

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

IA 101: Introduction to International Affairs

Fall 2010
Monday, Wednesday
Bolton 282

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Catalogue Description:

An introductory, multidisciplinary course, co-taught by two instructors and guest professors. Students will be expected to (1) know the kinds of questions that the study of international affairs raises, (2) recognize the shortcomings of a single disciplinary approach and the virtues of an interdisciplinary approach to answering these questions, (3) understand concepts such as traditionalism vs. modernization, cultural diffusion, integration vs. disintegration, nationalism vs. globalism, (4) engage actively in classroom discussions, case studies, small group exercises, and other problem-solving activities, and (5) follow, research, analyze and interpret a current international issue in a way that demonstrates the understanding and application of these concepts.

Course Objectives:

This is the introductory “core course” for the International Affairs majors and minors. It introduces fundamental questions and concepts necessary for students to understand, analyze, and apply basic interdisciplinary solutions to current international issues to be studied in the other elective IA courses. The course provides a common experience for all International Affairs majors and minors and other interested students regardless of previous courses completed. Specific objectives are to:

- Introduce International Affairs as a field of inquiry
- Explore the relationships among the International Affairs disciplines
- Examine key concepts that describe and explain international relationships and issues
- Explore the diversity of perceptions of international issues across national and cultural borders
- Engage in in-class global problem-solving activities and discussions
- Serve as a basis for further study in international affairs

Required Textbooks:

- Frieden, Lake and Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. 2010. W.W. Norton & Co. ISBN: 978-0-393-92709-2
- Other readings distributed in class, placed on e-reserve or placed on Blackboard.

Evaluation Methods:

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| • 2 Think Pieces | 30% |
| • 2 Exams (each 25%) | 50% |
| • Class Participation | 15% |
| • 2 Map Quizzes | 5% |

Late work is unacceptable. Think Piece assignments are due at the beginning of class. Assignments handed-in after that time will lose a minimum of 10% of the grade, and an additional 10% of the grade for every subsequent day it is late.

Think-Piece Instructions

In a five-page (no more), double-spaced typed paper, using proper spelling, grammar, sentence structure, paragraphs, pagination, and format---and with a title page and title/subtitle---respond to the think piece questions as assigned. Draw on what you have learned from the readings, lectures, discussions, debates, and videos to fashion your response. Cite relevant sources (e.g. Allen: 59) in body of text. A sixth page is used to list sources cited. Refer to the Skidmore Guide to Writing for instructions on how to cite (http://cms.skidmore.edu/writing_guide/index.cfm). Use evidence and dates/examples to back up what you write. Make certain the paper is coherent: it should have clear opening and closing statements in support of the body of material and thoughts presented.

Evaluation Criteria for think piece

- Quality of English: grammar, spelling, style.
- Organization of argument
- Illustration of argument with quotes
- Concentration of your focus
- Format: Title and last page of references
- Submitted on time
- Structure: introduction, conclusion, transitions, etc.
- Quality of argument

Exams

The first exam will be administered on the day scheduled during regular class hours (refer to the class schedule). The second exam will take place during the week of finals. The exams are not cumulative; they will be based on class discussions, assignments, lectures, and assigned readings including textbook chapters.

Class preparation and note-taking

Preparation for class is essential for your progress and includes reading all assigned materials and completing any written assignments in a timely fashion. Your careful preparation will ensure both lively and informed class discussions. Therefore, before each class you should take notes on the readings and review the central concepts and questions laid out for each section.

Classroom Participation

Active participation in classroom discussions is required. This implies two things: regular class attendance and thorough preparation. You are expected to be in class on time and to have read and studied the material assigned for the scheduled class session. Late arrivals not only disrupt the flow of important class activities but also suggest a lack of respect for other students and the learning process. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the hour and any late-comers will receive zero credit for attendance. If a student misses more than 2 classes, 2 percent will be deducted from the final grade each time the student misses each additional class. Students who miss a class are fully responsible for the material covered

when they were absent. As a matter of general respect to both your colleagues, and to the learning process itself, we ask you to 1) make sure you turn off your cell phones before the start of class and 2) make certain that you make use of the facilities. Ringing cell phones and bathroom breaks during class time are often disruptive. SO AS NOT TO DISRUPT THE CLASS, THOSE USING ELECTRONIC DEVICES WITHOUT PERMISSION WILL NOT BE CALLED OUT BUT WILL SIMPLY BE MARKED ABSENT FOR THE DAY.

