

Skidmore College

GO 103

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Spring 2009

Intro to Comparative & IR

1:25-2:20 MWF

Prof. Peter LaVenia

Course Objectives

What are the forces that drive world politics? What are the primary problems of world politics today? This course will focus on the potential main players in world politics: the state, inter-governmental institutions, economic forces, and individuals. Beyond this, we will examine contemporary problems and examine states in a comparative light. You will be expected to keep abreast of world affairs in this course, by reading a newspaper of record or watching a daily news program. Students will also be expected to be ready to write a sizable, but manageable, amount, during the semester.

Grade

Out of 300 points

3 Exams	50 pts. each (150 points total)
2 papers	50 points each (100 total)
Attendance and participation	50 points

Your final grade will be based on 3 exams (50 pts. each) which will be cumulative, 2 papers (4-5 pages each), and attendance and participation (which includes short papers assigned on the weekly readings besides class participation). Please do not take this class unless you intend to do the work.

Short Papers

Short papers provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the material in a less pressured format and for us to provide you with feedback on your application of theory to reality. Each paper should be between 4-5 pages long. All material should be cited.

Hypothesis analysis paper

Students will identify a hypothesis, frame it theoretically and test it empirically. There will be a handout that explains exactly what needs to be done in this assignment and we will devote considerable time to this effort. The paper itself will be between 4-5 typed pages long.

Attendance

It is expected that you will make every effort to attend class. Attendance will be taken regularly, and will factor into your class participation grade. However, it is understood that during the course of the semester unexpected events may occur; therefore, you are allowed up to 2 unexcused absences before your grade is impacted negatively.

News/Newspaper reading

As part of understanding world politics, you will be expected to keep abreast of world happenings by reading a "paper of record" such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, London Guardian; or you may watch a daily news program (CNN, MSNBC, Fox, etc.) instead. All of these are available to read (and often watch) online at no charge. Students will be randomly selected at the beginning of class to see what they have discovered; they will be expected to be able to explain the basic facts about the international event they have selected. This will factor into the participation grade.

Ombudsperson

“A government official, especially in Scandinavian countries, who investigates citizens' complaints against the government or its functionaries (www.answers.com).” One student will be asked to volunteer to act as an ombudsperson and will meet with me on a regular basis to offer feedback from students in terms of the direction the course is going and bring to my attention any problems with reading, assignments or other material.

Required Books

The following books are available at the campus bookstore, or cheaply online at www.amazon.com or www.bookfinder.com.

Mingst, Karen A. *Essentials of International Relations*. 4th Edition New York: W.W. Norton, 2008.

Mingst, Karen A. & Snyder, Jack L. *Essential Readings in World Politics*. 3rd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008.

Lim, Timothy C. *Doing Comparative Politics*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006.

Course Outline

Jan. 21

Introduction to the Course

<http://www.si.umich.edu/~pne/PDF/howtoread.pdf>

<http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html>

Jan. 23

What is International Relations?

Mingst - Chapter 1&2

Jan . 26-28

Diplomacy

Go to this website and read the rules and the FAQ

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=ah/prod/diplomacy>

go here to see a map of the board

http://www.diplomacy-archive.com/diplomacy_rules.htm#Diplomacy%20Maps

IR Theories

Jan. 30

Realism/Neo-realism

Mingst -Chapter 3, pgs. 55-59, 63-68

“The Melian Dialogue”(in Mingst pgs. 12-13)

Morgenthau, “A Realist Theory of International Politics” (in reader p. 56-60)

Mearsheimer, “Anarchy and the Struggle for Power” (in reader, pp. 60-74)

Feb. 2

Liberalism

Mingst -Chapter 3, pgs. 59-63

Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics" (in reader, pp, 80-93)

Feb. 4 **Marxism**
Mingst -Chapter 3, pgs.68-72
Lenin, "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism" (in reader, pp. 18-24)

Feb. 6 **A Constructed World**
Mingst -Chapter 3, pgs. 73-80
Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It" (in reader, pp. 93-117)

Levels of Analysis

Feb. 9 **The International System**
Mingst, Chapter 4
Paper Due: Why Sept. 11th?

Feb. 11 **The State**
Mingst, Chapter 5

Feb. 13 **The Individual**
Mingst, Chapter 6

Feb. 16 **War and Strife**
Mingst, Chapter 8

Feb. 18 **Exam 1**

Comparative Politics

Feb. 20 **Introduction to Comparative Politics**
Lim, Ch. 1
Hypothesis analysis paper assigned
How To Compare?
Examples <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/Stossel/story?id=1500338>
and <http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/tclim/weblog/stossel.htm>

Feb. 23 **Comparing to Learn, Learning to Compare**
Lim, Ch.2
How To Compare?
Examples <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/Stossel/story?id=1500338> and
<http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/tclim/weblog/stossel.htm>

Feb. 25 **Thinking Theoretically in Comparative Politics**
Lim, Ch. 3

Feb. 27 **What Makes a Democracy?**
Lim, Ch. 6

Mar. 2 **Building Democracy in Iraq?**
-Brooks, David. 2003. BUILDING DEMOCRACY OUT OF WHAT?
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200306/brooks>
-Gerecht, Reuel Marc Ayatollah Democracy.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200409/gerecht>

Mar. 4 **Culture or Structure or Rational Actor**
Film, "A Classroom Divided"

Mar. 6 **Culture or Structure or Rational Actor**
Debate

Mar. 7-15 **Spring Break**

Contemporary Problems

Mar. 16 **Ethnic Civil Wars**
Kaufmann, C. 1996. "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars."
International Security 20 (4):136-75
Kumar, R. 1997. "The Troubled History of Partition." *Foreign Affairs* 76 (1):22-34

Hypothesis Outline due!

Mar. 18 **Gendered Conflict**
Caprioli, Mary. 2000. Gendered Conflict. *Journal Of Peace Research* 37 (1):51.
JSTOR

Mar. 20-25 **WPSA – No Class!**

Mar 27 **Terrorism**
Lim, Ch. 7

Mar. 30 **Terrorism, Pt. 2**
Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" (in reader, pp. 398-418)

Apr. 1 **Exam 2**

Apr. 3-6 **International Political Economy**
Mingst, Ch. 9
Lim, Ch. 4

Apr. 8 **Social Movements**
Lim, Ch. 8

Apr. 10-13 **Social Movements, pt. 2**
Film: Frontline, "The Tank Man"
"This is What Democracy Looks Like"

