Course description and learning objectives

In August, 2008, Russia sent armored trucks and troops into neighboring Georgia. Why did Russia cross the border? Was this action “legitimate”? For years, environmentalists have been criticizing the World Bank for interfering in local ecosystems such as rain forests in the name of economic development. Can international agreements like the Montreal Protocol make a difference in dealing with environmental catastrophes?

This course introduces students to the major concepts and theories in the field of International Relations. Students will become familiar with some of the major debates in the field and be comfortable using IR concepts and theories to understand and explain events in international politics. These events cover the causes of war, power, security and cooperation, international economic relations, the environment, poverty, human rights, and the behavior of state and non-state actors in the international system.

The overall objectives of the course require that students:
1. Understand the history of international relations among states, international organizations and other groups and evaluate the roles, processes and functions of these relations in today’s world;
2. Analyze the various theories and concepts used to study international relations and recognize how different perspectives address these issues differently;
3. Assess the past and present performance and future prospects of international relations among countries, organizations, and international actors.
4. Develop analytical and critical thinking skills through written work and oral presentations.

Exam 15%  Essays (2)  30%
Visual Project 10%  Final Exam  20%
Participation/Presentations 10%  Response Papers (5)  15%

Participation and class attendance:  I value highly student participation in class, which is only possible if you are physically present. While illness and other life events do happen, I do expect you to make an effort to come to class. Once in class, the quality of your participation can be difficult to evaluate, but I will try to make my standards of measurement clear. First, I expect you to come to class having read the assigned readings. If you need to take notes to remember key points, then do so, and bring them to class. Second, I expect you to be able to state the argument of a reading. This is most important: sometimes an author may not be clear, sometimes he or she may develop several arguments. Your assignment is to come to class with your interpretation of what the author wants to communicate. It might be different from that of your classmate’s, which is fine. But come prepared. Third, I expect some recollection of dates and names of important events from the reading. Last, I expect you will be able to communicate your ideas to your classmates in a polite and professional manner.
**Exams:** In-class exams will assess your understanding of major concepts in the course, as well as identifications of key terms. The take-home final exam will also test your writing skills.

**Essays:** The essays seek to develop your analytical and writing skills. You will evaluate a newspaper article and write a short research paper. I will give you guidance for these essays.

**Visual Project:** Students will prepare and present a visual project that expresses a theme in international relations: Constructivism, al-Qaida terrorism, climate change, regional trading blocs, the World Bank in developing countries, and the United Nations and world order.

**Response Papers:** Students are requested to attend at least two of the three Sunday Speakers as well as three outside lectures and write a two-page response paper to each one. The Sunday Series events are held at 4:00 pm in Saunders Lounge, PAR. Your options are:

| Theme: Power and Powerlessness: Shifts in Our World |  
| 9/12   | Prof Rajmohan Gandhi on India |
| 10/17  | Dr. David Fleischer on Brazil |
| 11/7   | Prof Poshek Fu on China |

**Academic Integrity:** Cases of cheating and plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration will be handled in accordance with University of Illinois guidelines: http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/ Students are expected to use generally accepted practices governing bibliographic research and citations of resource materials in written assignments and written materials used in conjunction with an oral presentation. These requirements apply to resources from the Internet as well as to published and unpublished materials. Please read my handout on Plagiarism.

To insure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require auxiliary aids and/or academic accommodations/adjustments to participate in this class are asked to see me as soon as possible, and contact the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services at 333-4603 or email at disability@illinois.edu.

**Course Website:**
The general website for this course can be found at http://Compass.illinois.edu. On the website I will post instructor contact information, the reading guides, links to online readings, handouts, a copy of the syllabus, and other documents. I also post announcements on the course website, and you should login to the website at least twice a week to check for any new announcements. Please contact me if you have any problems accessing materials on the course website.

**Book available for purchase:**

**Module 1: History and Concepts**

| August 24 | Tuesday | Introduction to the Course and Student Worksheet |
| August 26 | Thursday | What is International Relations – Why history and theory matter |

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 1, “The Globalization of International Relations”.
Module 2: Competing Theories

August 31 Realism
Tuesday

- Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War – The Melian Dialogue, Book 5, Ch. 17
  http://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.html
  Introduction, pp. 4-15.
- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 2, “Realism”.

