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 politics (commonly still known as international relations theory or IR), 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 erode 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; an in-class final exam will be cumulative. Format for both is a combination of identification terms and short essays.

Paper: Students will write one 6-7 page paper due in the second half of the semester. This is an argumentative or policy-advocating paper – topic chosen from a selection provided to you. Paper guidelines and topics will be distributed early in 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.


Current News: Students should regularly read a major daily news source. Standards like the *Washington Post* or *New York Times* are fine, but you should also consider foreign news sources. An excellent source for foreign language news reports/commentaries translated into English is *The World Press Review*, available at [www.worldpress.org](http://www.worldpress.org).

- Note: Everyone should sign up for *Foreign Policy* magazine’s “Flashpoints” and “Morning Brief.” Do so at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/user/register](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/user/register).

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 Politics

Introduction, T 2/8

States and Sovereignty, R 2/10
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, “The Real New World Order,” BB
- “More Sudans, More Problems?” Foreign Policy, January 25, 2011. BB

Nonstate Actors, T 2/15
- Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics,” in M&S ch. 7.
- P.J. Simmons, “Learning to Live with NGOs,” Foreign Policy (Fall 1998), 82-96. BB

Anarchy, Order and the International System, R 2/17
- Moises Naím, “Five Wars of Globalization,” in M&S ch. 5.

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? We’ll return to these on 3/10.

Realism, T 2/22
- [Thucydides’s] Melian Dialogue,” in M&S ch. 1. (continued)
John Mearsheimer, “Anarchy and the Struggle for Power,” in M&S ch. 3.


Realism in Practice: Balance of Power Politics and the Road to the First World War, R 2/24


Liberalism, T 3/1

- Michael W. Doyle, “Liberalism and World Politics,” in M&S ch. 3.
- Keohane, From After Hegemony, M&S ch. 7.

Liberalism in Practice: Collective Security and the Road to the Second World War, R 3/3

- 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

Constructivism, T 3/8

- Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” in M&S ch. 3.
- J. Ann Tickner, “Man, the State, and War,” in M&S ch. 3.

Discussion & Review, R 3/10

Refer to the questions at the beginning of this section as a guide for the session.

IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM, T 3/15

Note: Mani is away at a conference 3/13 – 3/16.

Who Makes Foreign Policy? Bureaucratic Politics and Individual Leaders, R 3/17

- Seymour M. Hersh, “Offense and Defense: The Battle Between Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon,” The New Yorker, April 7, 2003. BB

Rational Actors? Avoiding War in the Cuban Missile Crisis, T 3/22 and R 3/24

These two classes will include screening of portions of The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert McNamara.

- Kennedy, entire.

SPRING BREAK, Week of 3/28
II. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN IR

International Political Economy

Liberal Ordering in the Economy: Hegemony & Institutions, T 4/5
- Joseph Grieco and John Ikenberry, “State Power and the Promotion of National Interests through Economic Integration,” ch. 5 from State Power and World Markets. BB

Global Economic Crises I: Structural Adjustment in the Developing World, R 4/7
- Jeffrey D. Sachs, “Bolivia’s High-Altitude Hyperinflation,” ch. 6 from The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time. BB
- Naomi Klein, “Crisis Works: The Packaging of Shock Therapy,” ch. 8 from The Shock Doctrine. BB

Global Economic Crises II: Advanced Industrial Economies, T 4/12 and R 4/14
Screening of portions of Commanding Heights, a PBS documentary about the global economy.
- “Bumbliners,” Foreign Policy photo essay. BB

What is development? T 4/19
- Amartya Sen, “What did you learn in the world today?” BB

Development Solutions: Big Push or Piecemeal Approach? R 4/21

International Law and Organization

International Law and Justice, T 4/26

International Intervention, R 4/28
- Samantha Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” in M&S ch. 7.
- David C. Morrison, “Human Rights in a New Era: Wars for Peace?” BB
International Security

The United Nations, T 5/3
- UN Website: http://www.un.org/ – Read Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter
- Virginia Page Fortna, From Does Peacekeeping Work? in M&S ch. 7.
- Gareth Evans, “When is it Right to Fight?” in M&S ch. 8.

Nuclear Proliferation, R 5/5

Catch-Up class, T 5/10

Course Wrap-Up, R 5/12

In-Class Final Exam as scheduled by the College Registrar:
Section 1 exam is held 2-4 pm on Thursday, May 19, 2011.
Section 2 exam is held 2-4 pm on Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

Rev 2/4/11