

SKIDMORE COLLEGE
INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Government 103
Fall 2010
TLC 203
Tu-Th: 11:10 - 12:30 pm
e-mail: avacs@skidmore.edu

Aldo C. Vacs
Ladd 319 (X 5249)
Office Hours:
Tu-Th: 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Wed: 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m.

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to some of the main approaches and issues in international and comparative politics for students who are assumed to have had no previous studies in political science. It combines the analysis of some basic theoretical notions with the examination of several major historical and contemporary political developments and events. The course examines some critical issues in international relations and comparative politics, including the theoretical, historical and current aspects of international interactions and the nature and relevant characteristics of authoritarian and democratic regimes. In the first section we analyze international relations focusing on some important issues and notions such as the theoretical approaches to global politics, the historical and current features of the international system, the role of states and transnational actors, international conflict and management, and post-Cold War globalization and the rise of new challenges such as ethnic conflicts and international terrorism..

Course Requirements

- * **Class attendance and informed participation are required.** Attendance is essential for those desiring to pass the course and will be taken by signing an attendance sheet. In order to be able to participate effectively in the discussions and ask and answer questions you must read the assignments **before** the day they are scheduled for analysis in class. In addition to the specified readings and other materials that will be delivered in class, *students are expected to keep informed of current political issues related to the topics analyzed in class.* Good sources of information are major national newspapers (New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor, etc.), weekly news magazines (Time, Newsweek, etc.), and other periodical publications available at Scribner Library and through electronic sources of information found in the Internet. It is expected that in class discussions each student will make reference to this information to update the discussion on different political issues. The discussion of current issues of interest for the students that are related to the contents of the course is strongly encouraged. Attendance, preparation for class discussions, and analytical quality of the interventions will be evaluated in order to calculate the course grade. **(20% of the final grade)**
- * **Four quizzes focused on the materials assigned for different sections.** These multiple choice tests will be given in class and will be focused on the readings assigned for specific sections. There is no make-up for these quizzes. **(20% of the final grade)**
- * **Midterm take-home examination (30% of the total grade)**
- * **Final take-home examination (30% of the total grade)**

Concerning the writing standards applicable to the essays in the take-home exams, please see the attached brochure on *The Writing Requirement in the Department of Government* and consult *The Hodges Harbrace Handbook* (available at the Skidmore Shop)

Required Texts (available at the Skidmore Shop)

Mark Kesselman, ed. Readings in Comparative politics: Political challenges and Changing Agendas (2nd edition)

James Lee Ray and Juliet Kaarbo, Global Politics (9th edition)

Assignments

Required readings are starred (). Materials between brackets [] are supplemental, non required works related to the assigned topics. In order to facilitate updated analyses of the issues and promote class discussions, articles from newspapers, magazines, journals, and other sources will be assigned for reading as they become available.*

PART I. GLOBAL POLITICS
(Introduction to International Relations)

September 7 - 14: **Understanding International Politics: Theoretical Approaches, Historical Setting, and Current Features**

* James Lee Ray and Juliet Kaarbo, Global Politics :
Chapters 1 (*Theories of Global Politics*), 2 (*The Historical Setting*), and 3 (*The Modern Era*)

[Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations
K. J. Holsti, The Dividing Discipline
John Spanier, Games Nations Play
K. Waltz, Man, the State, and War]

September 16 - 23: **The International Actors: Nation-States and Transnational Organizations and Groups**

* James Lee Ray and Juliet Kaarbo, Global Politics :
Chapter 4 (*The Power of States and the Rise of Transnational Actors*)

[Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics among Nations
Josselin & Wallace, Non-State Actors in International Politics
James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*
A. Wolfers, Discord and Collaboration]

Sept. 28 - Oct. 5: **War and Peace: International Conflict and Its Management**

* **James Lee Ray and Juliet Kaarbo, Global Politics :**

Chapters 6 (*International Conflict: Explaining Interstate War*), and 8 (*Efforts to Avoid Conflict: Alliances, Arms and Bargaining*)

[Seyom Brown, The Causes and Prevention of War
Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics
Joseph S. Nye, Understanding International Conflict
Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State, and War]

October 7 - 14: **Conflict and Non-State Actors: Ethnic Grievances and International Terrorism**

* **James Lee Ray and Juliet Kaarbo, Global Politics :**

Chapter 7 (*Ethnic Conflict and International Terrorism*)

* **Kesselman, ed., Readings in Comparative Politics:**

Chapter 1: readings 1.5 (Muller) and 1.6 (Habyarimana et al.)

