POLS 100S: Introduction to International Politics  
Fall 2004

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30—2:45 p.m  
Batten Arts & Letters 234

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Fall 2004 Office Hours:  
T 4:30—6:00 p.m.  
Th 2:45—4:30 p.m.  
Or  
By Appointment

Blackboard Technical Support (OCCS)  
http://www.odu.edu/dl/clt/bb/student_help_page.html  
757-683-3192

Syllabus

Catalogue Description and Objectives

This course introduces students to the systematic study of world politics. Rather than merely surveying the breadth and scope of issues in international relations today, the course introduces students to three principal theories of international relations. By taking a conceptual approach to international relations, the course seeks to train students both to think abstractly about everyday politics, and to use concrete evidence from current events to assess the strengths and weaknesses of abstract theory. Students will learn to think critically about the role of nation-states, international organizations, and non-state actors in international processes including warfare, trade, and globalization. The course has three goals: (i) to introduce students to basic concepts, hypotheses and theories of international relations; (ii) to instruct students in the application of these theories to problems of international politics, both historical and contemporary; and (iii) to prepare students for advanced study in international relations and political science.

Discussion

While scholars of international relations typically have been concerned with the causes of war, today students and scholars alike seek to understand a broad range of issues. Why are some states perpetually impoverished? What can the community of nations do to prevent environmental degradation? Why are states today more capable of preventing war than they are of protecting their citizens from terrorists or exploitation
by multinational corporations? What role (if any) do nongovernmental international organizations—such as protest movements or environmental organizations—play in the management of global problems? These concerns reflect both the diversity of challenges in international relations today and the richness of scholarship that investigates these questions.

This course does not introduce students to the myriad of international issues. Rather the course trains students in the theories and methods of the subdiscipline of international relations. Political scientists have developed theories that allow for systematic inquiry into a variety of international problems. Using international conflict, international economics, and globalization as empirical referents, the course demonstrates how these theories explain a variety of interactions between nation-states, both historical and contemporary. The purposes of this course are (i) to train students in these theories; (ii) to encourage them to use empirical evidence to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical approach; (iii) to understand current events in terms of these theoretical tools; and (iv) to prepare them for further study in political science and associated disciplines—including sociology and economics—that address questions of international relations. Students who complete the course will possess both the theoretical tools to understand contemporary international relations, and the practical knowledge of how such events affect their daily lives.

**Prerequisites**

This is an introductory political science course, for which students need not have completed any other courses. I expect students, however, to satisfy two prerequisites:

1. Students must have an ODU email account and password with which to access course materials and information through the Blackboard system (http://blackboard.odu.edu). An email account with an off-campus service provider (such as Yahoo! Mail) will not provide you the access to materials you need.

2. Students must read regularly newspapers or websites that cover international issues. This is necessary both for your familiarity with current global news and for our weekly “Of what is this an instance?” exercise that constitutes a portion of your course grade. I recommend you read The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Financial Times, The Economist magazine, or their affiliated websites.

**Course Materials**

You can purchase the following textbooks at the ODU bookstore in the Webb Center (http://odu.bookstore.com). You may also find copies for a competitive price at the Dominion Bookstore on Hampton Boulevard.

**Required Books**


**Recommended Books**


I have also assigned and recommended several articles for you to read during the semester. These articles are available through the Library’s electronic reserves (http://www.lib.odu.edu/ereserves/index.htm).

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

Student grades are based upon four elements of the course:

1. **A 3 to 5 page analytic paper due 5:00 p.m. Friday, October 15th** (20 percent of the student’s grade). The purpose of this paper is to apply your knowledge of international relations theory to a current or historical event. Using a recent newspaper article or an historical episode, students will analyze the occurrence using the theories we have discussed in the course. The event must be an international one—that is, an interaction between two or more states—not a question of politics within a single state. Students are expected to discuss (a) which theoretical approach (realism, liberalism, or constructivism) best explains the observed event and why; and (b) which level of analysis best explains the observed event and why. **The student must meet with me for approval of a topic no later than September 14th.**

