PSCI 2223 Introduction to International Relations / Fall 2013

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course description

This course explores the fundamental concepts, theories, practices, and problems of international politics, such as anarchy, power, causes of war, the nature of international economics, and origins and roles of international organization and law.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading Materials
2. Supplementary materials, available through D2L: https://learn.colorado.edu

Student Initiative
In addition to reading assigned materials thoughtfully and thoroughly and attending classes regularly, students should be alerted to the obvious fact that it will not be easy to summarize the complexity of our topics in terms of a few concepts and theories. Students should acquire the habit of regularly reading world news stories to learn about and keep up with international developments.

Exams and Research Paper Project
All students are expected to take the midterm exam. Each student, however, has a choice whether to (a) take the final exam or (b) demonstrate his/her knowledge by writing a research paper. A description of the exam format will be given prior to the exam dates while the guidelines, assignments, deadlines, and criteria of evaluation for the research paper are outlined at the end of the syllabus.

Participation and Quizzes
Students must read the assigned class readings in advance critically and in depth, so that they are able to identify the key points of the argument as well as find within them weaknesses and controversies. During a typical class session, students will be expected to clarify the readings and answer questions about them. To encourage participation, the instructor may use random questioning or unannounced quizzes. If quizzes are given, they will count toward the participation grade.

Attendance
Each student starts out with 100 attendance points. Unexcused absences beyond the second one will decrease this point total by 10 points each. Use the two “freebees” wisely, for family affairs, job interviews, minor health problems, etc. but not on the exam days or when assignments are due; an absence on the due date does not mean that you can make the work up. Absences will be excused only in cases of serious health or family emergencies and appropriate documentation will be required. Please note that excessive excused or unexcused absences will also hurt your participation grade, because one cannot participate in class discussions if one is not present in class.
COURSE RULES

Grading Policy
Midterm Exam 35%
Final Exam or Research Paper 35%
Participation / Quizzes 15%
Attendance 15%

Class Policies
1. Students are expected to turn in the assignments at the beginning of class and take the exams on the date specified. Failure to show up for the exam on time or meet an assignment deadline does not entitle the students to make up the work at a later time.

2. Exceptions to the class requirements and rules are granted at the instructor’s discretion, only under circumstances of extreme personal emergency or serious illness. In all instances, appropriate evidentiary documentation will be requested.

3. All academic work must meet the University’s standards for academic honesty. Each student is responsible to inform themselves of these standards before conducting any academic work. My academic dishonesty policy is very simple: you will receive a failing grade for the class if you are found cheating on examinations, plagiarizing the work of others, attempting to turn in assignments used in previous classes, or sign the attendance sheet for another student, along with all other possible infractions noted in the University's policy on academic dishonesty. Moreover, disciplinary proceedings to dismiss you from the University may be initiated. I will not tolerate academic dishonesty and you will face the harshest punishment possible if you attempt it.

4. Students may request the instructor to re-read exam answers or papers that they feel have been unfairly evaluated. Requests for re-evaluation must be submitted in typewritten form, along with the assignment, within a week after it has been returned to the class or the final grade posted. The written statement must explain specifically why the student thinks that the grade should be reconsidered and what grade the assignment deserves. Re-evaluation will be conducted de novo.

5. Accommodations based on disability and/or religious beliefs will be made whenever possible. But, it is the student’s responsibility to let their TA know about needing such accommodations within the first two weeks of class. Accommodation requests after this time period may not be granted.

6. The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced.

7. Additional short readings (e.g. articles, news stories) may be assigned as the semester progresses.

8. All students are expected to complete assigned readings before they are discussed in class and they are expected to discuss and respond to random questioning.
COURSE OUTLINE: TOPICS AND READINGS

I. Introduction
   o Mingst: pp. 1-70, 116-119, 144-145, 150-154
   o D2L: Ra’anan “The Nation-State Fallacy”
   o D2L: Barber “Jihad vs. McWorld”

II. Key Theories of IR
    A. (Neo)Realism
       o Mingst pp. 70-76, 94-101, 119-121
       o D2L: Hobbes “The State of Nature …”
       o D2L: Thucydides “The Melian Dialogue”
       o D2L: Waltz “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory”
    B. (Neo)Liberalism
       o Mingst pp. 76-81, 102-104, 121
       o D2L: Pease “Philosophical Roots of Liberalism”
       o D2L: Moravcsik “Taking Preferences Seriously”
    C. Marxism
       o Mingst: pp. 81-84, 104-107, 122-124
       o D2L: Pease “Marxism”

III. Key Topics in the Study of International Politics
    A. Security
       o Mingst pp. 134-137, 264-279
       o D2L: Morgan “Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis”
       o D2L: Ziegler “Disarmament”
       o D2L: Ziegler “Collective Security”
       o D2L: Russett “The Fact of the Democratic Peace”
    B. International Economic Relations
       o Mingst pp. 283-307
       o D2L: Frieden and Lake “International Political Economy”
       o D2L: Coughlin et al. “Protectionist Trade Policies …”
       o D2L: Lenin “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism”
       o D2L: Cohn “Dependency Theory”
       o D2L: Russett & Oneal “Triangulating Peace” esp. pp. 127-133, 154-155
    C. International Institutions and Law
       o Mingst pp. 181-210, 219-229
       o D2L: Pease “Liberalism and the Nature of International Organizations”
       o D2L: Akenhurst “Is International Law Really Law?”
       o D2L: Russett, Oneal & Davis “The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod” esp. pp. 441-449, 462
    D. Foreign Policy Decision-Making
       o Mingst pp. 137-143, 155-178

Midterm Exam: date TBA.
Final Exam: Monday, December 16, 1:30 pm
TERM PAPER PROJECT

General Instructions and Rules
With the instructor’s approval, choose a post-World War II international event of interest to you. Each student’s paper will be 6 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1” margins) plus bibliography. Note that this length is relatively short, so making your arguments economically and cogently are some of the goals of the assignment that you will be graded on.

Deadlines
Please propose your topic as soon as possible, but no later than October 29. Each topic can only be used once, so first come, first served rule applies. The topic proposal form is on D2L.

The papers are due in class on Thursday, December 5. Please note that all due dates are known well in advance, so you need to plan accordingly. Late papers will be penalized by 10% per day.

Paper Content
Although you will need to research historical facts in order to obtain information necessary for the analysis, the goal of the exercise is not to report a series of historical facts. The goal is to analyze the event in terms of two of the three main schools of thought (Realism, Liberalism, Marxism) discussed in class. Specifically, the papers will be composed of the following sections:

(1) Background (1 page max)
   (a) Briefly describe the event, noting when it occurred and the related contentious issue.
   (b) Identify the two most relevant actors that are on the opposing sides of the issue.

(2) Analysis Part I (about 2.5 pages)
   Use the insights from one of the three major IR theories we have discussed (i.e. Realism, Liberalism, or Marxism) to explain why the event took place and why each side did what it did (i.e. what motivated each side to pursue its chosen policies). In other words, you are utilizing the school of thought to figure out what happened and why.

(3) Analysis Part II (about 2.5 pages)
   Repeat part (2) using a different school of thought.

(4) Include a bibliography (not counted in the page length requirement) with at least three sources other than the assigned readings. It is imperative that all facts/ideas reported in the text are properly referenced using a parenthetical referencing style such as MLA.

Grading criteria for the assignment:
1. objectivity
2. quality of research
3. quality of analysis
4. organization
5. writing style and clarity
6. mechanics and grammar

Students who have difficulties with rhetoric are encouraged to use the University’s resources to help them improve their writing and purchase a writer’s manual such as Strunk and White’s Elements of Style.