INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL POLITICS

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Class: Mon., Wed., Fri., 9:05 a.m.–9:55 a.m.,
230 Anderson Hall

Office Hours: Wed., 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.,
or by appointment

Teaching Assistants
Asli Calkivik
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Michael Nordquist
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If students cannot make these office hours, they should contact TA’s to set up alternate appointment times.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Around 15 years ago, President George H.W. Bush proclaimed that the United States would lead a multinational alliance to forge a “new world order.” Ten years later, President George W. Bush sought to craft a multinational alliance against “terrorists of global reach,” promising to “smoke ’em out and hunt ’em down.” In the wake of the Cold War, the world seemed poised on the edge of an unprecedented era of international peace. By the turn of the millennium and especially after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, such heady optimism was but a dim memory. While the industrialized West has constituted a zone of peace, the previous decade has brought ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, genocide in Rwanda, failed humanitarian intervention in Somalia, the collapse of the Middle East peace process, continued bloodshed and chaos in sub-Saharan Africa, nuclear standoffs between India and Pakistan, occasional crises with China, and, of course, the destruction wreaked by al-Qaeda. The past decade saw tremendous gains in economic productivity and wealth in the industrialized world, increasing globalization of the means of production, and immense technological progress, but it also brought monetary meltdowns in Russia and East Asia, economic crises across Latin America, a mixed record on common environmental challenges, and so on.

One might be tempted to conclude that the more things change, the more they stay the same. This course will be devoted to analyzing how things have changed and how they have stayed the same in global politics. It will examine the perennial problems of international politics and how recent trends have transformed their dynamics. The course will explore, among other issues, the causes of war and peace, the limited use of force, humanitarian intervention, nuclear proliferation, nationalist conflict, international ethics, the politics of international trade and finance, foreign aid, globalization, the prospects for environmental cooperation and human rights norms, terrorism, and the future of world politics.

Students will be introduced to theoretical traditions, but the course will focus primarily on explaining and understanding current and historical problems and cases in world politics. (For a more theoretical course, see POL 3835, International Relations.) By the end of the term, students should be familiar with all these issues and others, should have developed their own views on these controversial questions, and should be able to apply basic analytical frameworks and tools to answer them.
**Requirements**

**Readings.** The average weekly reading load is between 50 and 100 pages. **All assigned readings should be completed before the lecture.** Lectures will at times use current events as illustrations. You are strongly encouraged to read regularly the international section of a major daily newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. These are available for free on-line or, at substantially reduced rates for students, by subscription.

**Sections.** Learning cannot be passive. It requires students to engage actively with this course’s ideas and readings, to apply this course’s concepts to debates about contemporary international affairs, and to argue with each other. None of that is possible, of course, within a large lecture. Thus on 3 Fridays over the course of the term, identified in the syllabus by **SECTION**, we will break the class up into three smaller groups to facilitate discussion. Attendance in sections is required, and students will be held responsible for the readings and in-class discussions associated with the section. You will receive details regarding your section assignment before the first section meeting, to be held on February 18.

**Assignments.** This course will have two midterm exams and a final exam.
- The first midterm exam will cover all class meetings (and corresponding readings) held between January 19 and February 21.
- The second midterm exam will cover all class meetings (and corresponding readings) held between February 25 and April 8.
- The final exam will be cumulative, but will have a particular emphasis on class meetings and corresponding readings from April 13 through the end of the course.
- Details regarding the exams’ structure and the instructor’s expectations will be presented in class as the exams approach.

*NB:* The instructor reserves the right to administer brief quizzes in any class meeting (lecture or section) or in a take-home format on the assigned reading.

**Make-up Exams.** Make-up exams will **not** be offered except in rare circumstances. Should you have an unanticipated emergency that causes you to miss the scheduled exam, contact the instructor as soon as possible by email or telephone. Note that you may be expected to provide evidence (e.g. a doctor’s note).

**Grading**

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<tr>
<td>Midterm I:</td>
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<td>Midterm II:</td>
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<td>Final Exam:</td>
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<td>Other (participation, quizzes):</td>
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**Readings**

The following **books are required.** They have been ordered for purchase at the University bookstore in the Coffman Memorial Union.


