3/18

II. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN IR

International Security

Nuclear Proliferation, T 3/23
- Scott D. Sagan, “How to Keep the Bomb from Iran,” in M&S, 360-368.
- Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick, “A Feminist Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction,” in M&S ch. 8.

Discussion: Nuclear Security and the War on Terrorism T 3/25
- Barnett R. Rubin, “Afghanistan and Pakistan.” GD
- Seymour M. Hersh, “Defending the Arsenal,” *The New Yorker*, November 16, 2009. BB

SPRING BREAK, Week of 3/29

Who Makes Foreign Policy? Bureaucratic Politics and Individual Leaders, T 4/6
- Mingst, 122-128.

Rational Actors? Avoiding War in the Cuban Missile Crisis, R 4/8 and T 4/13
These two classes will include screening of portions of *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of John McNamara.*
- Kennedy, entire.

International Political Economy
Along with lectures and discussion, the classes in this section of the course will incorporate portions of the documentary film *Commanding Heights*, a 3-part series on the evolution of the international economy.
Contending Approaches in IPE, R 4/15, T 4/20

- Mingst, 247-265.

Globalization and Development: Problems and Solutions, R 4/22, T 4/27

- Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 2005), chs. 12 (On the Ground Solutions for Ending Poverty) and 16 (Myths and Magic Bullets), BB

International Law and Organization

International Law, R 4/29

- Mingst, ch. 7.

The United Nations, T 5/4

- Mingst, 167-181.
- Recommended: John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” in M&S ch. 7.

International Intervention, R 5/6

- Samantha Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” in M&S, 290-310.
- David C. Morrison, “Human Rights in a New Era: Wars for Peace?” GD
- Recommended: Nye, sections on Intervention, 155-165. BB

Topic Open, T 5/11 unless you suggest otherwise it will be...

Discussion: Challenges to Existing International Power Hierarchies, T 3/16

- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” in M&S ch. 5.

Course Wrap-Up, R 5/13

Final Exams are due as scheduled by the College Registrar:

Section 1 exams are due before 5pm on Thursday, May 20, 2010
Section 2 exams are due before 5pm on Wednesday, May 19, 2010.