

Department: Political Science

Course No: 132/W

Credits: 3

Title: Introduction to International Relations

Contact: Jennifer Sterling-Folker

Content Area: CA2-Social Sciences

Diversity: CA4 International

WQ: Writing

Catalog Copy: "POLS132W. Introduction to International Relations. Prerequisite: ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250."

“POLS132. Introduction to International Relations. Either semester. Three credits. The nature and problems of international politics.”

Course Information: 5. Acquire awareness of their era and society: The focus of POLS132 is on contemporary global affairs in the political, military, economic, environmental, and social realms. Students who take the course acquire an awareness of the role that our own nation-state and society plays in world events. They also acquire a basic understanding of relations between nation-states and the role and relevance of transnational actors such as international organizations, multinational corporations, terrorist organizations, and criminal elements to global outcomes and events.

6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience: International relations focuses on the diversity of the global population and the political and economic tensions that emerge from that diversity. As with moral sensitivity, the topics covered in the course, such as relative military and economic power, geographic positions and resources, historical and cultural experiences, involve examining the ways in which the human experience differs throughout the globe. Such differences determine how nation-states, transnational actors, and individuals relate to one another across global space and the opportunities that exist for improvement in global quality of life.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: 2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility: International relations is by nature an interdisciplinary field as it encompasses the study of political, economic, social, environmental, anthropological, and psychological factors. As such, students learn the value of interdisciplinary work and the intellectual breadth and versatility such work provides at its most fundamental level.

4. Acquire moral sensitivity: The moral choices that are made in political arenas are evoked and examined by the very subject of the course itself. POLS 132 examines subjects such as the moral dilemmas of use of force for national security purposes, the justification of human rights interventions, the provision of aid and assistance to developing countries, the balancing of trade interests and environmental concerns, and quality of life issues throughout the global.

Discussions of all of these topics involve the promotion of greater moral sensitivity.

5. Acquire awareness of their era and society: The focus of POLS132 is on contemporary global affairs in the political, military, economic, environmental, and social realms. Students who take the course acquire an awareness of the role that our own nation-state and society plays in world events. They also acquire a basic understanding of relations between nation-states and the role and relevance of transnational actors such as international organizations, multinational corporations, terrorist organizations, and criminal elements to global outcomes and events.

6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience: International relations focuses on the diversity of the global population and the political and economic tensions that emerge from that diversity. As with moral sensitivity, the topics covered in the course, such as relative military and economic power, geographic positions and resources, historical and cultural experiences, involve examining the ways in which the human experience differs throughout the globe. Such differences determine how nation-states, transnational actors, and individuals relate to one another across global space and the opportunities that exist for improvement in global quality of life.

CA2 Criteria: This course enables the students to analyze and understand interactions of the numerous social factors that influence behavior at the individual, cultural, societal, national, or international level, and meets the four required criteria in this manner:

1. Introduce students to theories and concepts of social science: POLS132 provides a rigorous analysis of the manifestations and aggregations of human interaction across multiple levels-of-analysis. These include analysis of the role that the individual, society, the state, and the system play in determining international outcomes and processes. The course also introduces students to established theoretical perspectives in the discipline, such as realism, liberalism, and Marxism, in order that student may gain a more sophisticated understanding of global and transnational affairs.

2. Introduce students to methods used in the social sciences, including the ethical problems social scientists face: The course discusses the philosophical perspectives relied upon in disciplinary research, and it surveys the variety of methods available and at the disposal of the international relations scholar. Hence the student is acquainted with such techniques as experimental studies, field research, detailed news analysis and research, and archival research. The course also helps students understand the ethical dilemmas that international relations scholars face in pursuing

their research agenda, such as the difficulties of establishing value-free research programs, particularly when faced with opposition or pressure from the governments of powerful nation-states.

3. Introduce students to ways in which individuals, groups, institutions or societies behave and influence one another and the natural environment: The course discusses a variety of topics that involve the way in which individuals, groups, institutions, and societies influence one another and the natural environment. These include the study of human rights, international environmental politics, international organization, military-security relations, international economic processes, and transnational ideologies. In other words, it examines agents at various levels-of-analysis and the structures and process of interaction among them.

4. Provide students with tools to analyze social, political or economic groups and social issues at the societal, regional, national and international levels: The methodology of international relations provides students with the tools to analyze all of these entities and issues, because it provides them with the analytical tools to critically examine current debates and issues in the global arena. Such critical analysis is encouraged not only through class lecture and discussions but also via the variety of course activities that engage the student in independent analysis, such as reading the New York Times on a daily basis, keeping a journal in responses to current event issues, or role playing exercises in discussion sections. In addition, all IR textbooks consider race, gender, class, and power to be fundamental concepts to the study of IR.

CA4 Criteria: The course leads students to an appreciation of the differences as well as commonalities among people by studying the ideas, history, values, and/or creative expressions of diverse groups from the perspectives of the groups under study in this manner:

1. Emphasize that there are varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity: This course emphasizes how differences in experiences, perceptions, and values can lead to political and economic conflict, and it examines the possibilities and opportunities for peacefully resolving such conflict. Central to POLS132 is an appreciation and understanding of the diversity of the human experience at the political level, which rests, in turn, on a foundation of social, cultural, and interpersonal interactions. And it is impossible to understand how diversity can lead to conflict in the world today without first acquiring an understanding of global order and the Westphalian system upon which it is based.

