COURSE DESCRIPTION

Themes. Non-state actors have long influenced the use of violence, the creation of norms, and the distribution of wealth that guide relations among states. They increasingly challenge the traditional state system and thus the underlying structure of international politics. Yet what approaches exist to analyzing the diverse range of non-state actors? How do non-state actors form and evolve? When do they act as challengers to states, and when do they serve to reinforce state capacity? How do non-state actors influence norm building and policy making? What does their influence signify for the future of international politics? We take up such questions as we examine several types of non-state actors, including transnational advocacy networks and NGOs, transnational corporations, transnational criminal networks, private security providers, and terrorist groups.

Goals. This seminar is designed to provide students with 1) a conceptual framework for understanding the role of non-state actors in the international system 2) an empirical base of knowledge about the historical and contemporary impact of non-state actors and the various forms and purposes these assume in practice and 3) guidance as they conduct research and write a substantial analytical paper on a topic related to the course.

Peer Engagement. Active and collegial student participation is an essential component of the course. For our weekly sessions, students will post a comment on the readings (by the day before class) in the course Blackboard discussion board; they should read each other’s posts before class in order to have a sense of colleagues’ perspectives on the topics. Students will also write three critical reviews comparing two of the readings to help focus their understanding of them; one of these will be presented in class to start off that day’s discussion. In addition, students will read and critique each other’s draft research papers; and in the final segment of the course each student will give a presentation from his/her research paper in the class. These activities are intended to provide students with the opportunity to refine their analytical skills, to practice their ability to shape and participate in class discussions, and to develop critical-constructive abilities in assessing the work of their peers.
**Structure.** The course develops in three parts. Part I provides a conceptual overview of the state-based international environment and of how non-state actors fit into this context. Part II examines several different types of non-state actors – how they have evolved, what they do, how they matter in shaping (and being shaped by) existing dynamics in the international system. Part III is devoted to students’ research presentations.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Regular *attendance* in each class, *reading* of the assigned texts well before class, and active *discussion* of the texts and issues are essential for success of the course. The readings require critical evaluation and debate for class discussions and provide theoretical and empirical stimuli for your research projects.

In addition to weekly preparations for class, students will complete a *research paper* (20-25 pages) on a topic directly relevant to the course. During the last weeks of the course, students will present core components of their research papers for discussion in the seminar. Papers should be theoretically driven by a research question and at least one specified hypothesis; they should also indicate the theoretical and practical implications of your findings.

Grades are based on three components of the course:

- **30% toward class participation.** This includes:
  - Regular attendance and participation in discussions
  - Weekly Blackboard Posts – posting of a short comment (2-3 paragraphs in length is appropriate) on one or more of the readings: what did you find most interesting in the readings, and why? You are welcome to include a specific question for discussion in class. Posts need to be recorded by noon the day before class.
  - Three Critical Reviews – on three occasions, preparation of a 2-3 page (double spaced, 1” margins, 12-pt font) critical review of comparing two of the week’s readings. You will present one of these in class on a scheduled date. The reviews should be focused on a core theme or idea, not recap the readings. Submit these in class in hard copy; aim to submit at least one of these in September, one in October, and the final one by Thanksgiving.

- **20% toward presentation of your own project and discussion of other students’ projects** during the last weeks of the course.

- **50% toward the research paper.** This includes the research proposal (10%), annotated bibliography (5%), draft paper (given an interim grade to guide student expectations) and final paper (35%).

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

- All academic work for the course must meet the standards of the Honor Code. Please be sure you are familiar with it and see me if you have questions about how it applies in assignments for the course.
- Students must complete all components of the course in order to qualify for a passing grade.
- The following terms apply to paper-related assignment due dates. Due dates are firm and not negotiable; you should plan ahead to be able to meet them. Late assignments will
receive a lower grade (2-step grade reduction per day, e.g. from B to C+); assignments submitted more than 5 days (120 hours) late receive an automatic F. If you are unable to submit assignments to me as due in class, be sure to hand them in to me personally or email if necessary as a Word document. Do not shove papers under my office door!! Only extreme circumstances such as medical or family emergencies, may warrant exceptions to these terms.

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.

REASDINGS
Individual readings are available either as a download in the course Blackboard site (BB), or as an electronic title via OBIS (E).
In addition, these books are recommended for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore (a copy is also available in reserves):


I. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS: THE STATE, SOVEREIGNTY, AND ORDER IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Week 1: September 4. Introduction
No scheduled readings.

Week 2: September 11. The Global Context: States, Sovereignty, and Global Governance
Further Reading:

II. NON-STATE ACTORS:
CHALLENGERS, PARTNERS, OR SUBALTERNS OF STATES?

Week 3: September 18. The Globalization of Private Security
Abrahamsen and Williams, *Security Beyond the State*, chs. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Week 4: September 25. International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)
1) Peter A. Gourevitch and David A. Lake, “Beyond Virtue: Evaluating and Enhancing the Credibility of Non-Governmental Organizations,” ch. 1 in *CTNGO*, 3-34.

Week 5: October 2. Transnational Advocacy Networks

Week 6: October 9. Library Research Session. Meet in Mudd, classroom TBA.

Week 7: October 16. Transnational Organized Crime

Proposal for Research Paper Due
2) Moisés Naim, “Mafia States,” *Foreign Affairs* May/June 2012. BB
3) Peter Andreas, “Measuring the Mafia State Menace,” *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2012. BB

Week 8: October 23. No Class: Fall Break.

Week 9: October 30. **Transnational Corporations**


Week 10: November 6. No Class: Election Night…So you’ll be watching the small screen

Use this class-free week to make progress on your research papers! Plan to meet with Mani or Mitchell, as needed.

Week 11: November 13. **Terrorist Groups**

**Annotated Bibliography Due**


Further reading:


Week 12: November 20. **Conclusions: Power and Accountability in the International System**


3) Gourevitch and Lake, “Credibility and compromises,” ch. 8 in *CTNGO*, 193-207.

III. STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Week 13: November 27. Student Research Presentations

Draft of Research Paper Due

Week 14: December 4: Student Research Presentations

Week 15: December 11. Student Research Presentations and Course Wrap-Up

FINAL PAPERS DUE BEFORE 5pm on Friday, December 14

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