

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (POSC 140)
Manchester College
Fall 2008
MWF 11:00 - 11:50 am
SCIC 203

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Office Hours
MWF 3-5 pm

Course Content

This course is an introduction to the central concepts and theories which assist in organizing knowledge about international political phenomena. These concepts and theories are used in consideration of critical issues and controversies facing the global community. Simply stated, the substance of this course is information, concept, theories, and analysis of international issues. More specifically, we will examine the traditional international relations theories — realism, liberalism, and Marxism, and the more contemporary perspectives, such as, constructivism, feminism, green politics, and peace studies that do not fit neatly into any of the traditional approaches – and their application for the understanding of the global political and economic issues.

Course Objective

By focusing on concepts and theories, this course seeks to foster a heightened understanding of the dynamics of international relations to, identify the salient trends and developments in global politics, examine the principal questions that will confront the international community over the next decade or so, and to foster an informed discussion of war, peace and justice, and a host of other important world politics issues, human rights, environmental challenges, globalization, democratization, economic disparities among and between states and people, and the emerging role of none governmental actors, among other things. More specifically, the course intends to assist students in developing generalizations about and discerning patterns in the conduct of international affairs.

Course Design

In addition to formal lectures, we will use active learning techniques namely, role-play and out of class group projects to engage the students, and provide hands-on-activities to make some of the abstract concepts or theories come to life. In light of this, the course is designed to cover the following activities:

1. *Lecture*

There will be 15-20 minutes lecture during each class period. The lectures will provide students with the essentials, e.g., definitions and conceptual clarity to be able to participate meaningfully in the role play activities. Power point will be provided to supplement lectures for each chapter in the text.

2. *Role-Play*

There will be role-play activity during each class period. To do this, the class will be divided into 8 groups. Each group will have no more than 5 students. Given the size of this class, the groups will remain permanent like national states that are geographically specific. Because of the size of this class also, each group is encouraged to occupy seats close to one another. This means that students will constantly rotate roles and task within their groups but will not be able to another group. In order to encourage collaborative learning, the professor will not intervene to resolve conflicts, such as schedule, personality, free-rider problem, etc, that may occur. To be successful, each group should work quickly to resolve problems within themselves. **By permission of the instructor, students may write a two page paper as make-up for any missed role-play in class. However, each student is allowed no more than three make-ups total for the entire semester.** The daily role-play activities will carry 40% or 400 points toward the final grade

3. *Out of Class Activities*

There will be weekly and semester long out of class activities. Students will retain their in-class group membership to engage in these activities. The out of class projects and assignments will carry 20% or 200 points towards the final grade

4. *Weekly Quizzes*

There will be weekly quizzes to include topics and chapters covered during each week period. The quizzes will carry 40% or 400 points towards the final grade.

Grade Summary

Weekly Quizzes	40% or 400 points
In-Class Role-Play Exercises	40% or 400 points
Out of Class Activities (semester project)	20% or 200 points

Grade Scale

90% or 380 points and above	A
80% or 360 points and above	B
70% or 340 points and above	C
60% or 320 points and above	D
Below 60% and 320	F

Learning Objectives

1. *Alternative Presentation of Course materials*

We will use role-playing to provide a different variety to lecturing for presenting course materials. The purpose of using this method is to encourage students to become active participants in learning and absorbing course materials. By doing this it is expected that students will gain a deeper understanding when they engage in constructing new knowledge or reconstructing received ideas, rather than simply memorizing it.

2. *Promote Student Interaction and Input*

Interactive exercises using small groups are expected to give students a chance to (a) voice their own ideas, (b) bounce ideas off each other and (c), learn from one another. More importantly, the exercises challenge students to step out of the role of passive absorber of knowledge and work together to solve problems.

3. *Promote Collaborative learning and Problem Solving Skills*

By working together to reach solutions to common and enduring problems of our time, not only students gain more self-assurance in their own abilities, but also the practical skills for resolving the common and enduring problems of our time.

