

## **COURSE SYLLABUS: INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Course: POL\*K103

Course Title: Introduction to 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 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. We will discuss the United Nations (the UN) and its efforts to address problems of ethnic conflict and genocide. We will then examine the phenomenon of globalization and its affect on nation-states, and the phenomenon of neo-liberalism, as exemplified by the International Monetary Fund (the IMF), the World Bank (the WB), and the World Trade Organization (the WTO). 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 and other newly industrialized countries (NICs) in Asia, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iraq War, 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:

- Describing major theoretical perspectives on international relations, including realism, liberalism, 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 text for the class is:

- John T. Rourke, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2007.
- *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.
- 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, 1/21: The Nation-State

Readings: None

Week 2: Theoretical Perspectives

Mon, 1/26: Ethnic Nationalism and Failed States

Wed, 1/28: Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism

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

Week 3: The United Nations

Mon, 2/2: The United Nations

Wed, 2/4: UN Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 16 pp. 292-305; *Among Nations*, Glennon reading; RAND handout

Week 4: Genocide and International Law

Mon, 2/9: Genocide

Wed, 2/11: ICC Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 17, pp. 306-324; Chua handout (*World on Fire*, Chapter 7, pp.163-175)

Week 5: International Economics

Mon, 2/16: President's Day

Wed, 2/18: International Economics

Readings: TBA

Week 6: Free Trade and the WTO

Mon, 2/23: Perspectives on Trade

Wed, 2/25: WTO Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 9 pp. 134-161

Week 7: The IMF and the WB

Mon, 3/2: The IMF and the WB

Wed, 3/4: Third World Debt Debate

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

First Exam handed out; Due 3/11

Week 8: Globalization and the Nation-State

Mon, 3/9: NAFTA and the EU

Wed, 3/11: Globalization Debate

Readings: Rourke, Issues 1 and 2, pp. 2-35; *Among Nations*, Wolf reading

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

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: U.S. as Hegemon

Mon, 3/23: The End of the Cold War

Wed, 3/25: Neo-Conservatism and US Foreign Policy

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

Week 11: The Rise of China

Mon, 3/30: Economic Development in China

Wed, 4/1: China debate

Readings: Rourke, Issues 5 and 10, pp.70-83 and 162-184; *Among Nations*, Zakaria reading and Gilboy and Heginbotham reading

Week 12: The Arab-Israeli conflict

Mon, 4/6: The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Wed, 4/8: Palestinian State debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 6, pp.84-101; *Among Nations*, Makovsky reading

Week 13: Terrorism

Mon, 4/13: Terrorism

Wed, 4/15: Terrorism debate

Readings: Rourke, Issue 13, pp.226-253; *Among Nations*, Howard reading;  
Council on Foreign Relations handout

Week 14: The Iraq War

Mon, 4/20: Causes and Consequences

Wed, 4/22: Iraq War debate

Readings: Rourke handout (Issue 10, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition); Danner handout; Simon  
handout

Week 15: Nuclear Proliferation and WMD

Mon, 4/27: Iran and North Korea

Wed, 4/29: Missile Defense debate

Readings: Rourke, Issues 14 and 15, pp.254-288; *Among Nations*, Sagan reading  
and Pollack and Takeyh reading

Week 16: Conclusion

Mon, 5/4: Is Democracy the Answer?

Wed, 5/6: Concluding Remarks

Readings: *Among Nations*, Bellin reading and Gause III reading

Final Exam handed out; Due 5/13