

International Politics (POLY)

Course Syllabus

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth

Class overview

This course is designed to provide students with a broad introduction to the study of international politics, and will focus on significant themes and debates in the arena of contemporary international affairs. The course will introduce students to a variety of theoretical approaches to understanding these contemporary issues. It will also emphasize case-study analysis, both as a tool for applying the fruits of theory to the study of real-world events, and also as a tool for evaluating competing theoretical approaches. As so many of the topics studied in this course are the subject of ongoing debate (or even controversy) in both national and international arenas, the course relies on vigorous classroom discussion and active debate as a means of understanding and evaluating all sides of each issue.

The course employs a variety of texts and learning tools (from simulations and structured debate to documentary video and study of the daily news) to allow students to engage with the issues covered in this course from a range of diverse perspectives. The principal textbooks are *International Politics*, by Joshua S. Goldstein and Jon C. Pevehouse (Brief 2006-2007 Edition), and *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in World Politics*, by John T. Rourke (Thirteenth Edition). Supplemental reading materials will also be provided, as needed, by the instructor. The course includes daily guided reading and analysis of *The New York Times* International section.

Reading Assignments

Reading assignments will be given on a daily basis. These assignments are designed both as background preparation for each day's class, and as a means of supplementing the knowledge acquired in the classroom. When passages from *International Politics* are assigned, students are required to produce an outline of key points, concepts, and terms. When readings from *Taking Sides* are assigned, students will be required either to complete an outline summary (format to be handed out in class) or to complete answers to short essay questions based on the reading, as assigned. During the daily "New York Times Briefs," students will be given daily thinking/discussion questions to guide their reading, as well as a daily writing assignment (see below). With all of the reading assignments, students should make note as they read of any questions or observations they might have, and bring these notes with them to class discussion.

Written Assignments

Regular writing assignments will comprise a core feature of this course. These assignments are intended to encourage, support and facilitate the process of in-depth consideration and analysis that forms the core objective of this course. In addition to the daily reading outlines described above, students will complete the following three (sets of) writing assignments:

- *Daily NYT writing exercises* (approx. 1 page daily): As explained previously, daily analysis of current events in international politics will be a central element of this class. This process of analysis will be facilitated both by daily class discussion and by daily in-class writing exercises. Students will be given a different writing assignment each day, and will have about thirty minutes (in addition to time for reading) to complete this assignment. These daily writing assignments will require students to link their reading of the daily news with the topic(s) of study in class that day, and will ask students to use the concepts introduced in class to structure a focused analysis of a given topic.
- *Position paper* (2-3 pages): This is a two-part paper that will require students to take and defend a position on a controversial topic in international affairs. Students will be asked to use readings, concepts, and theoretical frameworks introduced in class to defend their position.
- *Analytical research project* (6-8 pages): This paper/project will require students to undertake independent research on a subject of their own choice in international politics. Students will be asked to formulate a question to guide their research, to develop an outline for their paper, and to produce a formally structured paper in answer to this question, using concepts and theoretical frameworks from class to structure and/or inform their work. More details on this assignment will be given in class.

Oral Presentations

In addition to the formal presentation that students will be asked to make to the class on their research projects, students will also be asked to deliver regular oral presentations in class. Some of these presentations will be informal, and some will be more structured. Some presentations will be based on individual work, and some will require collaboration with other classmates.

		WHAT (skill & knowledge goals/concepts/readings)	HOW (activities)
Unit 1: Introduction to Foundational Concepts of & Issues in International Relations			
DAY 1	morning	Overview of class structure – goals & expectations; introductions	(30 mins)
		Introduction to problems, dilemmas and puzzles in international politics – what is at stake?; theories of international relations; actors in international politics; origins of the contemporary international system	Lecture & Discussion (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current Event Analysis	NYT briefs: reading (30 mins), critical writing exercise (30 mins), discussion (30 mins)
	afternoon	Pre-Assessment Exercise	(60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Applying IR theories to real-world situations	Small-group activity: what would a Realist/Liberal/Constructivist think? (45 mins)
	evening	Readings on IR theory	Goldstein & Pevehouse (G&P) 45-51; 59-67; 77-84; 110-112 Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories”
		Readings on sources of state strength and (in)stability	G&P 289-299
	DAY 2	morning	Warm-up
Exploring the sources and consequences of state strength and (in)stability			Lecture/discussion (60 mins)
Break			(15 mins)
Current event analysis			NYT briefs (90 mins)
afternoon		Writing about int’l politics/choosing a research project	Introduction to the research project & library session
evening		Readings on int’l political economy	G&P 174-202; 210-212; 318-321; 330-336
		Taking Sides: Is WTO Membership Beneficial? OR Stiglitz “Chapter 2: Broken Promises”	Reading and Outlining