All **other required readings** are located on the course web-site. To log-in to the course web-site, go to vista.umn.edu and type in your X500 ID and password. Some of these files are quite large: if you do not have a high-speed connection at home, you should access them while you are on campus.
COURSE WEB-SITE

Students registered for this class may access the course web-site at vista.umn.edu. On this web-site, you will find:
• the syllabus
• lecture outlines (which will be posted by the day preceding each lecture)
• handouts and select overheads
• required readings not available in either of the required books

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Jan. 19  Introduction: What is Global Politics?
• L&L, pp. 1-30.

Jan. 21  Theory and Practice in International Politics
• L&L, pp. 55-75.

1. Theories of International Politics and the Causes of War and Peace

Jan. 24  The International System: Definitions, Types, and Origins
• L&L, pp. 50-53, 77-83, 131-154.

Jan. 26, 28, 31  Realism: Anarchy and the Security Dilemma
• L&L, pp. 31-36, 492-503.

Feb. 2, 4, 7  Liberalism: Institutions, Interdependence, and Democracy
• L&L, pp. 36-40.
Feb. 9, 11  Marxism: Modes of Economic Organization  
Constructivism: Norms and Ideas in International Politics

• L&L, pp. 40-50.
• Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” pp. 61-68. (A&J)

  **Do not sweat the details here. Think about the Tannenwald article as an example of constructivist research.**

Feb. 14, 16  Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Bureaucracy and Psychology  
Individuals and International Politics  
The Levels of Analysis and the Causes of War

• L&L, pp. 77-83.

Feb. 18  What is globalization? What are its implications for world politics?

  **SECTION**

• L&L, pp. 510-513.

Feb. 21  China: A New Threat?

  **What are the implications of China’s rise according to different theoretical approaches? And what would adherents of these theories recommend?**

Feb. 23 Midterm I

II. The Utility of Theory? International Politics, 1914 – 1992

**Do theories regarding the causes of war and peace help explain the origins of World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the end of the Cold War?**

Feb. 25, 28 World War I, the Interwar Period, and World War II
March 2, 4, 7


March 7, 9, 11 The Cold War and its End

- L&L, pp. 194-222.

**March 14-18 Spring Break: No Class**

III. International Security

Mar. 21, 23, 25 The Uses of Force: Deterrence and Compellence
Case: Gulf War I—Failure of Deterrence? Failure of Compellence?
Case: Gulf War II—The Debate over Deterrence

- L&L, pp. 223-234.

March 25, 28 Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Proliferation

March 30  Nationalism, Civil War, and Intervention


**Again, don’t sweat the details. When reading about Rwanda, focus on: Why does communal conflict, and even genocide, occur? Why did the West and the UN do next-to-nothing in Rwanda? Has the West learned the lessons of Rwanda (consider Darfur, Sudan)? **

April 1  Terrorism


April 4  Ethics and the Use of Force (I)


April 6  Ethics and the Use of Force (II): WW II and the Bomb


April 11  Midterm II
IV. International Political Economy

Apr. 13, 15, 18 The Politics of International Trade and Finance


Apr. 20 Economic Globalization


Apr. 22 Global Inequality: The North-South Gap


Preview: On April 29, we will debate Economic Globalization, which properly belongs here—but we cannot get extra rooms easily except on Fridays.

V. The Promise and Challenge of Global Governance

Apr. 25 Environmental Cooperation and Conflict

- L&L, pp. 404-431.
Apr. 27  Migration and Refugees

Apr. 29  Debating Economic Globalization
SECTION

May 2  International Law and Human Rights
   • L&L, pp. 97-101, 369-402.

VI. The Future

May 4  A Passing Moment or an Enduring Era? American Hegemony and World Politics
   • Niall Ferguson, “A World Without Power,” Foreign Policy (July/August 2004).

May 6  Primed for Peace or Ready to Explode?
   • L&L, pp. 513-520.

FINAL EXAM — Time and Date — To Be Announced.