

COURSE SYLLABUS: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Course: POL*K103

Course Title: International Relations

Course Schedule: Monday and Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.– 3:20 p.m.

Instructor: Prof. Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Mon & Wed 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.; Tues & Thurs 10:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m.;
or by appointment

I. Course Description

International relations is the study of cooperation, competition, and conflict between countries, or nation-states, as we refer to them in the social sciences. This course will examine international relations from a political-economy perspective. This means that we will look at both political and economic relationships between nation-states and how political and economic relationships between nation-states influence each other. We will also consider how international political and economic factors influence domestic political and economic situations within countries and vice versa.

The first part of the course will begin by discussing the concept of the nation-state (which we commonly call a “country”), which is the main actor in international relations, as well as different theories of international relations. We will then discuss key international political and economic institutions and actors in the world today, including the United Nations (the UN), the International Monetary Fund (the IMF), and the World Trade Organization (the WTO). We will examine the roles of these institutions and their effect on political and economic relations between countries. We will in particular discuss the effectiveness of the UN in addressing problems of ethnic conflict and genocide. We will then examine the phenomena of globalization (the move to a global economy) and neo-liberalism (the expansion of free trade and free markets), and their impact on countries in the world today. A key theme in the first part of the course will be the relationships of competition and conflict between developed countries (often referred to as “the North”) and developing countries (often referred to as “the South”) in the world today.

The second part of the course will examine how political and economic developments in the world today are challenging the position of the United States as the dominant political and economic power internationally--and how the U.S. is and should be responding to those challenges. Since the collapse of Communism, the U.S. has become the global “hegemon”—the dominant political and economic power in the world today. Nevertheless, it is facing a variety of developments that threatens its status, including a growing trade deficit, the rapid economic development of China and other

newly industrialized countries (NICs) in Asia, and problems of terrorism in the Middle East. In the course, we will discuss these issues, as well as whether or not the current war in Iraq and the spread of democracy as proposed by the Bush administration is a viable solution to the problem of terrorism.

II. Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for the course include:

- Describing major theoretical perspectives on international relations, including realism, liberalism, mercantilism, and world systems theory
- Understanding the political and economic consequences of globalization and neo-liberalism
- Explaining the role of international economic institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO in the global economy
- Identifying North-South political and economic conflicts in the world today
- Understanding various contemporary political issues, including the rise of China, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iraq War, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism
- Developing oral presentation and critical thinking skills through debates of current issues

III. Course Readings

Assigned readings are to be done before coming to class. The required texts for the class are:

- John T. Rourke, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics, 13th Edition*, Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2007.
- *Among Nations: Readings in International Relations*, Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2008.

There will be additional required readings that will be passed out during the class as noted in the course schedule in Section VI.

IV. Grading and Assignments

Course evaluation will be based on the following:

- There will be two take-home exams, one at the end of each section of the course. The last take home exam will be the final exam, which will not be cumulative. Each exam will count for 25% of the final grade.
- Beginning the third week, there will be weekly debates on the Wednesday of each week. Students will be expected to participate in two debates, one for each half of

the course. For the weeks that you are not a debate participants, you will write an evaluation of the debate, including a discussion of a current events article pertaining to the topic. The two debates you participate in plus your written evaluations of the other debates will count for 50% of your final grade.

All exams and assignments must be typed. Late work will be penalized accordingly.

V. Cell Phone Policy

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

VI. Weekly Outline and Readings

Part I. The Nation-State and International Political and Economic Relations

Week 1: Introduction to IR
Wed, 1/23: The Nation-State

Readings: None

Week 2: Theoretical Perspectives
Mon, 1/28: Realism and Liberalism
Wed, 1/30: World Systems Theory

Readings: *Among Nations*, pp. 1-41

Week 3: The United Nations
Mon, 2/4: The United Nations
Wed, 2/6: The U.N. and the U.S.

Readings: Rourke, Issues 16; *Among Nations*, pp. 67-86

Week 4: Genocide and Internal Law
Mon, 2/11: Hotel Rwanda
Wed, 2/13: Hotel Rwanda (cont'd)

Readings: Rourke, Issues 17; *Among Nations*, pp. 42-66

Week 5: International Economics

Mon, 2/18: President's Day

Wed, 2/20: International Economics

Readings: TBA

Week 6: Globalization

Mon, 2/25: Globalization

Wed, 2/27: Consequences of Globalization

Readings: Rourke, Issues 1 and 2; *Among Nations*, pp. 124-148

Week 7: Globalization, Regionalism, and the Nation-State

Mon, 3/3: The WTO

Wed, 3/5: NAFTA and the EU

Readings: Rourke, Issues 9; *Among Nations*, pp.149-161

First Exam handed out; Due 3/12

Week 8: International Economic Organizations and Neo-liberalism

Mon, 3/10: Neo-Liberalism

Wed, 3/12: The IMF and the World Bank

Readings: *Among Nations*, pp. 87-123

Part II. U.S. Hegemony and the Changing World Order

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: U.S. as Hegemon

Mon, 3/24: The End of the Cold War

Wed, 3/26: Perspectives on U.S. Hegemony

Readings: Rourke, Issues 3 and 12; *Among Nations*, pp. 162-211

Week 11: The Rise of China

Mon, 3/31: Economic Development in China
Wed, 4/2: Is China a threat to U.S. hegemony?

Readings: Rourke, Issues 5 and 10; *Among Nations*, pp. 212-250, NYT handout

Week 12: The U.S. and the The Middle East
Mon, 4/7: The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Wed, 4/9: OPEC

Readings: Rourke, Issue 6; *Among Nations*, pp. 251-268

Week 13: Islamic Fundamentalism Terrorism
Mon, 4/14: The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism
Wed, 4/16: The U.S. "War on Terrorism"

Readings: Rourke, Issue 13; *Among Nations*, pp. 269-309; Council on Foreign Relations handout

Week 14: The Iraq War
Mon, 4/21: Causes and Consequences
Wed, 4/23: Prospects for Democracy

Readings: Rourke, Issue 7; *Among Nations*, pp. 310-366; NYROB handout

Week 15: Nuclear Proliferation and WMD
Mon, 4/28: Iran and North Korea
Wed, 4/30: Concluding Remarks

Readings: Rourke, Issues 14 and 15; *Among Nations*, pp. 367-393.

Week 16: Conclusion
Mon, 5/5: Concluding Remarks

Final Exam handed out; Due 5/12