POLS 170A International Politics

**Fall 2010**

**MW 8:20-9:50am in AH 202**

**Instructor: Rebekah Tromble**

**Office: Asbury Hall 106, ext. 4263**

**Office hours: MW 10:30-11:30am**

**Email: rebekahtromble@depauw.edu**

***Course Objectives***

International politics often seem distant from our everyday lives. We read the headlines: “Copenhagen Climate Talks Accomplish Little,” “Bomb Attack Near Base in Afghanistan,” “Fierce Quake Devastates Haitian Capital.” Sometimes the stories make us stop and think. Sometimes they touch us deeply. But usually we go on about our daily routines. These events are important, certainly. But we’re busy taking care of things closer to home—studying, working, caring for family and friends. And in some cases, we’ve heard so much about death and disaster in faraway places that we’ve become numb to it.

This course gives us an opportunity to spend a little more time thinking about international politics—to consider the ramifications of international events for our lives and to try to understand what has been (and what can be) done to affect change.

Over the next few months, we will study international politics from a variety of perspectives. We will begin by examining several theories that political scientists have developed to help understand and explain the nature of the international system, and we will apply those theories to both historical and contemporary events. In fact, the last two weeks of class will be dedicated to an in-class simulation of international relations designed to actively apply the theories, concepts, and issues we discuss over the course of the semester.

I *do not* expect you to leave this class with the feeling that any one of the perspectives offered during the semester is “right”, that any one approach to understanding international relations provides all the answers we need. This may prove frustrating for some. However, the events we will be exploring are complex, and no single perspective can explain it all. As such, we will be applying a critical lens to each of the arguments that we encounter during the course of the semester. We will unpack claims, challenge conventional wisdom, and try to see events from as many angles as possible.

At the same time, however, we will try to be constructive. All too often, we (especially those of us in academia) dedicate ourselves to tearing down claims. Being critical is easy. Developing arguments that point us toward positive change is much more difficult. In the weeks ahead we will ask questions like: What should the world look like? Is world peace feasible? Can we have progress without exploitation? How do we achieve such goals? In the end, while I do not expect you to come away with easy and definitive answers to any of these questions, I do hope that you will leave this course with a few (imperfect) ideas about how we might improve the practice and outcomes of international politics.

***Assessment***

Your course grade will be divided into five components:

1. *Reading Quizzes* (10%) – I will give approximately 10 unannounced multiple choice quizzes based on the reading materials for the day. I will throw out your lowest two scores on these quizzes over the course of the semester. Should you miss a quiz due to an excused absence, you will be allowed to “double down” (count the grade twice) on another quiz of your choosing. However, you must choose to “double down” before the quiz has begun.
2. *Participation* (20%) – Participation represents a larger-than-usual component of the grade in this course for two reasons:
   1. First, this course is primarily discussion-based. Though I will give lectures on occasion to help introduce key concepts, the vast majority of time will be spent discussing the questions and issues that arise from the day’s readings together. As such, your active and informed participation is essential. I expect you to attend class—with exceptions made for reasonable and *documented* excuses—and ***more than two unexcused absences will lead to partial-letter deductions in your participation grade for each absence***. (For example, if you have three unexcused absences and your participation grade for the semester is a B+, it will become a B. If you have four unexcused absences and your participation grade is a B+, it will become a B-.) I also expect you to come to class prepared, having read the materials for the day and ready to discuss them in a thoughtful way.
   2. Second, we will spend the last two weeks of class conducting an in-class simulation. You will be divided into small groups, with each group representing a different fictional country, and you will play out various scenarios that correspond to concepts and issues we have discussed over the course of the semester. Your active and engaged participation is essential for the success of the simulation. Therefore, half of your class participation grade will be based on the effort you demonstrate during the simulation.
3. *Simulation Reflection Paper* (20%) – 6-9 pages. ***Due Wednesday, December 8th.***  Specific requirements for the paper will be discussed later in the semester.
4. *Midterm Exam* (20%) – The midterm exam ***(in class, September 29th)*** will consist of fill-in-the-blanks, short answer questions, and one short essay.
5. *Final Exam* (30%) – The final exam ***(December 13th, 8:30am)*** will consist of fill-in-the-blanks, short answer questions, and two short essays.

***No Technology Policy***

The use of laptop computers, cell/smartphones, and other mobile technology devices is prohibited in class, unless I instruct otherwise. In my experience, the temptation to surf the web, check email and Facebook, play Solitaire, send text messages, etc., is just too strong. These activities are distracting for everyone in the classroom and impede effective learning. Use of these devices during class will result in deductions from your participation grade. Use during either the midterm or final exam will be considered cheating. If you need to use a laptop for medical reasons, please provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services.

