

Political Science 115 (3 Credits)
Class Meeting Time: MW 3-4:30
Spring 2017
Facebook: UWO Political Science

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International Politics

or

“You are on Earth; there is no cure for that” --Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*

Course Description: The objective of the course is to provide a basic understanding of the major problems and issues facing the contemporary international system, and the efforts to create a stable and sustainable international order that is the prerequisite for dealing with these issues. Consequently, the course addresses factors that promote the stability and durability of the international system and threats to its stability.

What is this course *really* about: Statistically speaking, one or more students in this class will live to the ripe old age of 100 years (now, I’m not going to tell you which ones—that would be spoilers), and most of the rest will not fall very short of that. That being the case, in your lifetime you will see and experience things you probably cannot conceive of just yet (well, this is the beginning of the course...). Consider, for example, just how much the world has changed in the last 80 years, or in the lifespan who was your age in 1932. At that time, Hitler was not in power yet (and there was still time for him *not* to come to power), Stalin was in power but what did that matter to people in the US, which maintained no diplomatic relations with USSR. Splitting the atom was still a theory, and the moon might as well be made of cheese. Looking back at all the things that happened since that date, one can only wonder that things, overall, worked out as well as they did. They certainly could have been worse. But they also could have been better. Now, we know what happened in the last century. But what is going to happen in the *next* (i.e., your) century? Will you be able to say, from the vantage point of 80 years from now, that things worked out pretty well? Because, one way or the other, the world that you know as it exists today will not exist for much longer. Something else will replace it, the only question being, what? Will you like the changes, or will you pine for the “good old times”? To help you answer this question, what we are going to do in the course of the semester is to examine the last century or so through the magnifying glass of a variety of theories of international relations and, hopefully, present you with some idea as to what the history of the rest of your life might look like, depending on choices made at individual, national, and international level. The world that exists today did not come about by chance. It is, for better or worse, a product of conscious human action, people who have lived and live not just in the US, but also in other countries and regions whose circumstances and perspective may be very different from your own, therefore understanding those circumstances and perspectives is vital to having basic understanding of how the world works, especially since a lot is riding on choices, both individual and collective that will be made in the future by people in all corners of the world. You are no doubt aware this Quest 2 course is an integral part of the Universities Studies Program, whose description runs something like this:

The University Studies Program: “The purpose of the University Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is to inspire intellectual curiosity in our students, encourage them to understand their responsibilities as educated people, and lay the foundation for the skills and knowledge that will

enable them to succeed not only as university students, but also as engaged local and global citizens. The program is structured around three interconnected areas:

QUESTION / EXPLORATION / CONNECTION

These terms build upon the successful Odyssey program for incoming UW Oshkosh students. They also reinforce the goal of assisting students in developing responsibility for their own learning while underscoring the fact that knowledge is driven by inquiry.” (Adopted from University Studies Program booklet, <http://www.uwosh.edu/usp/pdfs/university-studies-program-booklet>)

Each of the Quest 2 courses revolves around one or more specific “Signature Questions”, so I might as well tell you a little about that:

The Signature Question: This course is intended to explore one of the three “Signature Questions” around which USP revolves, in this instance *“How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?”*. One of the more vexing problems facing our society is the perennial international political instability that affects US national security, economic well-being, and long-term prospects for prosperity. Let’s face it, the quest (no pun intended) for a stable, sustainable political environment is something that even the ancient Greeks obsessed about, and has been the center of attention for social scientists ever since. So far that quest has been unsuccessful. Every once in a while, the world has suffered major political breakdowns (you no doubt heard of the most recent one, usually referred to as “World Wars 1 and 2”), following which the survivors buried their dead, picked up the pieces, and resolved to do better the next time. Well, the “next time” is upon us. The world is facing a host of problems. Some of those problems rise, or have the potential to rise, to the level of threatening the survival of the international political system and, given what these breakdowns tend to be like, it’s something that we’d just as soon avoid. Therefore by the end of the semester you will have a pretty good idea of what these problems are, what the likely solutions will have to be, and what political obstacles stand in the way of adopting these solutions. I’m not exactly promising that the current international problems *will* have a “Hollywood ending”, but at least you’ll have an idea what such an ending might look like.

To this end, and consistent with other USP Quest courses, this course is organized certain learning outcomes (caution: boilerplate language follows):

UWO Sustainability Learning Outcome: Knowledge of sustainability and its applications is the ability to understand local and global earth systems; the qualities of ecological integrity and the means to restore and preserve it; and the interconnection of ecological integrity, social justice, and economic well-being. While there are many ways to define the concept of sustainability, the definition that suits this course best is the following one:

“Sustainability is achieved when all people on Earth can live well without compromising the quality of life for future generations.”