4. *Promote Student Curiosity and Creativity*

Students' curiosity is heightened by designing the lecture-role-playing exercises in a way that provides essentials, but not complete information about a topic. In addition to promoting further inquires by students, the exercises can also provide an opportunity for creative critical thinking by not offering immediate solutions to the problems presented, and by leaving the interaction relatively unstructured as in the course design. The main learning objective here is to promote the development of skills; critical analytical thinking as well as, social and diplomatic skills that might not be developed in straight forward lecture settings.

5. *Have Fun*

A final objective that may be overlooked is the simple goal of having fun. These exercises are expected to help capture students' attention and are entertaining in addition to being educational.

Course Text

1. John T. Rourke, International Politics on the World Stage Twelfth Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2008).

Course Schedule

Week 1 September 3 – 5

Topic: Introduction and Over view of the course.

Week 2 September 8 – 12

Topic: Issues in World Politics

Assigned Reading: International Politics, chapter.1

Activity #1: Each group should list all the terms or words associated with the notion “International Politics,” then classify the terms into the following three categories: what we know, what we do not know, what we ought to know.

Activity #2: Each student should scan the news media (print and electronics) for a week and identify one issue or problem such as war, high energy cost, healthcare, unemployment, the environment, spread of weapons of mass destruction, etc, and prepare a weekly report which must be posted in the Angels on Monday before class by 11am.

Week 3 September 8 – 12

Topic: Change in the World System

Assigned reading: International Politics, chapter.2

This chapter provides a historical overview of the evolution of the international system during the past 1,500 years. It highlights the following themes:

- Changing number and types of actors
- Shifting distribution of power among the actors
- Rapidly expanding scope and level of interaction
- The norms that govern international behavior
- The impact of nonhuman factors

Out of Class Activity: What do you know about each of these factors?

How do you think these topics influence international relations? How could changes within each of these topics, such as changing power distributions among the actors, influence the United States and you as an individual? What would you like to know about these topics? Each group should record and

post their responses on the Angels and respond to them during lecture section.

In class Activity #1: In this chapter, the text has talked about threats to the survival of the nation-state. The two most obvious threats are global integration (Benjamin Barber's "McWorld") and state fragmentation (Barber's "Tribalism"). Each group should decide which of the two they think will be more prominent in the twenty-first century and why they think this way. One student in each group should be prepared to make the case for "McWorld" (global integration), another student should argue for "Tribalism" (the fragmentation of states through, for example, nationalist movements), while the third student should defend the status quo represented by the nation-state system. Whenever possible, the groups should use real-world examples to support their arguments for or against a particular approach.

In Class Activity #2: Each group should assume that they represent a major power in a multipolar system. The alliance of which you are a member recently defeated the opposing alliance. One of your allies is asking to absorb the most industrialized sections of your recent enemy. If this transfer occurs, your ally will become the most powerful country in the area. What positions will you take on your ally's request and why will you take it? Identify and explain historical examples of the balance-of-power principle(s) you invoke.

Week 4 September 15 – 19

Topic: Theories and Levels of Analysis

Assigned Reading: International Politics. Chapter 3

In Class activity #1: Each student should privately write down a 2 sentence description of their foreign policy views: aggressive/passive cooperative/uncooperative etc. Then the instructor will set up several Risk boards in a number of different configurations and ask students to share their foreign policy statements with the other players in the group, and discuss the alliances that should be expected. Afterward, students should discuss how the statements shaped their perceptions of other players and of the security situation.

In Class Activity #2: Do you think that U.S. foreign policy would be different if we had a woman president and most members of Congress were women? Why do you think this way? Do women have innately different values from men when it comes to foreign policy? Or would women be forced to pursue similar policies to men when pushed into positions of power?

In Class Activity #3: Some scholars suggest that the world would be better served if all inhabitants thought of themselves as citizens of the world. Do you agree or disagree? How might U.S. policy toward the less developed countries be different if global interests rather than national interests were pursued? How would most U.S. citizens respond to this policy? How would citizens in Germany, Japan, or France respond if their countries pursued a similar policy? What conclusions might you draw from this discussion? Each student in the group should choose a country of their interest to respond to these questions.

