World Politics

Political Science 441/541, Fall 2015
Portland State University

David Kinsella
Hatfield School of Government
Office: Urban Center Building, room 650L
Phone: 503.725.3035 | e-mail: kinsella@pdx.edu
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:30-11:30

Description

The study of world politics consists of two broad fields of inquiry: international security and international political economy. This course surveys both these fields. Topics in international security include state and nonstate actors in world politics, the nature and limits of national power, war and peace, weapons proliferation, and international law and ethics. Topics in international political economy include international trade and finance, regional integration, globalization, and the North-South development gap. We also take up issues that do not fit neatly in either of these categories, like global environmental threats and international human rights. The course is neither a review of contemporary international history nor a discussion of current events. Rather, we survey a variety of theories, worldviews, propositions, and debates that help to make sense of both history and contemporary developments in world politics.

The course will also help students identify more specialized areas of interest in world politics and coursework that will allow them to further develop those interests. For example, students in the course are introduced to topics covered at greater length in Contemporary Theories of World Politics (PS 442/542), National and International Security Policy (PS 446/546), International Organization (PS 447/547), International Law (PS 448/548), European Union (PS 452/552), and International Political Economy (PS 454/554).

Learning Objectives

The general objective of this course is to develop the student's capacity to critically examine problems in world politics, consider the range of possible solutions to those problems, and communicate this analysis to others. This is to be accomplished by exposing students to a body of literature and debate drawn from the subfields of international security and international political economy. By the end of the term, students should be able to:

- show a familiarity with a wide range of substantive issues in international politics and foreign policy;
• demonstrate mastery of the main theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of world politics;
• interpret specific historical and contemporary problems using appropriate theoretical arguments and methods of analysis; and
• develop and articulate a normative position on some key ethical dilemmas in international relations.

Reading Materials

Readings are assigned from the following textbook, which is available at a discount from the website: http://www.cengagebrain.com/course/site.html?id=1-24569MD.


One other book is available at the Portland State Bookstore:


In addition to the course books, you should be reading, on a regular basis, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or some other newspaper with thorough international coverage. Your performance in the course will reflect your familiarity with current international issues, and not just an understanding of lecture and textbook materials.

Requirements and Evaluation

Undergraduate course grades are based in part on a midterm (35%) and a final (45%) examination. These exams consist of questions requiring both short answers and longer essays. You are also required to write a 6-7 page review of the Zeihan book (20%). Attendance is required. Graduate course grades are also based on a midterm and final exam, a 9-10 page book review, and participation in separately scheduled seminar discussions.

Conduct and Courtesy

Students are responsible for being familiar with the PSU *Student Code of Conduct*, especially the section concerning academic misconduct -- that is, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure of the definition or consequences of academic misconduct, consult your instructor.
Because they are distracting to others, cell phones (voice or text) and MP3 players may not be used during lecture and should be turned off at the start of class. Laptops and tablets may be used to take notes, but not for email, web browsing, or social media. Electronic devices may not be used to photograph, video, or stream course lectures or discussion, but lectures may be audio recorded with permission of the instructor.

COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Lectures and assigned readings are both complementary and supplementary; neither is a complete substitute for the other. During summer session, we move through a lot of material very quickly, so keep up on the reading.

**Analyzing World Politics**

28 Sep  
Introduction and Overview

30 Sep  
Analyzing international relations (3-20)

2 Oct  
International relations theory (21-41)

5 Oct  
Evolution of the state system (43-66)

7 Oct  
National power and influence (67-79)

9 Oct  
Balance of power (79-97)

12 Oct  
Domestic and international politics (99-127, slides)

14 Oct  
Foreign policymaking process (129-156, slides)

16 Oct  
Film: Thirteen Days

19 Oct  
Thirteen Days, cont.

**International Conflict and Cooperation**

21 Oct  
Interstate war (159-175, slides)

23 Oct  
Internal and unconventional conflict (175-190)

26 Oct  
Armament and arms races (191-226, slides)

28 Oct  
Ethics and rules of war (227-237)

30 Oct  
Midterm exam

2 Nov  
International law (238-256)

4 Nov  
International organization (257-270)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages/Slides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Nov</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>270-286, [slides]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Nov</td>
<td>Interdependence and collective goods</td>
<td>289-302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Nov</td>
<td>Trade and monetary regimes</td>
<td>302-320, [slides]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Nov</td>
<td>Documentary: <em>Commanding Heights</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Nov</td>
<td><em>Commanding Heights</em>, cont.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Nov</td>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>321-336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Nov</td>
<td>Integration and globalization</td>
<td>336-353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Nov</td>
<td>North-south gap</td>
<td>355-369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Nov</td>
<td>International development</td>
<td>369-389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Dec</td>
<td>Environmental decay</td>
<td>393-427, [slides]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dec</td>
<td>Global futures</td>
<td>429-436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Book review due</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dec</td>
<td><em>Final exam, 8:00 am</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This syllabus is available online at [web.pdx.edu/~kinsella/ps441f15.pdf](http://web.pdx.edu/~kinsella/ps441f15.pdf) and all course materials can be linked from there.

Last updated on 4 December 2015