2. **A 10- to 15-page research paper due 5:00 p.m. Friday, November 19th** (35 percent). The student may write about any international relations issue, either contemporary or historical, but must satisfy two criteria. First, the issue must involve the relation between two or more states. It is not appropriate, for example, to write a paper that seeks to explain the development of democracy in Mexico (a topic typically covered in a course on comparative politics). An appropriate topic might be, however, a discussion of the reasons for persistent impoverishment of Latin American countries. Second, the paper must seek to explain the issue using one or more of the theories and levels of analysis we discuss in the course. Rather than describing an issue, your paper should explain it by (a) using realism, liberalism, or constructivism, and (b) by looking at the systemic, state or individual levels of analysis. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate your mastery of the theories we have learned. The best papers therefore are those that not only explain the observed issue, but also discuss the analytic strengths and weaknesses of the realism, liberalism and constructivism. **The student must meet with me for approval of a topic no later than October 8th.**

3. **A final project** (35 percent), either an in-class exam or a second research paper. See below for details.
4. **Participation in class discussions and exercises** (10 percent). This includes participation in our weekly exercise called “Of what is this an instance?” **Each Sunday, starting September 5th**, students will email me a newspaper clipping or article about a current international issue. I will review your submissions and select one or two for distribution, which I will then post to our Blackboard page (http://blackboard.ou.edu). I expect you not only to read the article I circulate but also to consider how one can understand the event in terms of the levels and units of analysis and three theories of international politics. In other words, “Of what is this an instance?” is an in-class exercise similar to the short analytic papers you will write. There are no “right” answers for each week’s exercise: the purpose is stimulate your mind, to encourage you to climb the ladder of abstraction, and to develop the habit of asking critical questions about contemporary global issues. For this reason it is valuable practice for you, and a good reason to be prepared to discuss the newspaper clipping I provide.

**Final Project Options**

Students have an option either (1) to take an in-class final exam during the University-designated exam period (the week of December 11-18th), or (2) to write a 10 to 15-page research paper. **You must notify me by November 24th whether you plan to take the exam or to write a second research paper.** You should choose the option that best demonstrates your mastery of the course materials:

1. The in-class exam will consist of three essay questions. Each of these questions seeks to probe the student’s understanding of the theories and methods of analysis introduced in the course. The questions will not require specific knowledge of events. For example, the questions will not ask, “In what year did World War I begin?” Rather, a typical essay question will ask “Using World War I as an example, explain the points of agreement and disagreement between realism and liberalism. How do they diverge on the meaning and consequences of anarchy? How do these points of agreement and divergence affect each theory’s explanation for the causes of World War I?”

2. The final paper will be approximately 10- to 15-pages long, but unlike the previous paper, the student must address one of three questions that I will provide to on November 30th. I expect your paper to (a) discuss which of the three theoretical approaches best answers the question; (b) consider and refute counter-arguments and contradictory evidence; and (c) supplement your argument with ideas and information from sources other than those we have read during the course of the semester. In this sense, the final paper is also a research project.

Finally, I recognize that each individual student has unique learning skills. I am open to discuss alternative final projects if a student feels the in-class exam or second research paper does not allow him or her to demonstrate a mastery of the course’s subject matter. It is the student’s responsibility, however, to propose an alternative project and to gain my approval before hand. I cannot accept final projects that I have not approved.

**Grades**

There is no grading curve for the course. It is hypothetically possible for each student to get an A, or for each to get an F. I grade each student’s work on its merits, irrespective of the merit of other students’ work.
Based on your on-time completion of the required assignments and your adherence to the University’s honor code (see below), I will assign you a final grade from the following grade scale:

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<th>Percent</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94–100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90–93</td>
<td>A–</td>
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<td>87–89</td>
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<td>83–86</td>
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<td>60–62</td>
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<td>0–59</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Late Work**

I will accept late work but will penalize you five points for each day the assignment is late, including weekend days. To avoid this penalty, you must obtain from me an extension of the due date no later than 48 hours before the assignment is due, at which time we will agree to a new due date. I reserve the discretion to grant or withhold no- penalty extensions, and will do so only for serious reasons.