Out of Class activity: report on contemporary international issue, and describe the situation from

the perspective of an (a) individual-level of analyst, (b) state-level analyst and (c), system-level analyst.

Week 5 September 22 - 26

Topic: Nations, Nationalism, and Nation-States
Assigned Reading: International Politics. Chapter 4

In Class activity #1: Why is the United States considered a nation-state and Palestine is not? Each group should represent Palestine and describe what changes would be necessary for your state to become a nation state.

In Class Activity #2: Suppose that Bizquat is the leader of a sizable minority e.g., Kurds whose members are found within three adjacent powerful countries. Generally, her group has received adequate treatment in all countries, but there is increasing desire by her people to unify into a new nation-state. Should Bizquat have a right to induce her people to secede from their existing states? If the majority of students in your group favor secession, then you must address what problems might be encountered and discuss whether her people will be better off living in a microstate surrounded by powerful enemies than they would be if they continued to reside within those states.

In Class Activity #3: Each group should act as advisory councils to a ruler of a nation created from a former colonial holding. Its boundaries reflect European political realities, not geographic, ethnic, or cultural realities. How might you use nationalism to your advantage? What plan would you suggest to foster positive nationalism? What dangers does nationalism pose to your nation, and how will you respond to them? Each group should report their recommendations and critique them.

Out of Class Activity: Select any contemporary nationalistic “hot spot,” such as North and South Korea, any of the FSRs, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Kashmir, Scotland, the Basque Country, or Quebec. Gather information about critical issues and discuss possible solutions.

September 24, NO CLASS (CAMP MACK DAY)

Week 6 September 29 – October 3

Topic: Globalization
Assigned Reading: International Politics. Chapter 5

In Class Activity: Each group should identify and collect 7 to 10 treatments by the Western media (newspaper clippings, articles in popular news journals, televised news reports) of a conflict that has occurred between Huntington’s “civilizations.” Examples could include Bosnia, Kosovo, the “war on terrorism,” or the April 2001 collision of a U.S. surveillance plane and a Chinese fighter jet near China. Analyze the content of this media coverage with students, asking them to assess whether or not a pro-Western (or, alternatively, an “anti-other”) bias is evident and to provide specific evidence to support their position. Conclude by connecting the exercise to the question of whether Huntington’s thesis is viable.

Out of Class Activity: Each group should conduct a cultural globalization scavenger hunt. Students should keep a journal of imported cultural items (music, food, entertainment, language, etc.) that they encounter in their daily life.

Week 7 October 6 – 10

Topic: The State and State System

Assigned Reading: International Politics, chapter 6

How might U.S. policy toward the less developed countries be different if global interests rather than national interests were pursued? How would most U.S. citizens respond to this policy? How would citizens in Germany, Japan, or France respond if their countries pursued a similar policy? What conclusions might you draw from this discussion?

Week 8 October 13 – 17

Topic: Power

Assigned Reading: International Politics, chapter 8

Each group should select any foreign policy hot spot or hot issue in the world today (e.g., enrichment of Uranium by Iran, or trade issues with China), and take one of the chosen issue, and defend your choice. Then examine the issue from the opposing side and select countries involved. Review the options for conducting diplomacy listed in the text, select one to apply and defend one option. If time permits, study the issue in detail and reevaluate the choice exercised by your group

Week 9 October 22 – 31

Topic: National Security and the Causes of War

Assigned Reading: International Politics, chapter 10

Activity #1: An idealist and an advocate of realpolitik have been invited to this class to discuss the appropriateness of the use of covert operations as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. What arguments and supporting evidence would you expect them to offer? Which one is most persuasive, and why?

Activity #2: Facing budget cuts, the Pentagon has asked you to act as a consultant in an analysis of the costs and benefits of maintaining a capacity for biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. What would your findings be?

Activity #3: The text indicates that escalation or errors in judgment are the most likely causes of a nuclear war. Do you agree? Why, or why not? What might be done to reduce the likelihood that either of these paths will be taken?