Class Schedule

Part 1: The Political World

Session #1, Wednesday September 8

Introduction to International Affairs as a Discipline

Introduction to the Course and Mutual Introductions between Instructors and Students

A little historical and theoretical reflection: What do we mean by the “international system”? Where did the current international system come from, how has it evolved over time? Why interNATIONAL, i.e. why do we think of the nation-state as the main actor in IA, and how is this changing today? What are “nonstate actors” and what is their role in IA? We will come back to these questions later in considering the changing nature of state sovereignty.

Reading:

World Politics Ch 1 “What Shaped our World? A Historical Introduction” pp. 7-31 (Recommended background reading for those who have not had much world history; the rest of you can skim)

Session #2, Monday September 13

Nations, States and “National Interest”

What is a nation and what is a sovereign state? How do modern democratic states differ from older kinds of states? What makes states powerful? How do states define their interests and make foreign policy?

Reading:

David Held Global Transformations Ch 1 “The Territorial State and Global Politics” pp. 32- 49

(Blackboard)

World Politics Ch. 4, pp. 127-134, 143-151.

Session #3, Wednesday September 15

International Relations Theory: Peace and Conflict

Why do states go to war or stay at peace with each other? What aspects of state behavior and of the international system do we need to understand to explain wars? What influences states’ calculations in going to war and can we expect less war as more states turn democratic? We will consider the lenses of realist, liberal and constructivist theory and how they help us understand conflict.

Reading:

Stephen Walt, “One World, Many Theories” *Foreign Policy* Spring 1998.

World Politics Chs 3, pp. 82-105, 116-120 and 154-167.

Session #4, Monday, September 20

Civil Wars and Ethnic Conflict

James Fearon, “Iraq’s Civil War,” *Foreign Affairs* March-April 2007

Chaim Kaufmann, “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars,” *International Security* 20 (4) 1996

Gary Bass, “What Really Causes Civil War?” *New York Times* August 13, 2006.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/13/magazine/13wwln_idealab.html

While most theories of war and peace deal with conventional conflict between states, the most thorny and persistent conflicts in the world today are within states, often spilling over and inviting intervention from other states. Why are civil wars so hard to resolve? Can they be “won”? Do the civil conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan force us to change the way we think about sovereignty and the power of states?

Session #5, Wednesday September 22

Are religion and culture to blame for contemporary conflicts?

Why are cultural and religious identities still a source of conflict in today’s world? Are they the most important identities we have left after the erosion of national identities? Do these identities spark conflict or are they merely strengthened by clashes of interests?

Readings:

Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3) 1993

Graham Fuller, “A World Without Islam,” *Foreign Policy* Jan-Feb 2008

Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph, “Modern Hate: How Ancient Animosity Get Invented,” *New Republic*, March 22, 1993.

Think Piece assignment will be distributed at the end of class.

Session #6, Monday September 27

First Think-Piece Due.

Discussion of think piece.

Tuesday September 28 – Campus lecture by Greenberg Scholar in Residence Relli Shecter on “Consumerism and Islamism in the Middle East since the 1970s” at 8 p.m. in Gannett Auditorium. You are strongly encouraged to attend.

Session #7, Wednesday September 29.

The ideals and politics of universal human rights

Is there a global convergence of political cultures around the norms of human rights, or does cultural relativism still govern human rights debates? Is the idea of universal human rights imperialistic?

Readings:

World Politics Ch 10 pp 366-378 and Ch 11 pp 408-418 (optional), 419-442 (required)

Michael Ignatieff, “The Attack on Human Rights,” *Foreign Affairs* Nov-Dec 2001.

Fred Halliday, “Relativism and Universalism in Human Rights: The Case of the Islamic Middle East” in Political Studies, Vol 43, No. 1 (1995).

(We will discuss why the cases of Mukhtaran Mai in Pakistan and Sakineh Ashtiani in Iran became the focus of global human rights campaigns, with background information to be distributed in class)

Part 2: The Economic World

Session #8, Monday October 4

Why trade? Free trade and the global economy

Why do nations trade? Who benefits from trade, and how is trade good for economic growth? We will discuss the rise of economic liberalism and the concepts of absolute and comparative advantage, and consider the alternatives to economic liberalism that states have championed over the years, such as mercantilism and state-led development.

Readings:

World Politics, Chapter 6, “International Trade” pp. 214-225, 248-259

PBS documentary “Commanding Heights” Episode 1, “The Battle of Ideas.”

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/hi/story/ch_f01_01.html

Session #9, Wednesday, October 6

What’s wrong with free trade?

If (almost) everyone believes in free trade, why does (almost) everyone tend to impede it? Are states held hostage by special interests, or do national interests and different levels of development genuinely affect whether free trade will work for a country? What is a “developmental state” and does it help or hinder free trade?