4. Develop an understanding of and sensitivity to issues involving human rights and migration: The issues of human rights and migration are embedded in the subject of international relations itself. Migration is a political and economic issue in the modern world precisely because we live in a world of nation-states with defined borders, governments, and settled populations that exclude non-citizens. Hence it is impossible to understand migration as a contemporary issue without a background in the fundamentals of international relations. The same is true for human

rights, because it is in the realm of international relations that such values are pursued cross-nationally and on a global scale. Hence individual activists and international organizations who operate in the realm of human rights are also operating within a world of inter-national relations and about which students, as future activists, must be made aware.

5. Develop an awareness of the dynamics of social, political, and/or economic power in the context of any of the above four items: The traditional, defining concept of the study of international relations is power in both its raw (military-security) and more subtle (economic disparity and cultural hegemony) forms. The major cleavages in global affairs, such as economic haves vs. have nots, West vs. the rest, or the technological and digital divide, are about who gets what in world politics and why. The study of international relations is ultimately about power in all its manifestations and the differences relative social, political, and economic power makes on a daily basis to the lives of individuals throughout the globe. Hence topics such as human rights, migration, and variety in human experiences are all intimately linked into the study of international relations.

International: 1. The course focuses on issues of diversity/multiculturalism outside the United States: The course focuses on issues of diversity/multiculturalism outside the United States: By definition, international relations focuses on issues outside of the United States and looks at the different views of global affairs engendered by other situations and contexts around the world. The course is about placing the US into a larger global and historical context, and that involves acquainting students with the diversity of opinions and perspectives that exist beyond our own borders. One of the central goals of the course is to disabuse American students of the notion that the United States is always morally correct in its foreign policy behavior or perspectives. The course also seeks to reveal the legitimate interests and perspectives of other nation-states and global actors who do not always agree with US foreign policy.

2. The course focuses on cultural continuities and transformations over time and place: The course focuses on cultural continuities and transformations over time and place: The nature and pace of change in global affairs is central to the study of international relations. Changes in political alignments, such as the end of the Cold War, have reshaped our political, economic, social, and cognitive landscapes over the past decade. The curriculum of POLS132 keeps pace with these changes so that it is always topical, always contemporary, and always reflective of changing times. Yet while events such as 9/11 remind us of the fragility of national security and complacency, at the same time they evoke discussion of topics that have been part of POLS132 for sometime, such as terrorism and religious extremism, global poverty and despair, and human security in a technologically globalized era. Thus as much as global change swirls around us and POLS132 keeps pace with it, continuities in how nation-states and other global actors interact are just as pertinent to subject of the course.

W Criteria: 1. W Components to Course: When this course is taught as a W, a major research paper of 15-25 pages in length is required. During the first week of class, the instructor provides students with a list of possible topic ideas that are relevant to the course themes. Students may draw a topic from the list or come up with their own topics, but they are each required to meet individually with the instructor to discuss and finalize their topics by the 4th week of the semester. A description of their topic and a summary of their research is due by the 6th week of class, and a first draft of the research paper is due by the 9th week of class. The instructor comments on these drafts and returns them to students for revision. The final draft of their research paper is due on the last day of the course. The research paper is worth 50% of their final grade, with exams comprising the remainder of the grade.

2. Primary Modes of Writing Instructions: The students are required to meet individually with the instructor to discuss their research paper topics early in the semester. Handouts are provided throughout the semester that provide information about the mechanics of research, writing, and citation styles. Class-time is devoted to discussing these handouts and any other issues or questions the students have about writing and researching their papers. One class session is devoted entirely to discussing each student's topic as a class and providing feedback as well as information about sources, writing, and citation styles. The library liaison to the department is also asked to teach a class session on researching international relations topics in the library and through the library's web-page. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor at any point during the semester to discuss any issues pertaining to their papers.

3. Structured Opportunities for Revision: The course requires a first draft which is commented on by the instructor and returned in a timely fashion so that the students can revise the paper and hand-in a polished draft. On the day first drafts are handed back with comments, the instructor devotes the bulk of the class session to reviewing common problems, discussing revision expectations, and answering questions about writing from the students.

Role of Grad Students: Every semester this course is taught by several regular faculty members in the department at Storrs, including Professors Boyer, Hanson, and Sterling-Folker. Select graduate students who are concentrating in this field serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs), who either grade for a faculty member or, if advanced in their studies, teach their own sections. All political science TAs are required to attend the Teaching Institute's roundtables on pedagogy offered prior to the start of Fall semester. International students are additionally required to take teaching tests and to attend a three-day training session at the Institute. Every Fall the department sponsors a TA information session to offer advice and discuss potential problems they may encounter. The department offers roundtables on pedagogical issues throughout the academic year. Finally, the appropriate faculty member, Department head, and the Department's Teaching Mentor supervise the TAs work throughout the semester.