Week 10 November 3 – 7

Topic: International Security, the Alternative Road

Assigned Reading: International Politics Chapter 11

This chapter has presented four approaches to security (see Table 11.1). Your group has been asked to serve as an adviser to the U.S. president to develop a national security policy that will promote U.S. security in the post-cold war world. Summarize each of the four positions, identify its strengths and weaknesses, describe the steps that the United States would have to take to implement each approach, and develop a policy recommendation with clearly identified actions that the United States should take to promote its security.

Week 11 November 10-14

Topic Economic Development and National Competition

Assigned Reading : International Politics International chapter 12

Activity #1: Each group should choose a nation of interest to them. Your nation is concerned about the abuses of human rights in China. The government has asked you to develop a position paper outlining economic incentives and economic sanctions that your country could apply in this situation. In addition, you have been asked to describe the strengths and weaknesses of using incentives and sanctions

Activity #2: Alice and Harold Viridon work for the Zeppo Widget Company. The company and the entire industry are going bankrupt because of foreign competition. The industry contends that its demise is the result of unfair trade, but economists who have studied the issue indicate that the problem is really inefficient production. The industry lacks the capital to modernize. Each member of the group should assume the role of a U.S. Senator. As a Senator, would you vote to protect the Zeppo Widget Company and save the Viridons's jobs by imposing trade barriers? Why, or why not? Please report the results of your group vote to the class.

Week 12 November 17-21

Topic: Cooperation in the Global System

Assigned Reading : International Politics Chapter 13

Activity #1: The U.S. secretary of state is deeply concerned about the LDC debt issue. She knows that EDCs and LDCs have very different perspectives on the internal fiscal reforms proposed by the international lending agencies. She has asked your group to prepare a briefing paper that examines the issue from both perspectives and offers suggestions regarding what position your country should take.

Activity #2: Each group should pick a less developed nation in Africa or Asia of your interest. Your nation has been contacted by an MNC that is considering making a major capital investment in a factory in your country. Before making a decision, you decide to consult with your counterparts in other LDCs. Based on these conversations; you write a position paper for your government outlining the potential benefits and pitfalls of inviting a large MNC to establish a factory in your country. You also attach a list of recommendations to be included in any contract with an MNC. Include a description of the response you expect from the MNC to your list.

Week 13 December 1-5
Topic: Human Rights
Assigned Reading: International Politics Chapter 14

There has been concern that signing a variety of international agreements addressing issues ranging from women's rights to immigration will pose a threat to national sovereignty. Your group should choose a country and review chapter 14 to identify international agreements that your country has not signed or ratified and weigh the arguments for and against signing. Consider the implications of signing. For those documents that you believe your country should support, how would you respond to those who complain that it infringes upon your country's right of sovereignty and its right to pursue its own best interest?

Week 14 December 8-12
Topic: Population and the Global Environment
Assigned Reading: International Politics chapter 15

Discuss what you as an individual, group member, and political participant at the local, national, and international levels might do to address development issues. Especially, many pollution issues ranging from the dumping of waste into the ocean to the drift of air pollution across national boundaries are transnational problems. Review the successful global efforts to combat these problems. What has made for successful international cooperation? Why has cooperation failed in some cases?

Week 15 December 15-18 Final Exams

Good luck in your exams, and have a happy holiday season.

Important Information for Students with Disabilities:

Manchester College, in compliance with federal guidelines, is committed to assuring students with disabilities equal access to programs and activities that are provided to students without disabilities.

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Bonnie O'Connell, the director of services for students with disabilities, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose their disability. Students whose accommodation requests are approved will be provided with confidential letters to deliver to their professors which verify the nature of the student's disability and documents the need for auxiliary aids and services and/or academic adjustments/accommodations. Students are encouraged to meet with each professor early in the semester to discuss the academic implications of the disability as they relate to the specific course and to request appropriate accommodation. The Disabilities Office is located in the Success Center (second floor of the Union) telephone 982.5076 to schedule an appointment.