***Academic Integrity***

From the DePauw University Academic Handbook:

“Academic integrity refers to the ethical standards and policies that govern how people work and interact in the academic enterprise at a college or university. These standards and policies attempt to do more than define and condemn what is wrong or unethical; they also attempt to provide a foundation for the mutual trust and individual responsibility necessary in a healthy academic community.

“Both faculty members and students have the responsibility of upholding the principles of academic integrity. Faculty and staff members should create an environment in which honesty is encouraged, dishonesty discouraged and integrity is openly discussed. Faculty members should follow the principles of academic integrity in their own work and conduct. Students are obligated not only to follow these principles, but also to take an active role in encouraging other students to respect them” (<http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbookprint.asp?indexnum=101>, Accessed January 27, 2009).

I take academic integrity very seriously. Without it, learning and scholarship are pointless endeavors. I exercise a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, and will report all cases as required by University policy.

***Required Texts***

*World News*

In order to apply the theories and concepts we will be learning in class to the real world, it is crucial that you stay up-to-date on important world events. However, what makes an event “important” is subjective, and various media outlets make that determination differently. Therefore, I am going to ask the class to examine more than one source of world news over the course of the semester.

For the first third of the course (August 30th-September 29th), we will read articles from the *New York Times*. To make sure everyone is reading the same articles, you should register at the *Times* website ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) to receive the “Top Stories” and “World” headlines by email each day. (The “Register Now” link is at the top right of the *Times* homepage.) You may, of course, choose to receive headlines from many sections, but you are required to read the “Top Stories” and “World” headlines for this class.

During the second third of the course (September 30th-November 3rd), we will read the top three world news stories posted on Al-Jazeera’s English language website (<http://english.aljazeera.net/>) daily. (There are always three stories that correspond to the three largest photos at the top of the webpage. Read these.)

Finally, during the last third of the class (November 4th-December 8th), we will listen to the BBC’s evening “Global News” podcast. The BBC posts two podcasts Monday-Friday. You will be required to listen to the nightly (10pm) podcast only. The podcasts can be downloaded from iTunes or directly from the BBC website (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/globalnews>).

*Books*

The following textbooks are available for purchase from the Bookstore:

* Nau, Henry R. 2009. *Perspectives on International Relations*, 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
* Tessman, Brock F. 2007. *International Relations in Action*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

*Other Required Texts*

All other required readings, videos, and podcasts are either available online or will be posted on the course Moodle page.

*Expectations Regarding Reading*

Students are expected to read and learn all assigned material. Though the vast majority of assigned readings will be covered explicitly in class, we will not have time to thoroughly explore all materials, and a certain amount of independent learning is expected. However, should you have questions about material not thoroughly discussed in class, you should always feel free to either ask questions directly in class or see me outside of class time for guidance.

***Class Schedule***

Wednesday, August 25th: Course logistics

*Readings*: None

*Additional Information*: Ithaca University Professor Chip Gagnon has set up a webpage (<http://www.ithaca.edu/gagnon/links.htm>) with a number of links related to international politics. You may find this page useful throughout the semester.

Monday, August 30th: Why Theory Matters

*Readings:*

* Nau: Intro & Ch. 1
* Section 2 (“Being a Political Theorist”) of “Conversation with Kenneth N. Waltz” – A transcript of the interview is available at <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people3/Waltz/waltz-con2.html>. The interview video is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9eV5gPlPZg>. If you choose to watch the video (as opposed to reading the transcript), Section 2 begins at 6:16 and ends at 15:03.

Wednesday, September 1st: Realist Theories of International Relations

*Readings:*

* Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*
* (re-read) Nau: pp. 28-33
* Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*
* Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*

Monday, September 6th: Realist Theories of International Relations, continued

* Nau: pp. 75-92, 109-120, 136-138, 145-156, 167-185
* Section 4 (“The United States and Realism”) and Section 6 (“Realist View of China”) of “Conversation with John Mearsheimer” – The transcript of Section 4 is available at <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people2/Mearsheimer/mearsheimer-con4.html>, and the transcript of Section 6 is at <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people2/Mearsheimer/mearsheimer-con6.html>. The interview video can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKFamUu6dGw>. If you choose to watch the video (as opposed to reading the transcript), Section 4 begins at 22:40 and ends at 28:33 and Section 6 is at 39:21-47:10.
* Selections from Stephen M. Walt’s blog “A Realist in an Ideological Age” (The required selections are in a PDF posted on Moodle.)

Wednesday, September 8th: Liberal Theories of International Relations

*Readings:*

* Woodrow Wilson, *The Fourteen Points*
* (re-read) Nau: pp. 34-44
* Nau: pp. 92-98, 120-127, 138-145
* John Mearsheimer, “Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: Realism versus Neo-conservatism”

Monday, September 13th: Liberal Theories of International Relations, continued

*Readings:*

* Nau: pp. 194-203
* Robert O. Keohane, “International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?”

