International Politics

The purpose of this course is to broaden our knowledge of international politics and to sharpen our analytical ability in interpreting world events. To accomplish this, we will focus on both traditional/classical as well as modern theories of international relations. Since many believe that there has not been a complete break or departure between traditional and modern theories, the two traditions will receive our attention throughout the semester. Whether it is the balance of power theory or any of the many political economy theories, all will be examined to assist in developing a scholarly approach to and an informed understanding of world politics. Thus there will always be a twofold emphasis: an introduction to theories and concepts in international relations, and an application of these theories to explain world conflicts, both in the past and in the post Cold War period.

STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE: Each class meeting will be divided between lectures, discussions on contemporary international politics, and occasional documentaries and films. Discussion will be based on handouts of articles on international politics from leading publications to be distributed in class at no cost to you. There will be three in-class examinations, including the final, two take-home written assignments (three pages each). The first in-class exam is objective (multiple choice & true and false), worth 25 points; the second is objective and subjective (short essays and definitions), worth 30 points; the third, a final, is both objective and subjective, worth 35 points. The first take-home written assignment is a research essay worth 5 points; the second, part of the final, is an essay based on the assigned readings. This brings your total up to 100 points. The grading system for this class is as follows: the grade of A begins at 87.5; B at 77.5; C at 67.5; and D at 57.5. The course also provides you with the opportunity to earn an additional 10 points over the 100. This opportunity is in the form of 5 unannounced quizzes (each is worth 2 points; they are multiple choice & true and false) which can be given at anytime during the course (or the period during which the class meets) and will cover the materials discussed up to and including the day of the quiz. Since these quizzes are not part of the basic course assignments, there will be no makeup or substitute assignments if they are missed. (Attendance is a must in this class). In-class exams require a SCANTRON form #882 and a No. 2 pencil. DROPPING THE CLASS REMAINS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

The two take-home written assignments differ from each other. The first is in the form of a research essay. For the paper to be accepted and graded, a one-page statement about the topic, thesis, and sources to be used is required. Only when the statement is approved,
you can start writing the three-page research essay. A guideline handout on how to write the assignments will be distributed in class. The second take-home assignment, which is due in the last week of class, will be part of the final examination. More about it will be discussed as we approach the last week of classes.

While writing your research essay, bear in mind the following findings. Students were asked in a previous class to write an essay employing the three levels of analysis to explain an inter-state war. Based on a “Student Learning Outcome” analysis, I found the following: A good majority of the students showed a good grasp of the three levels of analysis and were able to focus their answers on a specific interstate war. Only a very small minority demonstrated weak command of the three levels, while an even more limited number were unable to focus on a specific war. Also, a very small number confused the three levels of analysis with each other, unable to match the correct theoretical proposition with the correct level of analysis.

While most of the students show a good understanding of the levels of analysis, their discussions comprised two separate sections, one on theory and the other on the war examined. Their reluctance to integrate the two sections has a lot to do with insufficient training in relating supporting facts to theoretical assumptions. Thus one basic need meriting attention is how to use theories and concepts in the form of the written essay.

Also, the age of the internet seems to have produced a bias against conventional and reliable sources of research. Despite my frequent in-class appeals to make sure that their sources should include an author’s name, name of publication and its date, many students continued to provide exclusive url addresses, names of publications without article titles or dates, and an inability to distinguish reliable from unreliable sources.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Recommended & Background Books

FIRST WEEK
General Introduction
Idealism and Realism in World Politics.
The Development of International Politics as a Science
Idealist and Realist Positions on War and Peace
Balance of Power as a Realist Theory of World Politics
Readings: “Realism and Idealism,” Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy,
SECOND WEEK
Approaches to International Relations
International Relations in Daily Life
Thinking Theoretically
Making Sense of International Relations
Readings: Chp.1

THIRD WEEK
The Historical Context of Contemporary International Relations
The Pre-Westphalian World
The Emergence of the Westphalian System
Europe in the Nineteenth Century
The Interwar Years and World War II
The Cold War
The Post Cold War Era
Learning from History
Readings: Chp.2

FOURTH WEEK
Contending Perspectives
Theory and the Levels of Analysis
Liberalism and Neoliberal Institutionalism
Realism and Neorealism
The Radical Perspective
Seeing the World through Theoretical Lenses
Readings: Chp.3

FIFTH WEEK
Contending Perspectives
Readings: Chp.3

FIRST EXAMINATION

SIXTH WEEK
The International System
The Notion of a System
The International System According to Liberals
The International System According to Realists
The International System According to Radicals
Advantages and Disadvantages of the International System as a Level of Analysis
From the International System to the State
Readings: Chp.4
SEVENTH WEEK
The State
The State and the Nation
Contending Conceptualizations of the State
The Nature of State Power
Using State Power
Models of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking
Challenges to the State
Readings: Chp.5

EIGHTH WEEK
The Individual
Foreign-Policy Elites: Individuals Who Matter
Private Individuals
Mass Publics
How Much Do Individuals Matter?
Readings: Chp.6
Conversations with Robert Jervis: Doing International Relations Theory
http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people5/Jervis/jervis-con2.html
Robert Jervis on the Bush Administration's Response to 9/11
http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people5/Jervis/jervis-con4.html

NINTH WEEK
SECOND EXAMINATION

Intergovernmental Organizations, Nongovernmental Organizations, and
International Law (Part I)
Realist Views of International Organization and Law
The Radical View of International Organization and Law
Organizations, and International Law Make a Difference?
Readings: Chp.7

TENTH WEEK
Intergovernmental Organizations, Nongovernmental Organizations, and
International Law (Part II)
Realist Views of International Organization and Law
The Radical View of International Organization and Law
Organizations, and International Law Make a Difference?
Readings: Chp.7

ELEVENTH WEEK
War and Strife
The Causes of War
The Changing Character of Warfare and Its Instruments
The Just War Tradition
Approaches to Managing Insecurity
Other Threats to International Security
TWELFTH WEEK
International Political Economy
Contending Theoretical Approaches
Key Concepts in Liberal Economics
Power, Competition, and Development in the International Political Economy
The Role of Institutions in Managing Power, Competition, and Development
Readings: Chp.9

THIRTEENTH WEEK
Current Issues in Political Economy
Readings will be handed out in class.

FOURTEENTH WEEK
Globalizing Issues
Health and Disease—Protecting Life in the Commons
The Environment—Protecting Space in the Global Commons
Human Rights—Protecting Human Dignity
The Impact of Globalizing Issues
Do Globalizing Issues Lead to Global Governance
Readings: Chp.10

FIFTEENTH WEEK
Current Issues in the Globalization Debate

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/03/magazine/03DOMINANCE.html?_r=2&oref=slogin

SIXTEENTH WEEK

FINAL EXAMINATION