Readings:

World Politics Chapter 6, pp. 225-238

Pankaj Ghemawat, “Why the World Isn’t Flat,” *Foreign Policy* Mar-Apr 2007

Tim Wu, “The WTO: The Stoner’s New Best Friend,” *Slate*, March 17, 2005.

<http://www.slate.com/id/2115008?obref=obinsite>

Keith Bradsher, “China uses rules on global trade to its advantage,” *New York Times*, March 10, 2010.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/15/business/global/15yuan.html?ref=world&pagewanted=print>

Session #10, Monday, October 11

Global Economic Institutions: The World Bank, IMF & WTO

Why are institutions necessary to promote free trade? If no sovereign state will agree to hand over its sovereignty to a ‘world government’ why do states nevertheless join international institutions and cooperate on multiple issues? Whose interests do the WTO, World Bank and IMF serve?

Readings:

World Politics pp. 62-73, 239-248, 275-277, 308-318

Session #11, Wednesday October 13

North-South Development and Globalization

GUEST SPEAKER - TBA

Why have developing countries been less enthusiastic about free trade than richer countries, and why is this changing today? Are the rules of global trade written against them? Can the international economy work to lift people out of poverty?

Readings:

World Politics, Chapter 9, “Development: Causes of the Wealth & Poverty of Nations”

PBS Wide Angle documentary “The Dying Fields” on cotton trade and farmers in Vidharba (**link to be posted to BB**).

“Rich Man, Poor Man: Globalization and the Rise of Inequality,” *Economist* January 18, 2007

(Blackboard)

Arvind Panagariya “Think Again: International Trade” *Foreign Policy*, November 2003.

Session #12, Monday, October 18

Globalization and Multinational Corporations

What is new about the current stage of globalization? What are the “infrastructures” on which it depends? Are there any constraints or limits on MNCs? Are states losing their sovereignty because of the free flow of goods, finance and investment? What does economic globalization mean for the international system?

Keohane and Nye, "Globalization: What's New? What's Not? And So What?" *Foreign Policy*, Spring 2000.

World Politics pp 267-281 (skim) and 282-292; 509-528.

Mark Landler, "Google Searches for a Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, March 26, 2010.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/28/weekinreview/28landler.html?ref=weekinreview>

Stephen Krasner, "Think Again: Sovereignty"

Dani Rodrik, "Sense and Nonsense in the Globalization Debate," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1997.

DEBATE: Has globalization fundamentally transformed the international system?

Session #13, Wednesday October 20:

Review for Mid-Term Exam

Session #14, Monday October 25: Mid-Term Examination on Political and Economic Sections

Part 3: The Cultural World

Session #15: Wednesday October 27.

Culture and its origins.

Questions on reading: What is the relevance of Sagan's Cosmic Calendar to the development of Human Culture? What are the main points in Becker's arguments about the origins of "the mind" and of culture? What are the relationships between "the mind" and cultural manifestations? What are the biological and mental interactions in Becker's theory, and why are these interactions so important? How does our linguistic and/or communicative behavior feature in our uniqueness as animals? What other great thinker of the 20th century gave such a great importance to sex and gender to the psychological and cultural characteristics of humans? In our contemporary world, how and where does the weight of the sexual surfaces? Can you speculate about the relationship between sex and International relations?

Readings:

Culture: definition.

E. Becker: The Origins of the Mind. The Mechanics of the Miraculous.

C. Sagan: The Cosmic Calendar.

Session # 16 Monday, November 1.

Thumb-sketch of Western Civilization until peace of Westphalia. Importance of Western culture for International Relations. One example of Imperialism and Colonialism: France.

Questions on reading: Where does the Western notion of "Scientific Man" come from? Why is it not called "Scientific women and men"? Do you believe that "Science" can save the world? What is the difference between Imperialism and Colonialism? How would you define the term "scientism"? Do you have a clear idea of the effects on Imperialism on any given country? Etymologically, what does "subaltern" mean?

Readings:

Hans J. Morgenthau: The dilemma of scientific man

Textbook: reread 1-34 + 344-347

Wikipedia: French Colonial Empire

Wikipedia: The subaltern.

Session #17 Wednesday November 8

Otherness: gender, ethnicity, religion.