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Unit 2: International Political Economy – the Basics			
DAY 3	morning	The basics of development & underdevelopment	Lecture & Discussion (20 mins)
		Development & underdevelopment in historical and comparative perspective	Group activity: Using maps to develop hypotheses about sources of underdevelopment? (20 mins)
		Int'l Financial Institutions and their role in Int'l Economic Governance	Lecture, cont'd (20 mins)
		Stiglitz' "Broken Promises"	Small group presentations and discussion (30 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	(90 mins)
	afternoon	The basics of int'l trade and the WTO	Lecture, discussion and brief film clips (from "Commanding Heights") (60 mins)
		Taking Sides	Small group presentations and discussion (45 mins)
	evening	Taking Sides: Is Economic Globalization a Positive trend	Reading preparation for debate (30 minutes)
		Development controversies in focus – IMF policies, structural adjustment and the case of Jamaica	Film screening ("Life and Debt") and Discussion (90 minutes)
	DAY 4	morning	Warm-up
Economic globalization in historical and contemporary perspective; current debates about economic globalization			Lecture & Discussion (30 mins)
Taking Sides: Is Economic Globalization a Positive Trend?			Structured Debate & Discussion (60 minutes)
Break			(15 mins)
Current event analysis			NYT briefs (60 mins)
afternoon		Research project – initial research	Library session
evening		Readings on international war	G&P 121-141; 51-59
		Taking Sides: Is pre-emptive war an acceptable doctrine?	Reading & outlining

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Unit 3: International and Civil War, Part I			
DAY 5	morning	Warm-up	Opening discussion (15 mins)
		Approaches to understanding & analyzing inter-state war	Lecture and Discussion (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (90 mins)
	afternoon	Ethical issues in the study of international war	Brief lecture (15 mins)
		Persuasive writing in int'l politics	Outlining position paper
(Sunday) evening	Persuasive writing, continued	Drafting position paper	
DAY 6	morning	Warm-up	Discussion (15 mins)
		Competing approaches in the study of civil war – how to prevent, predict, and understand war within nations	Lecture & Discussion (60 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Civil war case-studies in focus	Prepare presentations with classmate co-presenters on one of three civil wars (Sierra Leone, Bosnia, El Salvador) Handouts (60 mins)
	afternoon	Civil war case-studies, cont'd.	Brief film clips, group presentations, and discussion
	evening	Readings on inter-governmental institutions	G&P 231-250
		Reading & Discussion on Child Soldiers	“The Making, and Unmaking, of a Child Soldier,” by Ishmael Beah
Unit 4: International Organizations, International Law and the Human Rights Movement			
DAY 7	morning	Warm-up	Opening Discussion (15 mins)
		Inter-governmental institutions and their role in the current world system	Lecture & Discussion (30 mins) Film Clip & Discussion “UN Year in Review 2006” (30 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		The UN in focus	UN group research exercise & presentations (60 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (60 mins)
	afternoon	Outlining the research project	Library session

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	evening	Readings on int'l law & human rights	G&P 263-280 Keck & Sikkink, "Activists beyond Borders," excerpt
DAY 8	morning	Warm-up	Opening Discussion (15 mins)
		International law & human rights in theory and practice; non-state actors and their role in the int'l system	Lecture & Discussion (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (60 mins)
		Understanding the work of human rights institutions	Group research activity – "Human Rights TV" (60 mins)
	afternoon	Persuasive writing in int'l politics	Position paper re-writing
	evening	Outlining the research project	Library session
DAY 9	morning	Background readings on regional/supranational integration	G&P 250-263 "Is the EU a model for Asia" (45 mins)
		Prepare questions for afternoon debate	
		Proposals & prospects for regional/supranational integration	Lecture & Discussion (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (90 mins)
	afternoon	Is the EU a model for Asia?	Participate in a debate with the Asia-Pacific Rim class
	evening	Outlining the research project	Library session
DAY 10	morning	Warm-up	Reading preparation (45 mins)
		Debates surrounding nuclear proliferation & non-proliferation	Lecture, Discussion, and Games (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (90 mins)
	afternoon	Outlining the research project (outline due)	Library session
	(Sunday) evening	Israeli-Palestine simulation preparation	Background reading (handouts)
Unit 5: International and Civil War, Part II			
DAY 11	morning	Current event analysis	(60 mins)
		Approaches to conflict resolution and negotiation	Lecture & Discussion (60 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Understanding conflict resolution processes	Simulation exercise: mock Israeli-Palestine peace conference (75 mins)

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	afternoon	Finalizing the research project	Library session
	evening	Background readings on post-war peacebuilding & reconstruction	Ignatieff, “Nation-Building Lite” Hayner, “Unspeakable Truths,” excerpts Branch, “International Justice, Local Injustice”
DAY 12	morning	Issues in post-conflict peacebuilding & reconstruction	Lecture & Discussion (60 mins)
		Transitional justice in focus	Film screening (“In Search of Int’l Justice”) & Discussion (45 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT briefs (60 mins)
	afternoon	Finalizing the research project	Library session
	evening	Finalizing the research project	Library session
Unit 6: Focus on Contemporary Issues in International Politics			
DAY 13	morning	Warm-up	Opening Discussion (15 mins)
		Approaches to understanding the role and impact of terrorism and unconventional warfare in contemporary politics	Lecture and Discussion (45 mins)
		Taking Sides: Does the United States Have a Sound Strategy for the War on Terrorism?	Reading preparation (30 mins); informal debate and discussion (45 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		Current event analysis	NYT Briefs (60 mins)
	afternoon	Finalizing the research project	Library session
	evening	Finalizing the research project (due)	Library session
DAY 14	morning	Post-assessment exercise; student evaluations	(90 mins)
		Break	(15 mins)
		The International Politics of the Pacific Rim	Preparation for afternoon Summit meeting (90 mins)
	afternoon	The International Politics of the Pacific Rim, cont’d	ASEAN Summit (with Pacific Rim class): focus on human trafficking, human development, and the North Korean nuclear crisis
Wrapping Up			
DAY 15	morning	Student project presentations	
		Film Screening: “Hotel Rwanda”	