PSC 330 International Relations Problems

Course Syllabus
Fall 2013

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University at Buffalo, SUNY

Classroom: 218 Norton Hall
Class schedule: TR 5-6:20 p.m.
Office: 505 Park Hall
Office hours: TR 3:30-4:45 p.m.

Teaching Assistant:
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Course description
This seminar in international relations is designed to familiarize students with the scholarly and analytical approaches to current critical issues in international relations. We will cover the main contemporary themes in the areas of international security, international political economy, normative theory, and transnational issues such as environmental problems and human rights.

Required readings
All required readings are available on UB Learns for this course. The readings must be completed before the first class for which they are assigned.

Course requirements
The final grade in this course will be based on four main components: (1) two in-class examinations, (2) one project and its presentation, (3) four in-class quizzes, and (4) class participation.

Summary of the grade components:
50% Two in-class exams (1st exam: 25%; 2nd exam: 25%)
25% Project (essay 15%; PPT in-class presentation 10%)
15% Four pop quizzes
10% Seminar participation

1. Two in-class examinations (50% total; 25% each)
The exams will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. Each exam will be worth a total of 25% of the student’s final grade. Questions will be based on the student’s comprehension of both the assigned reading materials and the class lectures.

2. Project and class presentation (25% total):
   Each student will write a paper (6 double-spaced pages) and give a class presentation in PowerPoint on one from the list of project topics. Although several students will prepare their projects under the same general topic, each student will work independently on her/his project which will be graded separately from the others in the group. I will lay out
the parameters for each group topic on September 6. Each student will have approximately 5 minutes for his/her individual presentation (PPT slides) and the accompanying essay should be up to 6 pages long. To facilitate coordination among multiple topic preferences, by September 11 you are required to submit to me your top three topic preferences, one of which will be assigned as the topic for your presentation. If I do not receive your topic preferences, I will assign you to one of the topics after considering all the remaining students’ preferences. An assignment sheet listing presentation groups and topics for all students will be posted on UB Learns on September 12 (“Project Group Assignments” file). After this list is posted, the groups will briefly meet in class on September 18 to coordinate individual subtopic assignments within their topic. The deadlines for e-mailing me electronic copies of your PPT slides and essay are listed below. Also, on the scheduled date for your topic, you should bring your PowerPoint project in electronic form for the class presentation and give me a printed copy of both the PPT presentation and essay. Detailed instructions for the project requirements, format, each topic, deadlines, etc., are provided in a separate file available on UB Learns (“Project” file).

3. Four in-class quizzes (15%):
   The quizzes will be multiple choice and the questions will be based on the class readings and lectures. The dates of the quizzes will not be announced ahead of time, so if you know in advance that you will be missing a class for a university excusable reason, let me know early.

4. Class participation (10%)
   Class participation is based on active participation in class discussions. The students are expected to come to class having read the material and able to answer questions and/or engage in informed discussion. This can only be done if you conduct yourselves in a professional manner and are tolerant of other students’ ideas, even if they directly contradict your own personal views.

The breakdown for final grades is as follows:
93-100 % (A); 90-92.9% (A-);
87-89.9% (B+); 83-86.9% (B); 80-82.9% (B-);
77-79.9% (C+); 73-76.9% (C); 70-72.9% (C-);
67-69.9% (D+); 63-66.9% (D); 60-62.9% (D-);
< 60% (F)

Summary of important dates:
   September 10 - project overview
   September 12 - deadline for submitting three out of six topic preferences (bring to class)
   September 17 - a brief in-class meeting between group members to coordinate their individual subtopics
   October 10 - First Exam
   October 14 - deadline for the projects due to be presented on October 15-22
   November 21 - Second Exam
   November 25 - deadline for the projects to be presented on November 26, December 3-5
**Project Deadline Extensions and Make-Up Exams**
Deadline extensions and make-up exams will not be granted except in properly documented situations of serious illness or major family emergency. The request needs to be made in a timely manner and not later than the second day after the missed deadline or exam. Otherwise, the extension/make-up will not be granted.

**Electronic Communication**
I encourage students to visit me during my office hours for any questions and inquiries. If the circumstances necessitate it, you can also e-mail me on weekdays. The project assignments must also be submitted initially through e-mail. Please adhere to the following courtesy policy for this course when e-mailing me: (1) use only your UB e-mail address; (2) do address me properly in the message and sign it with your full name; (3) keep your message brief and, when submitting the project, provide the information about the project’s topic and the files you are attaching; (4) do not forget to attach the project files and make sure to wait for my confirmation (see “Project” file on UBLearns for further details). To protect the privacy of each student, please note that I do not provide any grade or similar personal information through e-mail or by phone, regardless of who is requesting it.

**Plagiarism Statement**
Cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class and will result in an automatic grade of “F” for the course. You may find more information about academic dishonesty at: [http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml](http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml).

**Copyright Statement**
Unless otherwise noted, the handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, web pages, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

**Students with Disabilities Policy**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester.
SCHEDULE

August 27
COURSE OVERVIEW

August 29
NO CLASS – THE INSTRUCTOR IS AT THE CONFERENCE

September 3, 12 & 17
MAJOR PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

September 5
NO CLASS – ROSH HASHANAH OBSERVED

September 10
PROJECT OVERVIEW

REMINDER:
Each student needs to submit her/his top three topic preferences in class on September 12. An assignment sheet listing presentation groups and topics for all students will be posted on UB Learns on September 13 (“Project Group Assignments” file). The groups will meet in class to coordinate their individual project assignments on September 17. The class-time reserved for this coordination meeting is up to 20 minutes, so do make sure to come with the prepared list of assignment preferences.

September 19-24
U.S. GRAND STRATEGY TODAY

September 26 & October 1
TERRORISM & COUNTER-TERRORISM
October 3
PEACE-KEEPING AND PEACE-BUILDING

October 8
ETHICS AND FORCE

EXAM #1
Thursday, October 10

REMINDER:
Projects scheduled for presentations on October 15-22 are due by 4 p.m. on October 14.

October 15, 17 & 22
PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

October 24-31
NONVIOLENCE IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS
November 5-7

HUMAN RIGHTS

November 12-19

FOREIGN AID, INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & GLOBAL HEALTH
Documentary: *A Closer Walk* [will be shown in class on November 14]

November 19

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

EXAM #2
Thursday, November 21

November 28

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - NO CLASSES

REMINDER:
Projects scheduled for presentations on November 26, December 3-5 are due by November 25 at 4 p.m.

November 26, December 3-5
PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

~ Have a Good Winter Break ~