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PSC 130E.01: International Relations

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PSC 130E.01: International Relations

Political Science 130E

Section 1

Fall 2006

TR 9:40-11:00

NUL 101

Course Website: <http://courseware.umt.edu>

Course Blog: <http://psc130.blogspot.com>

Professor Eric Hines

Office: 355 LA

Office Hours: 9:00-10:00 MWF

1:00-2:00 WF

2:00-4:00 TH

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to a subfield of political science known as international relations (IR). IR is the study of the interactions among various actors that participate in international politics including states, international organizations, and individuals. During the semester, students will be exposed to the dominant theoretical perspectives IR scholars use to explain these interactions and the nature of the actors who engage in international politics. With this practical and theoretical background, students will gain a better understanding of the behavior of international actors as they address the issues of contemporary IR.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the dominant theoretical perspectives of international relations.
- Identify the major actors in international politics.
- Understand the different levels of analysis in which international relations occur.
- Apply theory to explain the behavior of major actors in international politics.
- Understand the ethical dimensions of different perspectives of how to conduct international relations.

Textbooks

There are two required books for this course, both of which are available for purchase at the UM Bookstore.

Mingst, Karen. 2004. *Essentials of International Relations*, 3rd edition. W.W. Norton. ISBN: 0393924483

Mingst, Karen, and Jack Snyder. 2004. *Essential Readings in World Politics*, 2nd edition. W.W. Norton. ISBN: 0393924068

Student Responsibilities

1. Students have the responsibility to attend class regularly and complete all assigned readings before coming to class.
2. Students have the responsibility to complete all assignments by the deadline given by the instructor.
3. Students have the responsibility to complete the requirements of this course within the time framework of the semester. University policy on incompletes will be adhered to strictly.

Instructor Responsibilities

1. The instructor will provide an environment where all students' opinions are encouraged and respected.
2. The instructor will provide information in a way that is accessible and relevant to students.
3. The instructor will design assessments that accurately reflect the objectives of this course.
4. The instructor will make all necessary and reasonable efforts to facilitate student learning.
5. The instructor will provide opportunities for students to anonymously provide feedback regarding his success at meeting these responsibilities.

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Course Organization

This is primarily a lecture course, although students will participate in weekly online group discussions. Lecture slides and outlines, and other course material will be available from the course's Blackboard shell (<http://coursware.umd.edu>).

Course Requirements

Current Events

A working knowledge of current events in international relations is necessary to connect the theoretical and conceptual knowledge you learn in class to the real world. Therefore, students are required to follow the daily coverage of international relations in either *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com>) or *The Christian Science Monitor* (<http://www.csmonitor.com>). I will post occasional commentary on articles appearing in these and other publications on the course blog, which students are encouraged to read and comment on periodically. Your final exam will feature a question asking you to apply your knowledge of IR theory to the development of a topic which received coverage in these newspapers during the semester.

Virtual Discussion Sections

During the first week of class, students will be divided into groups of around 20 that will form a "virtual" discussion section." Each week, I will post discussion questions to group discussion boards on Blackboard. Each student is required to consider the questions and then develop and post their original answers to their group's discussion board. After posting their responses, students will read the responses of their group and provide feedback to at least one other person. Students will be assigned a weekly participation grade based on their responses. *Credit will given only if their answers and feedback contain substantive and critical thought.* These online discussions are worth 20% of the final grade. All responses will be read by the instructor and/or Teaching Assistant, and feedback will be provided on a random basis.

Exams

Students will take three exams in this course including two midterms and a final after each of the three major sections of the course. The exams will include multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. Some of the questions will be student generated. The second midterm and final exams will include a small number of questions that draw on material covered on earlier exams. This cumulative material will represent no more than 10% of the questions on an exam. The midterm exams are each worth 25 percent of your final grade. The final is worth 30 percent.

Exam Reviews

Before each exam, student generated questions will be used to produce an on-line review lecture presentation they can access via Blackboard. The exam review process will also be used to generate questions for the exams. Each student must post at least one substantive question about the material to be covered on the exam by 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the exam review in their group discussion board. Students will be required to rate all the questions posted by their group members by 5:00 p.m. the following day using Blackboard's built-in rating system. The highest rated questions from each group will form the core of my review lecture and some of the questions will be selected by the instructor to appear on the exam itself. Submitting and rating questions will be graded as if they were a discussion question and will contribute towards the discussion portion of your grade. Guidelines for writing questions are posted on Blackboard.

