

POL 309 Current Issues in International Politics

Semester One, 2009-2010

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Office Hours: posted on the door of my office. Other times are available by prior appointment.

Mode of Tuition: Lecture (2 + 1 hours per week)

Course Description and Aim:

This course introduces you to the current issues in a world undergoing globalization. Several issues will be discussed in depth so that you can relate these pressing concerns in contemporary international affairs to the broader background of international political theories. Potential topics include: Trade and Poverty; People in Developing Countries; Transnational Social Movements; and Sustainable Development.

Learning Outcome:

Upon completing this course, you should have learnt:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the issue agenda of international politics;
2. Develop analytical tools to understand patterns of behavior and change in world politics; and
3. Able to evaluate different approaches from mass media, governments, non-governmental organizations, and academia on international politics.

Teaching Methods:

In the lectures, topics will be discussed and evaluated in detail with empirical cases provided. Classroom discussion will be used mainly in the both lectures and tutorials to convey basic concepts and developments on different issues. Students are encouraged to seek the linkage between the theories and case studies in the tutorial sessions and give comments on them.

Course Content:

Topics

- I. Orientation / Introduction
 - How should we face the issues in international politics?
 - * Movie: “*Lions for Lambs*” (Cast: Robert Redford, Tom Cruise and Meryl Streep)
- II. Transnational Activism
 - Anti-Globalization Movements
 - International Campaign to Ban Landmines
- III. People in Developing Countries
 - Human Rights of Children and Women
 - Refugees
- IV. Poverty
 - Trade and World Trade Organization
 - Sweatshops and Fair Trade
 - * *Guest speaker of a labor NGO has been invited to give a talk in this session*
- V. Sustainable Development
 - Create a better world? Problems in international cooperation on sustainable development

Measurement of Learning Outcome:

Assessment in various ways will contribute to the measurement of your learning.

The Continuous Assessment (100%) will be sub-divided into four components.

There will be no final exam during the University’s regular exam period.

1. A tutorial presentation (20%) which demonstrates your ability to (i) research and organize content in a coherent and logical manner, (ii) present this content together with your own analysis in a clear manner, and (iii) defend your arguments during the discussion period.
2. An individually-written term paper in which a question related to the themes covered in this course is discussed in a logical and clear manner. Weight is given to your research and analytical skills as demonstrated by the nature of the content and

your critical analysis. You must include footnotes/citations and references list/bibliography. An individual grade is given (30%).

Deadline is Friday 4 December 2009.

"Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations"

3. Participation in class discussions. You will be given an opportunity to lead the discussion on other students' presentations, but credit will also be given to those who join in actively and regularly in class discussions. Your grade depends on quality as well as quantity of contributions (20%). In addition, class attendance will affect one's grade. Missing one class will cause loss of your participation grade. Please inform me in advance if exceptions need to be made.

4. A Mid-term test will be held on **14 October 2009**, which will examine your knowledge and understanding of key concepts and factual information in the course (30%).

Suggested Reading:

You should keep up-to-date with current international issues; therefore, reading newspapers is very important in this course and help you to participate actively in class discussions. As the sources of daily global news, you are recommended to read the International Herald Tribune (IHT), South China Morning Post (SCMP), BBC News, which are very good and high quality English-language sources of news related to this course. IHT and SCMP are available in the library, or you can subscribe. BBC news and part of IHT's articles are available for free on their website.

Tutorial Discussion Topics: to be outlined and allocated during the first week of tutorials.

Required readings

Poverty

Cornia, Giovanni Andrea, ed. *Inequality Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Ch. 1-8.

Fridell, Gavin, *Fair Trade Coffee: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Market-Driven Social*

Justice. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, c2007.

Khusro, Ali Mohammed, *The Poverty of Nations*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
Ch. 14-16.

Ross, Andrew , ed. *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers*. New York : Verso, 1997.

People in Developing Countries

Agosín, Marjorie, ed., *Women, Gender, and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*. NJ : Rutgers University Press, 2001., pp.1-124, 191-266.

Heinze, Eric, ed., *Of Innocence and Autonomy : Children, Sex and Human Rights*. UK: Ashgate, 2000. Ch. 1-4, 6 & 8.

Seabrook, Jeremy, *Children of Other Worlds: Exploitation in the Global Market*. UK: Pluto Press, 2001.

Whittaker, David J., *Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Contemporary World*, London ; New York : Routledge, 2006. Ch. 1, 2, 5 & 10.

Transnational Activism

Brooks, D. Christopher. "Faction in Movement: The Impact of Inclusivity on the Anti-Globalization Movement." *Social Science Quarterly*, vol. 85, number 3 (2004): 559-77.

Florini, Ann M., ed., *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society*. Tokyo : Japan Center for International Exchange, 2000. Ch.1 & 6.

Khagram, Sanjeev , *et al*, eds. *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. Ch. 1 & 2.

Sustainable Development

Farrell, Alex and Hart, Maureen, "What Does Sustainability Really Mean?": The

Search for Useful Indicators”, in Frey, R Scott, ed. *The Environment and Society Reader*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2000., pp.362-377.

Ison, Stephen, *et al*, *Environmental Issues and Policies*, Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd, 2002, pp. 107-132.

Jacobs, Michael, “Sustainable Development as a Contested Concept”, in Dobson, Andrew, ed. *Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999., pp.21-45.

Middleton, Nick, *The Global Casino: An Introduction to Environmental Issues*, Third Edition. London: Hodder Arnold, pp. 35-48.

World Commission on Environment and Development, “Towards Sustainable Development”, *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987., pp.43-66.