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277-02 International Relations

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Survey of Course

This course provides an overview and introduction to the field of International Relations. This subfield of political science focuses on the interaction of states, organizations, and individuals across national borders. This course provides students with an analytical framework from which they can more readily explain and understand international events. This course is organized around a series of intuitive questions to explore the major dynamics of world politics. Students are expected to draw upon lectures, class discussion, and the readings to come to understand the historical and conceptual development of the international political system, the dynamics of conflict and cooperation, and major issue areas of contention in contemporary world politics.

Exams

There will be two in-class exams in this course. Each of these exams will include multiple choice, identification, and essay questions and account for 30% of the student’s final grade. The first will be held on October 1st and the second on November 14th. The final take-home exam will require a two and a half to four single-spaced page assessment of the future of world politics based on the Kagan book and article by Ikenberry and Deudney. This take-home final is due on December 17th and accounts for 20% of the student’s final grade and should be emailed to white@xavier.edu.

Assignments

Each student will be responsible for two papers. Each paper will be one and a half to two single-spaced pages and account for 10% of the final grade. The first paper due on November 5th will summarize and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy you chose for the Iterated Prisoner’s Dilemma Simulation held in class on October 29th. The second paper due on December 3rd will assess the credibility of the Clash of Civilizations Thesis offered by Huntington. There will be an assignment for each topic emailed to you that will provide more detailed instructions for each paper. These papers are to be submitted by email to white@xavier.edu.
Class Participation

Class participation is expected in this course. Students are especially encouraged to ask questions that arise from the readings and films shown in class. Although no formal grade is given, class participation will be a factor in determining a student’s grade in borderline cases.

Grading Policy

The following grade scale will be used in this course: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, and F = Below 60. There is no curving or dropping of grades in this class. For a reference to the standards for these grades, see the Department of Political Science and Sociology Grading Guidelines provided below:

A- to A = Superior critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Detailed understanding of course readings. Generally clear, well-organized writing that develops important issues in a thoughtful way. Analysis of texts is without technical or factual errors. An excellent essay will significantly surpass the expectations of a good essay by demonstrating critical mastery of the logic, assumptions, and evidence of research sources. Excellent use of quotations and proper citation of texts.

Class discussion is frequent and thoughtful; shows a very good grasp of the issues.

B- to B+ = Good to Very Good critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Solid understanding of course readings. Generally clear, well-organized writing that reports important issues in some detail. Analysis of texts is generally without technical or factual errors. A good to very good essay will have a thesis, define and incorporate concepts appropriately, present a coherent argument, and make a persuasive case for its thesis using convincing evidence; it may also need to consider plausible and reasonable alternatives systematically. Good use of quotations and proper citation of texts.

Class discussion is regular and helpful; shows a solid grasp of the issues.

C- to C+ = Adequate critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Basic understanding of course readings. Generally competent writing that identifies important issues but leaves them insufficiently explained or examined. Analysis of texts may be technically or factually defective in minor ways. An adequate essay will have a thesis, define and incorporate concepts appropriately, and present a coherent argument. Correct use of quotations and citation of texts.

Class discussion is occasional and generally adequate; may reveal some misunderstanding of the issues.
D- to D+ = Inadequate critical reading, thinking and analytical skills. Poor or incompetent understanding of course readings. Below average writing that omits or misunderstands important issues. Analysis of texts may be technically or factually defective in substantial ways. An inadequate essay may not have a clear thesis, or may not define and incorporate concepts appropriately, or it may not present a coherent argument. There may be ineffective use of quotations and inadequate citation of texts. Class discussion is infrequent; may reveal a lack of engagement with the issues or serious misunderstanding.

F = Unacceptable. No serious engagement of course readings. An unacceptable essay shows little or no serious attempt to understand important issues. Writing is unclear, or unorganized, or undeveloped to the degree that the essay is deemed a failure. Analysis of texts may contain egregious errors. There may be a failure to cite texts. Class discussion is infrequent and ill informed; reveals no real understanding of even basic issues.

Readings for the Course

The following two books should be available in the University Bookstore:


Articles assigned are available through the electronic reserve system of the McDonald Library. The password for these e-reserve articles for this course is “whiteir”.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Aug. 27  Introduction to the Course

Aug. 29  What are the Scholarly Approaches to the Study of International Relations?

Rochester, pp. 18-29

Sept. 3  Who are the Actors in World Politics and How do They Interact?
  Rochester, pp. 3-18.

Sept. 5  How Did the Contemporary International System Develop?
  Rochester, Ch. 2.

Sept. 10  What do States Want? The Relationships between Capability, Power, Influence, and the Achievement of Goals
  Rochester, pp. 135-143.

Sept. 12  Why do States do What They do? Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior
- How Does the Structure of the System Constrain Behavior?
  Rochester, pp. 73-90.

Sept. 17  - How Does the Physical Environment Affect Foreign Policy Behavior?

Sept. 19  - How Do Governmental and Bureaucratic Factors Affect Foreign Policy?
Sept. 24  - How Does the Domestic Society Limit Foreign Policy Options?


Sept. 26  - How Do Idiosyncratic Factors Affect Foreign Policy?


Oct. 1       First Exam

Oct. 3       How do States Achieve Their Goals? The Instruments of Foreign Policy

- Diplomacy and Propaganda

Rochester, pp. 113-135.

Oct. 10      - Economic Coercion and Foreign Aid

Oct. 15 - Military Threats and War

Rochester, Ch. 5.

Oct. 17-22 What Problems Confront the International Political System?

- The Need for Law and Organization

Rochester, Ch. 6.

Oct. 24 - Improving International Security

Rochester, Ch. 7.

Oct. 29 - Promoting Cooperation in an Anarchic World


Oct. 31 - Protecting Human Rights and Promoting Human Development
-Nov. 5

Rochester, Ch. 8.

– Paper Due on Promoting Cooperation Due Nov. 5th

Nov. 7 - Coordinating the Interdependent World Economy: The 4 “Cs”

Rochester, Ch. 9.
Nov. 12 - Managing the Global Commons


Nov. 14 Second Exam

Nov. 19-26 World Politics in the Post-Cold War World - The Clash of Civilizations?


Dec. 3-12 Will the Future Be Similar to the Past in International Relations?

Rochester, Ch. 10.

– Clash of Civilizations Paper Due Dec. 3rd

Dec. 17 Final Take-Home Exam Due