Grading

Grades will be based on three exams and a participation grade from on-line discussions. The plus/minus grading system will be used based on the following scale:

93-100	A	90-93	A-	87-90	B+	83-87	B
80-83	B-	77-80	C+	73-77	C	70-73	C-
67-70	D+	63-67	D	60-63	D-	0-60	F

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Course Schedule

I. Introduction

- August 29 Introduction
- August 31 Why Do We Disagree About IR? Mingst, Chapter 1, pgs. 1-15
Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 1, pgs. 3-24

II. Theoretical Perspectives

Week 2: *The Historical Context of International Relations*

- Sept. 5 What Can the Past Tell Us About IR Today? Mingst, Chapter 2, pgs. 17-34
- Sept. 7 What Caused the Great Conflicts of the 20th Century? Mingst, Chapter 2, pgs. 35-54
- Discussion: What Does The Cold War Tell Us About Fighting Terror? Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 2, pgs. 28-42

Week 3: *Thinking Theoretically About International Relations*

- Sept. 12 You might be a Realist if ... Mingst, Chapter 3, pgs. 55-81
Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 3, pgs. 48-72
- Sept. 14 You might be a Liberal if ... Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 2, pgs. 26-28
- Discussion: Does Morality Have a Place In International Relations?

Week 4: *What If You Don't Buy Realism or Liberalism? (Thinking Critically About International Relations)*

- Sept. 19 You might be a Radical if ... Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 3, pgs. 94-101
- Sept. 21 You might be a Constructivist if ... Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 3, pgs. 102-115
- Discussion: Are International Relations Rational or Constructivist?
- Sept 26 **First Midterm**

III. Levels of Analysis and International Actors

Week 5: *The International System*

- Sept 28 Is the International System Anarchic? Mingst, Chapter 4, pgs. 83-99
Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 4, pgs. 119-129
- Discussion: You're a State, What Do You Make of Anarchy?

Week 6: *The State*

- Oct. 3 What is the Nature of a State? Mingst, Chapter 5, pgs. 101-135
- Oct. 5 Is There a Clash of Civilizations? Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 5, pgs. 163-173
- Discussion: Does Sovereignty Still Mean Anything to Anyone? Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 5, pgs. 142-156

Week 7: *Individuals*

- Oct. 10 Which Individuals Matter in International Relations? Mingst, Chapter 6, pgs. 137-157
- Oct. 12 Political Psychology and International Relations Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 6, pgs. 181-202
- Discussion: Does Gender Matter in International Relations? Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 6, pgs. 202-206

Week 8: *International Organizations*

- Oct. 17 What are International Organizations? Mingst, Chapter 7, pgs. 159-180
- Oct. 19 Would Reforming the UN Make Any Difference? Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 7, pgs. 207-222
What are Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)? Mingst, Chapter 7, pgs. 180-185
- Discussion: What Is the Future of American Multilateralism? Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 7, pgs. 262-282

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Week 9: *International Law*

Oct. 24	Do NGOs Make IR More Democratic? Can Humanitarian Interventions Be Justified?	Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 7, pgs. 222-233 Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 7, pgs. 233-253
Oct. 26	Is There Such a Thing as International Law?	Mingst, Chapter 7, pgs. 185-195
Discussion:	Should There Be Universal Jurisdiction?	Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 7, pgs. 253-261
Oct 31	Second Midterm	

IV. Issues in IR

Week 10: *War*

Nov. 2	What Causes War?	Mingst, Chapter 8, pgs. 197-218 Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 8, pgs. 297-309
Discussion:	Is Preemptive Military Action Ever Justified?	

Week 11: *Peace*

Nov. 9	How Do We Manage Our Insecurity? Does Democracy Cause Peace?	Mingst, Chapter 8, pgs. 218-231 Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 3, pgs. 73-86
Discussion:	Does Nuclear Proliferation Make the World Safer?	Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 8, pgs. 322-347

Week 12: *Terrorism*

Nov. 14	What Are the Causes of Terrorism?	Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 8, pgs. 382-401
Nov. 16	How Do We Fight Terrorism?	Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 8, pgs. 367-381
Discussion:	Is Terrorism Ever Justified?	

Weeks 13-14: *International Political Economy*

Nov. 21	What are the Causes of the North-Gap?	Mingst, Chapter 9, pgs. 233-256 Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 9, pgs. 402-421
Nov. 28	Can International Institutions Close the Gap?	Mingst, Chapter 9, pgs. 256-271 Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 10, pgs. 421-437
Discussion	What is the Future of Economic Globalization?	Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 9, pgs. 437-460

Weeks 14-15: *Global Issues in International Relations*

Nov. 30	Is Human Security National Security?	Mingst, Chapter 10, pgs. 273-280
Dec. 5	Is There a Global Commons? (Environment)	Mingst, Chapter 10, pgs. 280-295
Dec. 8	Are There Universal Human Rights?	Mingst, Chapter 10, pgs. 296-307 Mingst and Snyder, Chapter 10, pgs. 477-480
	Conclusions	
Discussion:	Should the United States Ratify the Kyoto Protocol?	Case Study

Final Exam	Dec. 12	10:10-12:10
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