Wednesday, September 15th: Liberal Theories of International Relations, continued

*Readings:*

* Kenneth A. Oye, “Explaining Cooperation under Anarchy: Hypothesis and Strategies”

Monday, September 20th: Constructivist Theories of International Relations

*Readings:*

* (re-read) Nau: pp. 44-53
* Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It”
* Nau: pp. 98-104, 127-131, 157-163, 185-187

Wednesday, September 22nd: Review of Theoretical Perspectives

*Readings:* None

Monday, September 27th: Class cancelled.

Wednesday, September 29th: Midterm exam

***\*\*Begin reading news from Al-Jazeera’s website on the 30th.\*\****

Monday, October 4th: Clash of Civilizations?

*Readings:*

* Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”

Wednesday, October 6th: Terrorism

*Readings:*

* Bruce Hoffman, "Defining Terrorism"
* Nau: Ch. 7

Monday, October 11th: Terrorism, continued

*Readings:*

* Robert Pape, *The Logic of Suicide Terrorism* interview (PDF)
* Robert Pape, *Dying to Win* interview (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tEsWRXV_BM>)
* Michael Lind and Peter Bergen, “A Matter of Pride: Why We Can’t Buy Off the Next Osama bin Laden”

Wednesday, October 13th: A “Revolution in Military Affairs”?

*Readings:*

* P.W. Singer, *Wired for War*,Ch. 10 and Ch. 12**.** Singer is a (self-proclaimed) war nerd. His website provides a suggested playlist (<http://wiredforwar.pwsinger.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=55>) of songs to listen to while reading his book. I haven't tried it, but feel free to see if it enhances your learning experience.
* Nic Robertson, "How Robot Drones Revolutionized the Face of Warfare"
* Siobhan Gorman, Yochi J. Dreazen, and August Cole, "Insurgents Hack U.S. Drones" (3pp.)

*Note:* If you're interested in learning more about this topic, see <http://www.comw.org/rma/fulltext/overview.html>. Singer's website also has a lot of interesting multimedia posts, including a number of video demos of the latest robot technologies: <http://wiredforwar.pwsinger.com/>.

Monday, October 19th and Wednesday, October 21st: Fall break

Monday, October 25th: International Political Economy

*Readings:*

* Nau: Ch. 8
* Joshua Goldstein and Jon Pevehouse, *International Relations*,Ch. 10

Wednesday, October 27th: International Political Economy, continued

*Readings:*

* Nau: Ch. 9 & 10

Monday, November 1st: International Political Economy, continued

*Readings:*

* Nau: Ch. 11 & 12

Wednesday, November 3rd: The Environment

*Readings:*

* Nau: Ch. 14
* Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons”
* N. Gregory Mankiw, “One Answer to Global Warming: A New Tax”
* Read the *New York Times*' background information on the Copenhagen Climate Conference at <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/united_nations_framework_convention_on_climate_change/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=copenhagen%20climate%20change&st=cse>. (Read *all* of the background info. I.E., Click on "Read more…".) Take a look at the interactive map of 2007 global carbon emissions at the top of the page, too.

***\*\*Begin listening to news on the BBC “Global News” podcast on the 4th.\*\****

Monday, November 8th: Global Civil Society

*Readings:*

* Nau: Ch. 15
* Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Activists Beyond Borders”
* Jan Aart Scholte, “Civil Society and Democratically Accountable Global Governance”

Wednesday, November 10th: Global Governance

*Readings:*

* Nau: Ch. 16
* Brian Uruqhart, “New Demands and Old Constraints: The Role of the United Nations in the International System”
* Shashi Tharoor, “Why America Still Needs the United Nations”

Monday, November 15th: Human Rights

*Readings:*

* U.N. Declaration of Universal Human Rights
* Rhoda E. Howard and Jack Donnelly, “Human Rights in World Politics”
* Amartya Sen, “Universal Truths”
* Abusharaf, Rogaia Mustafa. 2006. "Introduction: The Custom in Question." In *Female Circumcision*, Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 1-24.

Wednesday, November 17th: Intervention and Nation-Building – How Sacred is Sovereignty?

*Readings:*

* Kofi Annan, “Reflections on Intervention”
* Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, Ch. 9

Monday, November 22nd: Intervention and Nation-Building – Postwar Reconstruction

*Readings:*

* Chaim Kaufmann, “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars”
* James Dobbins, “Nation-Building: UN Surpasses U.S. on Learning Curve”

Wednesday, November 24th: Thanksgiving break

Monday, November 29th: In-Class Simulation

*Readings:* None

Wednesday, December 1st: In-Class Simulation

*Readings:* None

Monday, December 6th: In-Class Simulation

*Readings:* None

Wednesday, December 8th: Final Exam Review

***\*\* Simulation reflection papers due.\*\****