

COURSE SYLLABUS FOR POL*K103: INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Course: POL*K103 Introduction to International Relations

Course Schedule: MWF 9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.

Location: D105

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

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 key institutions and actors and the forces shaping them. We begin with the nation-state, which is the main actor in international relations, and different theories of international relations. We then discuss the United Nations (the UN) and its efforts to address problems of ethnic conflict and genocide. We will then discuss other key international political and economic institutions and actors in the world today, such as the International Monetary Fund (the IMF), the World Bank (the WB), and the World Trade Organization (the WTO). We then examine the phenomena of globalization and neo-liberalism, and their affect on nation-states. A key theme in this 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 responding and should respond to those challenges. Since the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War, 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 the rapid economic development of China, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the war against terrorism, and the potential proliferation of nuclear weapons in N. Korea and Iran. In the course, we will discuss and debate these issues and solutions to them.

II. Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for the course include:

- I. Cultures and Societies: analyze and understand political and economic relationships between nation-states

- Understand the political and economic consequences of globalization and neo-liberalism
- Understand the role of major international institutions such as the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO
- Identify and interpret North-South political and economic conflicts in the world today
- Understand various contemporary political issues, including the rise of China, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the War on Terrorism, and nuclear proliferation

II. Critical Thinking

- Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives on international relations, including realism, liberalism, constructivism, and world systems theory
- Analyze and synthesize evidence from classroom debates on current events

III. Communication

- Organize and present evidence in classroom debates on current events

III. Course Readings

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

- John T. Rourke, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics, 14th Edition*, Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2010.
- *Among Nations: Readings in International Relations*, Pearson Custom Publishing, 2009.

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.
- There will be several student team debates throughout the course. 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. The two debates you participate in will count for 25% of your final grade, and your written evaluations of the other debates will count for 50% of your final grade.

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor quality writing, including poor spelling and grammar, will negatively affect your grade. At a minimum, you should spell check all work before it is submitted. If you want assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to visit The Writing Center in room C117.

All exams and assignments must be typed. Late work will be penalized accordingly. Assignments and exams submitted by email without permission will also be penalized. Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects some level of effort.

Class participation will help boost your final GPA for the course.

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

Fri, 1/21: Introduction

Readings: None

Week 2: The Nation-State

Mon, 1/24: The Nation-State

Wed, 1/26: Failed States

Fri, 1/28: Ethnic Nationalism

Readings: Chua, *World on Fire*, Introduction, pp. 1-17 and Chapter 4, pp. 95-122 (handout)

Week 3: Theoretical Perspectives

Mon, 1/31: Realism

Wed, 2/2: Liberalism and Constructivism

Fri, 2/4: World Systems Theory

Readings: Handouts

Week 4: The United Nations

Mon, 2/7: The United Nations

Wed, 2/9: UN Debate

Fri, 2/11: Debate Wrap-Up

Readings: Rourke, Issue 16 pp. 306-327; *Among Nations*, Glennon reading; RAND handout

Week 5: Genocide and International Law
Mon, 2/14: Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing
Wed, 2/16: Film
Fri, 2/18: The ICC

Readings: Rourke, Issue 10, pp. 163-182, and Issue 17, pp. 328-343; Chua, *World on Fire*, Chapter 7, pp.163-175 (handout)

Week 6: International Economics
Mon, 2/21: President's Day Holiday—No Class
Wed, 2/23: International Economics
Fri, 2/25: The U.S. Trade Deficit

Readings: TBA

Week 7: Free Trade and the WTO
Mon, 2/
28: Perspectives on Trade
Wed, 3/2: The WTO
Fri, 3/4: WTO Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 11 pp. 186-213

Week 8: The IMF and the WB
Mon, 3/7: The IMF and the WB
Wed, 3/9: The Debt Crisis
Fri, 3/11: Film

Readings: *Among Nations*, Nye reading; Global Exchange handout; Stiglitz handout

Week 9: Spring Break—No Class

Week 10: Regionalism, Globalization, and the Nation-State
Mon, 3/21: Globalization
Wed, 3/23: Globalization Debate
Fri, 3/25: Globalization and the Nation-State

Readings: Rourke, Issues 1 and 2, pp. 2-44; *Among Nations*, Wolf reading

First Exam handed out; Due 4/1

Part II. Issues and Challenges for the U.S.

Week 11: US Hegemony and US Foreign Policy

Mon, 3/28: The Cold War and US Hegemony
Wed, 3/30: U.S. Foreign Policy and Neo-Conservatism
Fri, 4/1: Hard Power vs. Soft Power

Readings: Rourke handout (Issue 14, 12th Edition); *Among Nations*, Ikenberry reading;
Nye handout

Week 12: U.S. Relations with China
Mon, 4/4: The Rise of China
Wed, 4/6: China Debate
Fri, 4/8: China Debate Wrap-Up

Readings: Rourke, Issue 6, pp.96-110; *Among Nations*, Zakaria reading and Gilboy and
Heginbotham reading

Week 13: The Arab-Israeli conflict
Mon, 4/11: The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Wed, 4/13: The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Fri, 4/15: Palestinian State debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 7, pp.111-128; *Among Nations*, Makovsky reading

Week 14: Terrorism
Mon, 4/18: Islamic Fundamentalism
Wed, 4/20: Terrorism
Fri, 4/22: Terrorism Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 18, pp.344-360; *Among Nations*, Howard reading; Council on
Foreign Relations handout

Week 15: The Afghanistan War
Mon, 4/25: The War in Afghanistan
Wed, 4/27: Pakistan
Wed, 4/29: The Afghanistan War Debate

Readings: *The Economist*, "Waziristan: The Last Frontier", 1/17/2010 (handout); Council
of Foreign Relations, "Pakistani Partnerships with the US: An Assessment", 11/12/2009
(handout)

Week 16: Nuclear Proliferation and WMD
Mon, 5/2: Nuclear Proliferation
Wed, 5/4: Iran and North Korea
Fri, 5/6: Nuclear Weapons Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issues 14 and 15, pp.252-303; *Among Nations*, Sagan reading and Pollack and Takeyh reading

Final Exam handed out; Due 5/13