PSC12 Introduction to World Politics

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Course Description

The study of world politics consists of two broad fields of inquiry: international security and international political economy. This course surveys both these fields. Topics in international security include state and nonstate actors in world politics, the nature and limits of national power, war and peace, weapons proliferation, and international law and ethics. Topics in international political economy include international trade and finance, regional integration, globalization, and the North-South development gap. We also take up issues that do not fit neatly in either of these categories, like global environmental threats and international human rights.

The course is neither a review of contemporary international history nor a discussion of current events. Rather, we survey a variety of theories, worldviews, propositions, and debates that help to make sense of both history and contemporary developments in world politics.

Learning Objectives:

The general objective of this course is to develop the student's capacity to critically examine problems in world politics, consider the range of possible solutions to those problems, and communicate this analysis to others. This is to be accomplished by exposing students to a body of literature and debate drawn from the subfields of international security and international political economy. By the end of the term, students should be able to:

- show a familiarity with a wide range of substantive issues in international politics and foreign policy;
- demonstrate mastery of the main theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of world politics;
- interpret specific historical and contemporary problems using appropriate theoretical arguments and methods of analysis; and
- develop and articulate a normative position on some key ethical dilemmas in international relations.

Required Text


Course Hours

The course has 26 class sessions in total. Each class session is 90 minutes in length. The course meets from Monday to Thursday, and two additional class sessions on the third Friday (July 20) and the sixth Friday (August 10).
Grading Policy

Course grades are based on a midterm (40%) and a final examination (60%). These exams consist of questions requiring both short answers and longer essays. Attendance is required; participation in class discussion is expected, including leading class discussions on one or more journal articles during the semester.

Course Schedules

Lectures and assigned readings are both complementary and supplementary; neither is a complete substitute for the other. Pages from the text should be read prior to the lecture for which they are assigned. We move through a lot of material quickly, so keep up.

Analyzing World Politics

July 2  Introduction and overview

July 3  Analyzing international relations
        Russet et al., (3-26)

July 4  International relations theory
        Russet et al., (27-48)

July 5  Evolution of the state system
        Russet et al., (49-72)

July 5  Balance of power
        Russet et al., (73-101)
July 9  National power and influence
Russet et al., (102-132)

July 10  Domestic and international politics
Russet et al., (133-162)

July 11  Foreign policymaking
Russet et al., (160-192)

July 12  Film: *Thirteen Days*

July 16  *Thirteen Days*, cont.

**International Conflict and Cooperation**

July 17  Interstate war
Russet et al., (195-212)

July 18  Internal and unconventional conflict
Russet et al., (212-229)


**July 19**

Arms and arms races

Russet et al., (232-267)


**Midterm exam**

**July 20**

Laws of war

Russet et al., (268-278)

**July 23**

International law

Russet et al., (278-294)

**July 24**

United Nations

Russet et al., (294-307)


**July 25**

Stable peace and security

Russet et al., (308-340)
Zakaria book review due

**International Political Economy**

July 30  
- Political economy of national security  
  Russet et al., (343-376)  
  Collier, Part I (What’s the Issue?)

July 31  
- Collective goods  
  Russet et al., (377-392)  
  Collier, Part II (The Traps)

August 1  
- Trade and monetary regimes  
  Russet et al., (393-409)

August 2  
- Regional integration  
  Russet et al., (410-432)

August 6  
- Globalization  
  Russet et al., (432-443)  
  Collier, Part III (Globalization to the Rescue?)

- Documentary: *Commanding Heights*

August 7  
- *Commanding Heights*, cont.

August 8  
- North-south gap  
  Russet et al., (444-450)  
  Collier, Part IV (The Instruments)

August 9  
- Dependency and underdevelopment  
  Russet et al., (450-476)  
  Collier, Part V (The Struggle for the Bottom Billion)

**Global Challenges**

August 10  
- Review
Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is an essential value of any intellectual community, and the University regards academic dishonesty in any form as a serious offense against the academic community in general and against this University in particular. I expect students to be fully aware of the University’s policies regarding academic integrity. Ignorance of academic policies is not considered a defense against substantiated charges of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty, including cheating and falsification of data.