**Academic Integrity**

I expect all students to understand and to abide by the University’s honor code. You should understand your rights and obligations, what constitutes a violation of the honor code and academic integrity, what disciplinary procedures and sanctions you may face, and what options I have should I suspect a violation. If you are unfamiliar with the honor code and disciplinary procedures, I suggest you visit the Honor Council’s webpage (http://studentservices.odu.edu/hc/). If you are unsure what may or may not constitute plagiarism, I suggest you visit http://www.csubak.edu/ssric/Modules/Other/plagiarism.htm.

**Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with the University’s policies and procedures, I will work to accommodate students with disabilities. If you require such accommodations, please contact me by email, phone or during office hours as early in the semester as possible.

**Sexual Harassment**

It is the policy of Old Dominion University to provide students and employees with an environment for learning and working that is free of sexual harassment, whether by
members of the same sex or the opposite sex, which is prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. I expect all seminar participants to understand and abide by the University’s sexual harassment policy and procedures, as detailed at http://web.odu.edu/webroot/orgs/AO/PO/eoe.nsf/pages/eohome.

Course Plan and Schedule

Part One: Concepts and Approaches

August 31st: Course Objectives, Materials and Assignments: Is there a “science” of international relations?

September 2nd: Units and Levels of Analysis

   Required Readings:
   • Spiegel et. al., ch. 1
   • Nye, ch. 2

September 7th and 9th: Anarchy and its Consequences: Realism versus Liberalism

   Required Readings:
   • Nye, ch. 1
   • Spiegel et. al., chs. 2, 4

September 14th: Anarchy as a Construct: Constructivism

   Required Readings:

September 14th: Deadline for Approval of Short Paper Topic

September 16th: Actors other than states

   Required Readings:
   • Spiegel et. al., ch. 11
   • Nye, ch. 8

   Recommended Readings:

Part Two: International Security and Conflict

September 21st and 23rd: Introduction to Conflict: World War I

Required Readings:
• Spiegel et. al., pp. 203–229
• Nye, ch. 3
• Remarque, entire

September 28th and 30th: World War II

Required Readings:
• Spiegel et. al., pp. 230–258
• Nye, ch. 4

October 5th and 7th: The Cold War

Required Readings:
• Spiegel et. al., ch. 6
• Nye, ch. 5

Recommended Reading:

October 8th: Deadline for Approval of Research Paper Topic

October 12th: No class session (fall holiday)

October 14th: A Democratic Peace? Conflict after the Cold War

Required Readings:
• Friedman, ch. 12
• Nye, ch. 6

Recommended Reading:
Part Three: International Political Economy

October 19\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st}: Thinking about IPE: Introduction to Trade and Finance

Required Reading:
- Spiegel et. al., ch. 7

Recommended Reading:
- Lairson and Skidmore, chs. 1-3

October 26\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th}: Bretton Woods, GATT, and the WTO

Required Reading:
- Spiegel et. al., ch. 10

Recommended Reading:
- Lairson and Skidmore, chs. 4-6

November 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th}: Relations between the Rich and the Poor

Required Reading:
- Spiegel et. al., ch. 12

Recommended Reading:
- Lairson and Skidmore, chs. 8-13

November 9\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th}: Economics and Globalization

Required Reading:
- None; work on research papers

Recommended Readings:
- Friedman, ch. 11

Part Four: Globalization and Emerging Issues in International Relations

November 16\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th}: Globalization: Who wins, who loses?

Required Readings:
- Spiegel et. al., ch. 8
- Nye, ch. 7
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Recommended Reading:
• Friedman, chs. 1-3, 13-14

November 19th: RESEARCH PAPER DUE by 5:00 p.m.

November 23rd: Emerging Challenges to State Sovereignty

Required Readings:

November 24th: NOTIFICATION OF YOUR CHOICE OF FINAL EXAM OR RESEARCH PAPER DUE by 5:00 p.m.

November 30th and December 2nd: Thinking about the Future

Required Readings:
• Nye, ch. 9
• Spiegel et. al., ch. 13

Recommended Readings:
• Lairson and Skidmore, ch. 14
• Friedman, ch. 20

December 7th and 9th: Review

Week of December 11th: Exam or Final Project

FINAL PAPER DUE (Date & Time of Final Exam) OR IN-CLASS EXAM

End of Semester
Supplementary Reading Materials

Levels of Analysis


Realism and Liberalism


Globalization

