Politics 120
INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
Oberlin College Spring 2014, 4 credits (4SS, W-INT)
TR 11:00-12:15pm in King 241

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Office hours: Wednesdays 1:30pm–3pm, Thursdays 1pm-2:30pm
Students should sign up for office hours at http://tinyurl.com/34ywc3f

COURSE OVERVIEW
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 law and organization, international security, and international political economy.

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 prosperity? When humanitarian crises arise, who should intervene, and how? What new forms of warfare have arisen and how do they challenge conventional practices?

This course will help students 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 conflicts and transnational concerns of policymakers and publics today. The course also emphasizes the skill of writing review and argumentative papers, so students will draft and workshop papers before submitting final drafts.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Graded Components

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>20% (draft due 3/18, final due 3/20)</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>25% (draft due 4/17, final due 4/24)</td>
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<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>25% (due 5/14)</td>
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**Participation:** Regular *attendance* in class, *reading* of the assigned texts before class, and *constructive participation* in class discussions are important for your success and learning in the course. Constructive participation means:

- Respect others’ rights to hold opinions
- Listen carefully to what others say
- It’s fine to disagree with others, but do so with courtesy; don’t interrupt
- Support your statements!
- Allow everyone the chance to talk

**Quizzes:** There will be five unannounced quizzes during the term. These are intended to test your understanding of the day's assigned reading. Quizzes are graded Pass/No Pass. Your *best four quizzes* will count toward your quiz grade. The quiz component of your course grade will be A for 4xPass, B+ for 3xPass, B- for 2xPass, C for 1xPass, D for 0xPass. Quizzes are given at the beginning of class, and there are no makeups for lateness or unexcused absences.

**Papers:** Students will write three 5-6 page papers during the semester. The first is a comparative review essay, the remaining are argumentative papers. All papers will be based on topics drawn from the course materials, so no additional research is expected; rather, the emphasis is on developing your papers through a multi-stage process of drafts, assessment and revision. Students will prepare initial drafts of the first two papers, to be workshopped in class.

**ELECTRONICS POLICY**

**Phones** must be muted and stored away for the duration of the class.

**Laptops** are permitted in class for those students who require them *only* for purposes of accessing course readings and taking notes. I reserve the right to have students work with closed laptops in portions of the course (for instance during general class discussions).

**Uploading materials** from this course onto a third party web site is not permitted. Such materials are intended for the use of students in this class only.
ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Honor Code. All academic work for the course must meet the standards of the Honor Code. Please be sure you are familiar with the Honor Code and see me if you have questions about how it applies in the course. Recall also that on each assignment you complete, you are required to sign the Honor Pledge, “I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.”

Paper due dates. Plan ahead to meet due dates. 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.

NOTE: Students must complete all assigned papers to be eligible for a passing grade in the course.

Attendance. Regular on-time attendance is requisite for the course. I consider up to 2 absences, due to illness or extracurricular activities, allowable; 3 is a stretch; more than this means that you are missing more than 15% of the course, which will affect your participation grade in an unfortunate way. If you miss a class, get notes from a classmate.

Disability Services. Please speak with Jane Boomer in the Office of Disability Services and with me as early in the semester as possible if you have a documented disability that requires accommodation. All discussions will remain confidential.
READINGS

The books listed below are required for the course. They are available for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore. One copy of each book is on reserve at Mudd Library. Remaining assigned readings are available in Blackboard (BB).


I. CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Central Concepts in the Study of International Politics

**Tuesday, 2/4: Introduction**
- No reading required. Recommended primer (also to consult later): Jack Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories,” *Foreign Policy* (Nov-Dec 2004), 52-62. BB

**Thursday, 2/6: A Primer on Levels of Analysis, Anarchy and Order in the International System**
- Nye, chapter 2.

**Tuesday, 2/11: States and Sovereignty**

**Thursday, 2/13: Transnational Actors**
- Nye, ch. 8. 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?

Tuesday, 2/18: Realism
- Kenneth N. Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” M 27-34.

Thursday, 2/20: Discussion: Realism in Practice

Tuesday, 2/25: Liberalism
- Robert O. Keohane, “International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?” Foreign Policy (Spring 1998), 82-96. BB

Thursday, 2/27: Discussion: Liberalism in Practice

Tuesday, 3/4: Constructivism

Thursday, 3/6: Discussion: Constructivism in Practice

Tuesday, 3/11: From the West to the Rest
- Kupchan, No One’s World, ch 1 and pp. 64-72 and ch. 4.
Thursday, 3/13: Managing a Non-West Led World?

Tuesday, 3/18: Workshop on Writing Paper 1
***Bring initial draft in hard copy to class AND email a copy to Mani before class***

***Paper 1 due at beginning of class***

SPRING BREAK, Week of 3/24

II. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN IR

International Law and Organization

Tuesday, 4/1: International Law and Justice
- Nye, pp. 196-206. BB
- Spend at least 30 minutes surfing the United Nation’s Web site, www.un.org

Thursday, 4/3: International Intervention and R2P
- Nye, pp. 206-218. BB

International Security

Tuesday, 4/8: Child Soldiers: Context and Causes
- Peter W. Singer, *Children at War*, chs. 1, 2 and 3.

Thursday, 4/10: Child Soldiers: Prevention through Law, Norms and Technology
- Singer, *Children at War*, chs. 6, 8 and 9.

Tuesday, 4/15: Nuclear Proliferation
- NTI, Role of the IAEA http://ntiindex.org/news-items/the-role-of-the-iaea/
Thursday, 4/17: National Security of Climate Change
***Draft Paper 2 due – BRING TWO HARD COPIES***
Screening of part of The Island President, documentary on the 2009 Copenhagen climate change summit and the Maldives' role in globally reducing carbon emissions

Tuesday, 4/22: Peer Review Workshop
***BRING your peer review comments on the papers you have read, to discuss with the authors in class.***

International Political Economy

Thursday, 4/24: The Structures of the International Economy
***Paper 2 due at beginning of class***
- Nye, 255-275. BB

Tuesday, 4/29: Global Financial Crises: System; Korea Case
- Blustein, The Chastening, chs. 1, 2, and 7.

Thursday, 5/1: Global Financial Crises: Russia Case; Prescriptions

Tuesday, 5/6: Development Convergence?

Thursday, 5/8: Conclusions from the Course & Distribution of Final Paper Assignment

** Final Paper due in hard copy (Rice 205) before 4pm on Wednesday, May 14, 2014.***