

POLS 145N
Politics of Global Problems
Autumn Quarter, 2005
Lecturer: Dr. Sarkis Mahdasian
Monday & Wednesday: 5:30p.m. – 7:18 p.m.
MacQuigg Lab 0161

E-mail: pols145@sbcglobal.net (this is the best way to get in touch with me)

Phone: 247-6437

Office: Derby Hall, room 3044

Office Hours: after class or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to expose students to the basic actors and institutions in the international system as well as some of the more pressing issues found in international relations today. The course will begin with an introduction to the actors, concepts and models used in the study of international relations. Once this introduction is complete, we will focus on four distinct areas of conflict and/or cooperation among international actors, utilizing the concepts and models covered in the first part of the course. Unfortunately, because of the limited time available in a single quarter, this course can only provide an introduction to this very broad topic. Therefore, the primary goal of this course to provide you with the skills needed to better understand international relations so you can continue the process after the course is complete.

Required Reading Material:

International Relations, Brief Third Edition. Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2005, Pearson-Longman. Available at University bookstore.

Suggested Reading Material:

Keeping informed of current events in international politics will definitely assist students in this course. I strongly encourage each student to make use of the wide variety of news sources available. Many major news outlets have free access to news reports on their websites, both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have extensive coverage of international affairs on their websites and are a useful starting point. In addition to these sites there are many resources on the web that will provide commentary on international events. I highly recommend that you seek out a wide variety of viewpoints and do not limit yourself to sites that simply confirm what you already believe. A list of websites from competing viewpoints will be presented during the quarter.

Course Requirements:

- 30% - Exam 1
- 40% - Final Exam
- 30% - Research Paper (approximately 7 pages in length)

All exams will be in essay format. The exams will consist of material from the required text as well as additional material presented through lectures. Essay exams will consist of a number of short answer identification questions and a number of longer essay questions. In order to do well on the exams, students must keep up to date on the required readings as well as attend class regularly. In order to get full credit on exam questions students must be able to reproduce material from class lectures that will not be found in the textbook. You will receive a study guide for each exam at least one week prior to the exam date to help you prepare.

Make up exams will not be given. If you fail to take an exam during the scheduled time and date you will receive a zero-grade for that exam. If you wish to replace this zero-grade you must write a ten-page paper on a topic of my choosing. If you wish to exercise this option it is your responsibility to contact me to discuss the details of the paper. Failure to take the Final Exam will result in a failing grade for the course.

The research paper will provide you with an opportunity to study a topic of your choosing in more depth than we can cover in the quarter. The objective of the paper is to critically review one viewpoint on how to deal with an international problem or issue. You will be required to research a “real” problem faced by an actor(s) in the international arena and propose a solution to that problem. You will also be required to detail the strengths and weaknesses associated with the proposed solution. The research paper must be approximately seven pages in length (not including a bibliography of sources used in your research). Additional information regarding the paper will be distributed during the second week of the quarter.

Research Paper Grade Breakdown:

- Paper Topic: 10% (Due Monday, October 10th)
- Paper Outline: 20% (Due Wednesday, October 26th)
- Complete Paper: 70% (Due Wednesday, November 16th)

If you have any questions at any point during the course **PLEASE** let me know immediately, I can only provide assistance if I am aware that a problem exists. Please do not wait until after you have received a less than satisfactory grade on an exam before contacting me. Also, please do not make any assumptions about what I am expecting. The phrase “There are no stupid questions” definitely applies here. I do not grade on a curve and the distribution of grades in this course is dependent upon the effort made by the students in this class – if you are willing to put in the necessary time I will do all I can to help you succeed in this class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 21st - Course introduction.

Section 1: Actors, Concepts & Models used in the study of international relations

Week 1: September 26th & 28th

Key concepts in the study of international relations and a few hundred years of history!

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 1

Week 2: October 3th & 5th

The Power Politics Approach to studying international relations

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 2

Week 3: October 10th & 12th

Alternative approaches to studying international relations

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 3

***** Paper Topic Due on Monday, October 10th *****

Week 4: October 17th & 19th

Conflict in the international system

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 4

Week 5: October 24th & 26th

Terrorism

Reading: To be assigned

*** Note:** A study guide for the first exam will be distributed no later than Monday October 24th.

***** Paper Outline Due on Wednesday, October 26th *****

FIRST EXAM IN CLASS ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 31st

Section 2: Substantive Issues in International Relations

Week 6: November 2nd (Wed) & 7th (Mon)

International Organizations and Legal Institutions

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 6

Week 7: November 9th (Wed) & 14th (Mon)

International Trade and Economic Institutions

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 5

Week 8: November 16th (Wed) & 21st (Mon)

North-South Relations and the politics of development

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 7

***** Paper Due on Wednesday November 16th *****

Week 9: Thanksgiving, no class on Wednesday November 23rd.

Week 10: November 28th (Mon) & 30th (Wed)

International Environmental Issues

Reading: Goldstein & Pevehouse, Chapter 8

* **Note:** A study guide for the final exam will be distributed no later than Monday November 28th.

***** The Last Day I Will Accept Late Papers is Monday, November 28th *****

Final Exam:

The university schedules the date and time of the final exam. The specific time and date will be provided during the quarter. The final will be cumulative in the sense that you will need to apply concepts from the first section of the course in answering questions about the material covered in the second section of the course. As always, a study guide will be provided to help focus your study on the most relevant material.