--Rolf Jucker, “A Vision for a Sustainable University”

As a concept, sustainability has multiple components or dimensions, usually defined in terms of the so-called “three pillars of sustainability”, namely ecology, society, and economics. The chief focus of this course is on the political

Essential Learning Outcomes:

- Knowledge of human cultures
- Identification and objective evaluation of theories and assumptions.
- Knowledge of sustainability and its applications.

Skills developed in this course:

- Improve the level of understanding of the main issues in contemporary international politics.
- Develop a concept of individual and national responsibility.
- Develop critical and creative thinking through utilization of social science theories.
- Practice written communication through short essays and a research project.

Ethical Reasoning: One of the crucial aspects of the University Studies Program is the emphasis on ethical reasoning. Political decisions are very rarely clear-cut. In most cases, we make either implicit or explicit choices to favor one set of principles or ideas over another, and every gain in some realm of public policy is accompanied by sacrifice somewhere else. Therefore, the objective of the course is to make you aware of the conflicts of values that are an ever-present aspect of international politics, be able to recognize different ethical perspectives of the same set of problems, and develop a course of action that reconciles these competing perspectives.

This Quest II course is consistent with the goals of liberal education, which has been defined as follows: “Liberal education is a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement. These broad goals have been enduring even as the courses and requirements that comprise a liberal education have changed over the years. Characterized by challenging encounters with important and relevant issues today and throughout history, a liberal education prepares graduates both for socially valued work and for civic leadership in their society. It usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in at least one field or area of concentration.” [Source: *Advocacy* “[What is a liberal education?](#)”]

This might sound daunting. It’s not.

Global Citizenship: This course is **designated a “Global Citizen” course** and may count toward the achievement of a Global Scholar Designation on your transcript. Global citizenship is the knowledge of nations, cultures, or societies beyond the US; the recognition of how interaction, interdependence, and inequity among diverse geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped historical or contemporary global challenges and opportunities, and the skills to engage with the responsibilities of informed citizenship in a complex, interdependent, and changing world.

The Global Citizenship criteria are as follows:

- examine nations, cultures, and societies beyond the U.S. historically or in the present
- appreciate diverse human ideas and traditions
- understand forms of and sources of interaction, interdependence and inequity at the local and global levels

On the basis of those, the course has the following Student Learning Objectives:

--Students will gain knowledge of global systems, institutions, and theories of international behavior.

--Students will acquire knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives on international politics which are conditioned by the individual countries' or regions' circumstances, interests, and historical experiences.

Readings: all course readings are on D2L. There is *no* textbook associated with this course.

Assessment: Your course grade will consist of the following:

--**Three exams**, each with 30 multiple choice questions and 4 (out of 5) short essay questions. Each exam will count for 15% of the final course grade. The highest exam grade will count for an additional 15%.

--**One research paper of at least 12 pages in length.** Select a disagreement or a conflict between two or more international actors and analyze it using the following criteria:

Discuss each actor's position on the issue in some detail.

Why has the actor adopted this position? What interests does the position serve?

On what is the disagreement between the two actors based? What is the incompatibility of interests?

Why is one's actor position perceived as harmful by the other actor?

What is each actor's perception of "the other"? In other words, when discussed by the political leaders or the mass media of the actor in question, how is the adversary described?

Is that an accurate or fair depiction?

Try to propose a possible solution to overcome the incompatibility that does not require either side to make a fundamental realignment of interests. Is such a solution possible, in your estimate?

--**Participation in class discussion:** This accounts for the remaining 10% of your course grade. Class participation grade will be assessed as follows:

Frequent and topical participation: 100%

Occasional participation: 85%

No participation, or very rare participation: 70%

All readings summaries submitted on time and to standard: +15% (not to exceed 100%)

--**Weekly reaction papers:** You are required to submit, by email to the address at the top of this page, weekly reaction papers dealing with the assigned readings, in which you attempt to answer the questions for that week (these questions are listed below, in the list of readings for each course week). The summaries are to be approximately **1 page, single-spaced**. The summary is due Monday, by midnight, of the week. Send it by email to my email address (see top of this page). These papers will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Each week's readings have an associated question that your reaction ought to attempt to answer to the best of your ability (don't worry if the readings may seem over your head in some cases, what I'm looking for is the effort to grapple with the course material, plus they give me an idea of which concepts you are struggling with so that I may give them extra attention in class). You may fail to submit one summary during the semester. Failure to submit each additional summary will lower your course grade by 2 points.

--**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed **three** unexcused absences with no penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce your final course grade by 1 point. Occasional lateness will not be penalized; however, frequent lateness may negatively affect your class participation grade.