Questions on reading:

Note: *The "Other" is anyone that does not belong closely to one cultural, ethnic or religious group. One possible definition of "essentializing": putting "the Other" within the prison of rigid, inescapable, and often false characterizations: e.g.: Women are more emotional than men; Arabs are women haters; Males are superior at management of their emotions, etc...*

Why are Orientalism and Occidentalism parallel notions? How does Tickner suggest we overcome these ways of "essentializing" the other. Can we easily recognize "orientalist" representations in contemporary US society? Why was 9/11 such a determining moment for contemporary International Relations? Do you agree that gender studies should have a role to play in IR? How safer would the world be without "essentializations" of the "Other." Name a few nations or human groups famous for their claim to "exceptionalism."

Readings:

J. Ann Tickner. Feminist perspectives on 9/11.
Wikipedia: Orientalism.
Wikipedia: Occidentalism
Wikipedia: Cultural relativism, Exceptionalism, Xenophobia
Wikipedia: Cultural imperialism

Session # 18 Wednesday, November 10.

Looking back in Section III. Relationships between III and IV. Cultural and Global dilemmas of colonialism, and globalization/postcolonialism.

Questions on reading : Review of the definitions we have encountered. Discussion of the 2 stories (See questions and notes on both texts).

Readings: Ousmane Sembene, "In Front of History" (1960)
Albert Camus, "The Host." (1950)
Notes + Questions on both texts

Part 4: The Environment

Session #19. Monday November 15.

Discussion of Harper's article. Transition between "cultural ecology" and "physical ecology."

Questions on reading: how does the article recapitulate and illuminate some of the topics we have covered in this section? In what way does American politics, fed by religious and philosophical issues, become relevant in Ugandan social and political life?

Readings:

Harper's (September 2010). Jeff Sharlett: "Straight Man's burden: the American origins of Uganda's persecution of gays." Background material on Uganda, with emphasis on environmental problems.

Session #20 Wednesday November 17

Questions on reading: Use the 3 levels of analysis {individual, sovereign state, world-view} in order to assess the impact of environmental crises upon IR. Do you believe alternative energies alone will be able to resolve the issues raised by the concept of "Peak Oil"? What other measures will have to be taken? Is it prudent to say that technology and the "invisible hand" of the markets will solve everything? What are fossil fuels, and how does their formation relate to Sagan's calendar?

Readings:

Textbook: p. 445-460
Wikipedia: Peak Oil.
Wikipedia: Malthus.
William Blake: Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright....

**Session #21, Monday November 22.
Global Warming**

Questions on reading: What successes for difficult environmental problems has the International Community come up with in the last 20 years? Why does Gore use the article "inconvenient" in the title of his article? Will the very idea of "convenience" have to change in order to find solutions? How can we change our habits: laws, personal commitment, force of dire circumstances? Make sure you study well the graphic showing the mechanism for greenhouse effect? What is photosynthesis and how does it influence the greenhouse effect.

Readings:

Al Gore: "An inconvenient truth." {excerpt of article}
Wikipedia: Global Warming.
Textbook: p. 461 - 482.
Suggested: Watch the video for "An Inconvenient Truth."

Think-piece II topic announced:

Vandana Shiva and her work on seeds: the GMO problematic.

Readings: Wikipedia: Vandana Shiva
{Other articles: Monsanto and India; Preserving Intellectual property.
Shiva's seed bank: why protecting non-altered seeds is important.
Biological diversity.

Topic: Analyze how the GMO controversy in India interests International Affairs from a cultural and an analytical point of view.

THANKSGIVING BREAK NOV 24-28

**Session #21, Monday November 29.
Global Warming II. Water, Politics, and Global Warming**

Questions on reading: Why has global warming become a political issue? In what manner is the refusal to accept scientific assertions of global warming related to "Scientism" and "elitism?" How are the "water wars" in Cochabamba related to the political struggles within the country. Note how the IMF and the World Bank play an important role in these events.

Readings:

S. Fred Singer and Dennis T. Avery: "Is Humanity losing the Global Warming debate?" (2009)
Mary H.Cooper "Water Shortages" (2006) [in Global Issues, 2006]

Session # 23. Wednesday December 1. Think-piece # 2 due.

Watch the film Darwin's Nightmare. Darwin's Nightmare (2004) Hubert Sauper, Director. The film will be screened in the evening during the previous week, and DVD copies will be put on reserve in library. An important question on the film will be included in the final.

Discussion of think piece (1 hr). Discussion of film (20 mins)

Session # 24, Monday December 6

Globalized waste and problems of elimination or concealment.

Beginning of review for Final.

Readings:

Articles: The question of the disposal of toxic waste.
The question of organized crime organizations
involved in this disposal.

Homework for Session 25: Make a list of concepts and questions for revision.

Session # 25 Wednesday December 8

REVISION FOR FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM: Monday 12/20 9 AM.