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PSC 130E.01: International Relations

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UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA :: DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SUMMER 2008

PSC 130E: International Relations

M-TH 9:30-11:20, LA 337

International relationships are ... preordained to be clumsy gestures based on imperfect knowledge.

— REBECCA WEST, *THE STRANGE NECESSITY*, CH. 10 (1928)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

International relations (IR) is the study of conflict and cooperation in international politics. This course introduces you to three different perspectives used to understand patterns of international conflict and cooperation — realism, liberalism, and the identity perspective. With this background, you will gain a better understanding of the behavior of international actors as they address contemporary issues in international politics.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY

Learning is more than memorizing facts and answering questions on a test. It is using information to gain an understanding of how things work and how to make them better. In this course, learning will be defined as the process of enhancing your ability to:

- Ask the right questions and frame good problems,
- Acquire information and evaluate sources of information,
- Critically investigate and solve problems,
- Make choices among different alternatives,
- Explain concepts to others both orally and in writing and,
- Generalize to new situations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Explain current events by applying three theoretical perspectives.
- Compile and compare explanations at different levels of analysis.
- Identify the underlying ethical positions informing the actions of others in IR.
- Evaluate competing ethical claims about how IR should be conducted.
- Defend held ethical commitments about how IR should be conducted.
- Resolve simulated conflicts using the instruments of international relations.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is one required text for this course available at the UC Bookstore for \$50:

Nau, Henry R. 2008. *Perspectives on International Relations: Power, Institutions, and Ideas*. First Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 1933116463.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following paragraphs outline the basic requirements for this course. More detailed information on specific assignments can be found on the course website.

Knowledge of Current Events

To provide practice applying different perspectives to current events, students will read *The Christian Science Monitor* daily (Monday-Friday). Each day, the class will discuss world events covered in the CSM since the previous discussion. The CSM is available online at <http://www.csmonitor.com>. Students' responses will be graded on a "good faith" basis. Students not prepared to answer will lose 10 points.

Participation

On days in which a chapter from Nau has been assigned, random students will be selected to respond to the "study questions" found in the book. Students' responses will be graded on a "good faith" basis. Students not prepared to answer will lose 25 points.

Critical Analysis (Article Review and Presentation)

In academic terms, critical analysis means considering the claims of an author, what they are based on, and how relevant they are. This involves splitting those claims up into their component parts and conducting a "close reading" of the author's work. The critical analysis requirement of this course will be done in two parts:

1. Students will critically analyze commentary on international relations published in the CSM during the course on both the midterm and the final exam.
2. Students will write two short papers critically analyzing the arguments in a scholarly article. One article will be selected from an instructor-prepared list, while the second article will be chosen by the student. Students will also present the article's conclusions and their responses to them in a 3-5 minute presentation.

Security Council Simulation

Two class days will be devoted to simulated sessions of the United Nations Security Council. Students will be divided into teams representing the Council's members and countries related to the Council's agenda. Students will write a short background paper and two position papers outlining their state's general foreign policy. Students will also be graded on participation and on final exam questions based on the simulation.

ATTENDANCE

Student learning requires the active participation of the individual student, the instructor, and a student's peers. To encourage attendance the following policies will be in effect:

1. If attendance at a class session is greater than or equal to 75% of enrollment for the entire class period, the class will receive two extra credit points.
2. If attendance at a class session is less than or equal to 50% of enrollment at any time during the class, the class will lose two extra credit points.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the responsibility to:

1. Attend class regularly.
2. Complete assigned readings before class.
3. Complete assignments by their deadlines.
4. Inform the instructor beforehand of any reasons why they are unable to do this.
5. Complete all requirements within the timeframe of the semester. University policy on incompletes will be strictly enforced.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online at: <http://life.umn.edu/VPSC/name/StudentConductCode>.

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES:

I strongly encourage students with documented disabilities to discuss appropriate accommodations with me. Because I am not qualified to make an assessment of your need for an accommodation or what accommodations are reasonable, if you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course please present me with a letter from Disability Services for Students (DSS), Lomasson Center 154 (243-2243), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations.

FINAL GRADE

Grades will be based on points distributed between participation (200), simulation (200), critical analysis (100), midterm (250), and final exam (250).

The plus/minus grading system will be used with grades based the total points: A = 1000-930, A- = 929-900, B+ = 870-899, B = 830-869, B- = 800-829, C+ = 770-799, C = 730-769, C- = 700-729, D+ = 670-699, D = 630-669, D- = 600-639, F = < 600.

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND SCHEDULE

This course is primarily a lecture course, although there will be discussion. All materials are posted to the course website. I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule.

Prologue

June 23: Introduce Course; *State of Nature & Foreign Policy Simulations* (Not Graded)

June 24: Why we disagree about International Relations. (*Read Nau, Introduction*)

Introduction: Explaining and Predicting Conflict and Cooperation

June 25: The Prisoner's Dilemma: Realism, Liberalism, and Identity (*Read Nau, Ch. 1*)

Part I: International Conflict and War

June 26: Prisoner's Dilemma Cont.; Perspectives on World History (*Read Nau, Ch. 2*)

June 30: Applying the Perspectives to International Conflicts (*Read Nau, Chs. 3 & 4*)

July 1: The Origins and End of the Cold War (*Read Nau, Chapter 5*)

July 2: Global Integration and Global Terrorism (*Read Nau, Chapter 6*)

July 3: *U.N. Security Council Simulation* (Military Crisis)

Part II: Globalization and the World Economy

July 7: What is Globalization? (*Read Nau, Chapters 7 & 8*)

July 8: How does Globalization work? (*Read Nau, Chapters 9 & 10*)

July 9: Development and Extreme Poverty (*Read Nau, Chapter 11 & 12*)

July 10: Catchup; *Midterm*

Part III: Fragmenting and Unifying Issues

July 14: How do we manage collective goods? (*Read Nau, Chapter 14*)

July 15-16: Ethnic, religious, and national conflicts (*Read Nau, Chapter 13*)

Film: *Ghosts of Rwanda* (2004)

Samantha Powers, "Bystanders to Genocide," *Atlantic Monthly* 288.2 (Sept., 2001): 84-108.

July 17: *U.N. Security Council Simulation* (Humanitarian Crisis)

July 21: Can global governance end global anarchy? (*Read Nau, Chapter 15*)

Conclusion

July 22-23: Is the democratic peace the solution to conflict? (*Read Nau, Conclusion*)

Film: *Why We Fight* (2005)

Gause III, F. Gregory. "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *Foreign Affairs* 84 (Sept./Oct. 2005): 62-76.

Epilogue

July 24: *Final Exam*