Grade Scale: Final course grades will be assigned as follows: A: 92 and higher. A-: 90-91; B+: 88-89; B: 82-87; B-: 80-81; C+: 78-79; C: 72-77; C-: 70-71; D: 60-69; F: 0-59.

Academic Honesty: All work is to be your own. No notes, books, or other study materials will be permitted during exams. Violations of the academic honesty code will be pursued in accordance with university procedures. You may (in fact, you are encouraged to do so) work in groups on your readings summaries, however each member of the group should turn in his/her individual summary.

Early Alert: Since college is a novel experience to most students in the USP program, this course is part of the Early Alert system whose purpose is to identify students who appear to be struggling by evaluating their performance in the initial weeks of the semester. Your Early Alert grade (which is not a component of the course grade in any way) will be based on class attendance and the Reaction Papers for weeks 1 through 3.

Learning Communities: Please keep in mind that most of the people you see in this class are the same people with whom you will be interacting in other USP courses. Moreover, each Quest II class of 50 students is composed of two smaller learning communities of 25 students each who are together enrolled in either a Quest Writing or Speaking course.

Course Schedule

Week 1 *"Do unto others before they do unto you."*

Walt, "One World, Many Theories"

Week 2 *The state is a relationship of domination of men over men, one that rests on the use of legitimate violence."*

Krasner, "Sovereignty"

Renan, "What is a Nation?"

Weber, "What is a State?"

Ottaway, "Nation Building"

Sadowsky, "Ethnic Conflict"

Week 3 *"You get the government you deserve"*

Bay, "Needs, Wants, and Political Legitimacy"

Huntington, "The Third Wave"

Falk, "Human Rights"

Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma."

Week 4 *" Greedy men, competing, make the world go 'round"*

Sobel, "Economic Liberalism and Market Exchange in the Global Arena" [Chapter 5 only]

Week 5 *"In the long run we are all dead"*

Nau, "History of Globalization"

Matthews, "The Global Civil Society"

Week 6 *"But the Spanish had gunpowder."*

Goldstein and Pevehouse, "The North-South Gap"

Goldstein and Pevehouse, "International Development"

Stiglitz, "International Development: Is it Possible?"

"Development's Great Depression"

Week 7 *"Man cannot live in the midst of plenty."*

Eberstadt, "Population Implosion"
McKibben, "Climate Change"
Rothkopf, "Is a Green World a Safer World?"
Grunwald, "Seven Myths About Alternative Energy"
Brown, "The New Geopolitics of Food"
Kahn, "The Green Economy"
Ferguson and Smith, "The Nuclear Option"

Week 8 *"What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such."*

Jervis, "The Era of Leading Power Peace"
Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?"
Wolf, "Can Globalization Survive?"
Perkovich, "Nuclear Proliferation"
Mueller, "Nuclear Weapons"

Week 9 *"The worse, the better"*

Carothers, "Civil Society"
Appleby and Marty, "Fundamentalism"
Crenshaw, "Causes of Terrorism"
Lawrence, "The Science of Guerrilla Warfare"

Week 10 *"We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order."*

Clark, "American Strategic Experience"
Mead, "America's Sticky Power"
Zakaria, "The Future of American Power"
Walt, "The Myth of American Exceptionalism"
Hendrickson, "Revolution and Intervention"
Gilpin, "Hegemonic War and International Change"

Exam 2 Monday of Week 11 (Weeks 6-10)

Week 11 *"Don't mention the war"*

"The Declaration of 9 May 1950"
Gonzalez and Hoffmann, "The EU and Globalization"
Harding, "The Myth of Europe"
Frieden, "The Euro"
Ghosh, "What next for the EU"
O'Rourke, "Brexit"

Week 12 *"Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain."*

Brown, "Deconstructing Russophobia"
Goebbels on USSR

Orlov, "The Peculiarities of Russian National Character"
Bullough, "Vladimir Putin: The Rebuilding of Soviet Russia"
Ames, "Sorry America, Ukraine isn't all about you"
Klaus, "Let's Start a Real Ukrainian Debate"

Week 13 *"BRICS must provide a united and clear voice in shaping a peaceful, balanced and stable world."*

Bello, "The BRICS: Challengers to Global Status Quo"
McGregor, "5 Myths About the Chinese Communist Party"
Chang, "The Coming Collapse of China"
Kaplan, "The South China Sea is the Future of Conflict"

Week 14 *"We are not far from disaster."*

Ottaway and Carothers, "Middle East Democracy"
Burke, "Al Qaeda"
Gaddis, "Grand Strategy of Transformation"
Al-Diyali, "The Price of Victory"
Lynch, "Behind the Arab Spring"
Hanieh, "A Brief History of the Islamic State"

Exam 3 Wednesday of Week 14

Papers due Friday of Week 14