Course Description and Goals

This course provides an introduction to the study of politics among nation-states by exploring the causes and consequences of conflict in the international system. It seeks to familiarize students with the main theoretical approaches to the study of international politics; to encourage the critical application and evaluation of these theories as explanations of international events; to introduce important historical and contemporary issues in international relations; and to facilitate the interpretation and critical evaluation of contemporary issues and events.

Course Requirements

Course grades are based on four requirements:

- Participation 25%
- Two short papers 40%
- Final 35%

Reading: All reading assignments must be completed before class, since they serve as the basis for lecture and discussion. Students are required to read a major daily newspaper or to access a reputable internet news source on a daily basis.

Exam: All students are required to take the exam at the scheduled time unless I receive appropriate notice from the Health Center or the Dean of Students Office.

Papers: All students are required to submit two short (3-4 page) reaction papers. Each paper should use course readings and/or lectures to make an argument about one of the films shown in class. The papers are due in class no later than three class meetings after the film viewing. If you are submitting a paper on the final film, it is due in my office by noon on July 2.

General grading policies:

1. All late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade (i.e., from an A- to a B+) for each day or fraction of a day late.

2. No student can pass this course without completing all requirements.

3. All students must submit assignments in hard copy and are responsible for retaining a hard copy of their papers until they have received a returned and graded copy from the instructor.
Other Policies

Absence: Students are required to attend class. To reschedule a test or receive a paper extension because of an absence requires notice from the Health Center or the Dean of Students. Late paper assignments will be penalized as stated above, unless an excuse is provided from the Health Center or the Dean’s office.

Disability Services: Persons with documented disabilities requiring accommodations to meet the expectations of this course should contact the Dean of Students Office. *If you feel it is important for me to know that you have a diagnosed disability that will require accommodation, the Dean of Students Office must notify me in the first week of classes.*

Blackboard: All assignments, reserve readings, and course documents are available on the Blackboard site (http://blackboard.wm.edu).

Required Text


*All other readings—those marked with an asterisk—are available through BlackBoard and for copying purposes only ($.05 a page) in Morton 19.*

COURSE OUTLINE

I. The Study of International Politics

II. The International System

A. Anarchy and the Security Dilemma
B. The Balance of Power
C. Deterrence and the Use of Force
D. Interdependence and Globalization
E. International Institutions

III. Domestic Sources of International Politics

A. Economic Systems
B. Political Culture
C. Domestic Institutions
D. Decision Making and Rationality

IV. Ethics and International Politics
CLASS SCHEDULE: ALL DATES ARE TENTATIVE

I. Introduction: The Study of International Politics (June 1) What is international politics and how do we study it? Is there a science of international politics?

II. The International System

A. Anarchy and the Security Dilemma (June 2) How does international politics differ from domestic politics? Why is international cooperation difficult to achieve? Does technology make states more or less secure?


B. The Balance of Power (June 3) Why don’t states go to war more often than they do? How do states restrain each other?


   *Paul M. Kennedy, “The First World War and the International Power System,”

C. Deterrence and the Use of Force (June 7) How is force used in international politics? Did the advent of nuclear weapons change the nature of force? Are nuclear weapons politically useful today?

   Art & Jervis, “The Uses of Force,”

   Robert J. Art, “The Four Functions of Force,” 153165


**Film and Discussion: “Dr. Strangelove” (June 8 )**

**D. Interdependence and Globalization (June 9)** How economically and militarily interdependent are the nations of the world today? What is globalization? How do interdependence and globalization influence the behavior and interests of states?


**E. International Institutions (June 10, 14)** Why and when is international cooperation possible? What types of international institutions exist? How do they influence domestic and international politics?


Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” 73-80.

III. Domestic Sources

A. Economic Systems (June 15) How does the nature of national economic systems influence foreign policy and the interaction among states? Is capitalism inherently imperialist?

*J. A. Hobson, “The Economic Taproot of Imperialism.” (14 pp.)

*V. I. Lenin, “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism.” (11 pp.)

B. Political Culture (June 16) What role do national attributes like culture and religion play in international politics?


Film and Discussion: “Before the Rain” (June 17)

C. Domestic Institutions (June 21) What are institutions? How do they affect states’ ability and desire to cooperate? Are democracies more peaceful than nondemocratic states?


D. Decision Making and Rationality (June 22) What is rationality? Why does decision making deviate from rationality? How do beliefs, perceptions, and emotions influence foreign policy decisions?

*Graham Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis.” (17 pp.)


*Robert Jervis, “Misperception and War.” (26 pp.)


Film and Discussion: “Frontline: The Long Road to War”(June 23, 24)
IV. Ethics and International Politics (June 28, 29) Does morality play any role in international politics? Should it? If so, what type of ethical system should inform the conduct of international politics?


Film and Discussion: “Breaker Morant” (June 30)

EXAM July 1

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS ARE TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE INSTRUCTOR’S DISCRETION.