[Stephen Ryan, Ethnic Conflict and International Relations
Taras and Ganguly, Understanding Ethnic Conflict
Cindy Combs, Terrorism in the 21st Century
Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism]

October 19 - 26: **The Rise of Globalization and the Emergence of New International Challenges**

* **James Lee Ray and Juliet Kaarbo, Global Politics :**

Chapters 14 (*Globalization: Contemporary Dynamics and the Future of World Politics*) and 13 (*The Global Environment and Its Inhabitants*)

[Ulrich Beck, What is Globalization?
Ian Clark, Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century
Lechner and Boli, eds., The Globalization Reader
Raimo Vayrynen, Globalization and Global Governance]

PART II. DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM
(Introduction to Comparative Government)

Oct. 28 - Nov. 4:

State, Nation and Political System: Notions and Problems

* **Kesselman, ed., Readings in Comparative Politics:**

Chapter 2: readings 2.1 (Marx), 2.2
(Strange), 2.3 (Sassen), 2.5 (Rotberg), and 2.6 (Rapley)
Chapter 5: reading 5.5 (Connor)

[Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy.

B. Rubin, Modern Dictators

G. Tullock, Autocracy]

November 9 - 18:

Democratic Variations: The Nature and Diversity of Democracies

* **Kesselman, ed., Readings in Comparative Politics:**

Chapter 1: reading 1.2 (Huntington)
Chapter 4: all readings

[Robert Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition.

Robert Dahl, Democracy and its Critics

R. Harrison, Democracy

D. Held, Models of Democracy

A. Lipjhart, Democracies

G. Bingham Powell, Contemporary Democracies.]

November 24 - 28: Thanksgiving Vacation

Nov. 23 - Dec. 9:

Authoritarianism, Fundamentalism, and Ethnonationalism: Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century

* **Kesselman, ed., Readings in Comparative Politics:**

Chapter 2: reading 2.4 (Levitsky and Way)
Chapter 5: readings 5.1 (Norris), 5.3 (Winant), 5.4 (Wilensky), and
5.6 (Nasr)
Chapter 6: readings 6.1 (Linz) and 6.6 (Weldon)
Chapter 7: readings 7.1 (Przeworski and
Wallerstein), 7.2 (Tarrow), 7.3 (Putnam), and 7.5 (Zakaria).

[D. Chirot, Modern Tyrants

Gino Germani, Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism

Walter Lacqueur, Fascism.

Peter Marsden, The Taliban

G. Tullock, Autocracy]

Department of Government
Skidmore College
Policy on Civility and Comportment in the Classroom

The classroom experience is the heart of liberal education, and as such is the most important aspect of your Skidmore College education. Presumably, if you did not agree you would not be attending Skidmore. The faculty of the Government Department takes this understanding as the basis of our educational efforts. It is in an attempt to honor the centrality of the classroom experience that we offer this department policy on civility and comportment.

As is stated in the Student Handbook, your presence at Skidmore College is contingent upon your acceptance of, and full adherence to, the Skidmore College Honor Code. This honor code is distinct from the oath you take when writing a paper or taking an exam – it is in fact much more all-encompassing, and much more demanding.

The Code includes the following statement: *“I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.”* Elsewhere, the Code also calls all Skidmore students to *“conform to high standards of fair play, integrity, and honor.”*

What does it mean to do act honestly, with integrity, and according to high standards of fair play, particularly in the classroom ? In our view, it includes, minimally, the following:

1. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by arriving late to class.
2. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by leaving the classroom while class is in session, except for true medical emergencies.
3. Cell phones must be turned off during class.
4. No student shall disrupt the learning experience of others in the classroom by talking to a neighbor, writing notes to other students, reviewing one’s mail, reading the newspaper, completing homework for other classes, or playing with the laptop computer, while class is in session.
5. No student shall disrespect other Skidmore students, professors or the housekeeping staff by putting feet on the desks or other furniture in the classroom, or by leaving trash, food, or recyclables in the room at the end of the class session.

While we will hold all students to these minimal expectations, we also have some suggestions for those who seek to go beyond the bare minimum of civil classroom comportment to become the type of mature, responsible, active learners who are an asset to any classroom and society at large. These include the following.

6. Every student should take copious and meaningful notes both on assigned readings and during classroom sessions. Note taking is an important skill—if you do not already

possess it, you should acquire it.

7. Every student should take some time to review the notes that he or she has taken on the day's assigned reading before each class meeting. You will be amazed how much more invested and engaged in the class you will feel if you go into the classroom well-prepared.

8. Disruptions in class can be a significant impediment to learning, and no member of the Skidmore community—including faculty and students—should tolerate them. Thus every student should take responsibility for holding his or her peers and classmates to both high academic standards and high standards of civility. If people around you are chatting, passing notes or otherwise detracting from the overall quality of YOUR classroom experience, don't let them get away with it.

9. Individual faculty members in the Government Department will determine the level of sanctions for disruptive behavior.