September 2 Liberalism compared
Thursday

- Nye, Chapter 1, “Is there an enduring logic of conflict in world politics?”, pp 1-32.
- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 3 “Liberalism”

September 7 Marxism
Tuesday

- Ignacio Ramonet, “Response to Friedman”, and Friedman’s response, and Ramonet’s, in Foreign
  Policy, Autumn 1999.
  Theories of International Relations”, Stephen Hobden and Richard Wyn Jones.

September 9 Constructivism/Gender Theories
Thursday

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 3, “Social Theories”.
- Birgit Locher and Elisabeth Prügl, “Feminism and Constructivism: Worlds Apart or Sharing the

Assignment: Bring in a newspaper article on an international environmental topic. Describe the issue,
and discuss how it can be viewed from different perspectives. Write a one-page essay. Due Sept 14.

Sunday September 12 at 4pm in Saunders Lounge
Sunday Series Lecture

Module 3: War and Peace

September 14 Introduction to Conflict
Tuesday

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 5, “International Conflict”.

**September 16**

**Terrorism**

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 6, “Military Force and Terrorism”.


**September 21**

**The United Nations, Multilateral Organizations and NGOs**

- Browse the United Nations website.
- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 7, “International Organization, Law and Human Rights”
- Globalization 101 website run by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: click on Issue Briefs, and select “International Law and Organizations” **EXTRA CREDIT: Take Quiz**

**September 23**

**Intervention and Conflicts (The Balkans)**

- Nye, Chapter 6, “Intervention, Institutions, and Regional & Ethnic Conflicts”.


**September 28**

**Theories of Cooperation**


**September 30**

**Exam**

**Thursday**
October 5
Movie “Ghosts of Rwanda”

October 7
The United Nations, the United States, and Rwanda

Thursday


October 12
Evaluating the United Nations and Multilateral Organizations
Tuesday


Module 4: The Politics of International Economic Relations & Globalization

October 14
Library tips for writing your paper - Prof. Lynn Rudasill
Thursday
Room 314, Main Library

October 19
International Trade: The Rise of BRICs
Tuesday

- Chapter 8, “International Trade”.

**Sunday October 17 at 4pm in Saunders Lounge**
Sunday Series Lecture!

October 21
Multinational Corporations: Friend or Foe?
Thursday


Recommended: Movie: *The Corporation*
October 26 International Finance
Tuesday

- Chapter 9, “Money and Business” (note section on Multinational Business for last week).

October 28 Regional Trading Blocs
Thursday

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 10, “International Integration”.

Recommended:

November 2 Evaluating Global Governance
Tuesday


Module 5: Development, the Environment, and International Relations

November 4 International Poverty: Indebtedness and Sustainability
Thursday

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 12 & 13, “The North-South Gap” and “International Development”

Recommended: UN Development Goals website.

Assignment: Write an 8-10 page paper on one of the four assigned topics. Due November 5.

Sunday November 7 at 4pm in Saunders Lounge
Sunday Series Lecture!

November 9 What are the NGOs doing?
Tuesday

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**November 11**  
**The Environment and Issues of Sustainability**  
**Thursday**

- Goldstein and Pevehouse, Chapter 11, “Environment and Population”.
- Globalization 101 website run by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; click on Issue Briefs, and select “Environment” **EXTRA CREDIT: Take Quiz**


**November 16**  
**Collective Action problems with Environmental Sustainability**  
**Tuesday**


**November 18**  
**Human Rights**  
**Thursday**

- Globalization 101 website run by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; click on Issue Briefs, and select “Human Rights” **EXTRA CREDIT: Take Quiz**

**Thanksgiving Break**

**November 30**  
**Human Rights and Business**  
**Thursday**


**December 2**  
**Audio/Visual Presentations!!**  
**Tuesday**

**December 9**  
**The Future of International Relations**  
**Thursday**


*Final Exam – Same format as the other exam, but a 24-hour take-home.*