Course Overview:

This course introduces students to the study of politics at the international stage. It surveys the different approaches used to examine the history as well as the structure of global politics. We will broadly explore the main causes and consequences of conflicts and cooperation. We will also examine the behaviors of nation-states and non-state actors on the international stage.

We will achieve the goals of this course by relying on a two-pronged approach. Firstly, we will learn the theoretical, conceptual, and historical tools used by analysts of international politics to make sense of our world. Secondly, we will apply these lenses to major historical changes as well as contemporary events germane to this course to better understand relations among nations. Particular major contemporary issues include, but are not limited to, conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the emergence of economic powers such as China, Brazil and India, migration and financial crises in Europe, protracted conflicts, and humanitarian crises in Sub-Saharan Africa, revolutions, and political change in the Middle-East and North Africa etc.

Objectives of the Course:

Students who take this course will gain substantial knowledge on the history of the relations among nations and the rationale for their behaviors on the world stage.

General Educational Objectives:

As required by Louisiana State University, this course satisfies the general education requirement. It socializes students with basic knowledge on international politics, allowing them to make sense of the world through reading, interpretation, analysis, and critical thinking. Particular goals include the ability to retain factual knowledge on the subject matter; to understand the levels of association, ranging from friends and family to civilization of global significance; and to understand cultural diversity across time and space as well as universal social characteristics and global networks.
Course Requirements:

You are expected to attend class, do the readings prior to the session for which they are listed, take all the quizzes, take a mid-term and final exam, and submit two brief research papers of no more than 8 double-spaced-12 pts pages each. The research paper will focus on a specific case of international politics. You will focus on a topic of your choice among the list of topics that I will provide.

Participation:

You will be expected to participate in class, as it is a way of demonstrating that you have done the required reading and that you have given it some thought. In addition to the unannounced quizzes, I will occasionally call on a student to respond to a specific question related to the reading. This form of participation will be graded. You can also participate through responses on specific current events developed in the NYT or other major news outlets.

Current events review:

Each student will review and briefly comment on a piece of newspaper article on international politics three times in the course of the semester. This assignment is due every Friday (groups will be assigned). A copy of the newspaper article reviewed will be submitted to me along with your page to page and a half-long comment each week. The comment should be no more than five hundred (500) words comprising respectively a summary of the article, a broader discussion of the issue and a conclusion that with questions, and implications that you would like to draw from the article. I will specific guidelines on this exercise on the course web page. I recommend articles from the New York Times, Washington Post, Financial Times, etc or in some magazines such as the Economist, the Christian Science Monitor. The Internet can also be a valuable source of information. www.irinnews.org is a great source on information of international relevance.

Grading policy

Quizzes and class exams (20%);
Midterm (20%);
Final Exam (20%);
Two short Papers (30%);
Current event review (newspaper articles) (5%);
Participation (5%)

Required Course Textbook:

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK OF 8/22/2011: SOME BASIC CONCEPTS
Syllabus Presentation
Continuity and change in international relations.
Optional Readings: Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War

WEEK OF 8/29/2011: MAJOR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT
Lecture Two: Traditional International Relations Theories: Realism, Idealism, and Interdependence.
Dynamic of International relations: Introduction and Ch. 1.

Labor Day Holiday: 9/05/2011

WEEK OF 9/07/2011: POST-WAR WORLD ORDERS (WW I & II)
Dynamic of International Relations, Ch. 2
Optional Reading: Joseph Nye: Understanding Conflict and Cooperation ch. 3
Wednesday 9/7/2011 Map Quiz

WEEK OF 9/12/2011: THE POLITICAL FUNCTIONS OF WAR
Dynamic of International Relations, Ch. 4
Optional reading: Clausewitz: On War
Joseph Nye: Understanding Conflict and Cooperation ch. 4

WEEK OF 9/19/2011: FOREIGN POLICY DECISION MAKING
Dynamics of International Relations, ch. 3.
Optional Reading: Graham Allison; Essence of Decision Making

WEEK OF 9/26/2011: COOPERATION AND DIPLOMATIC CONDUCT
Dynamic of International Relations, ch. 6 and 7.
Optional Readings: Kant, Immanuel: “Perpetual Peace”
Review for Midterm exam

WEEK OF 10/03/2011: THE USE OF FORCE AND HUMANITARIANISM
Dynamic of International Relations, ch. 9.

MIDTERM EXAM
WEEK OF 10/10/2011: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY
Dynamics of International Relations, ch. 10 & 11
Optional Reading: Ghemawat, Pankaj. 2007. Why the world isn't flat. Foreign Policy. (159): 54-60.

WEEK OF 10/17/2011: GLOBALIZATION AND NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS
Dynamic of International Relations, ch. 12.

WEEK OF 10/24/2011: INTERNATIONAL REGIMES, NON-STATE ACTORS AND ISSUE-AREAS (Part One: non-state actors)
Dynamics of International relations, ch. 15.
First Short paper due on Friday 10/28/2011

WEEK OF 10/31/2011 INTERNATIONAL REGIMES, NON-STATE ACTORS AND ISSUES AREAS (Part Two: Sovereignty, human rights and Global Governance)
Dynamics of International relations, ch. 16.

WEEK OF 11/07/2011: HUMAN SECURITY AND TERRORISM
WEEK OF 11/14/2011: DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN POST 9/11 WORLD
Zakaria, Fareed. The Rise of Illiberal Democracy
Articles on the Libya and Egypt: TBD

November 18. Class cancelled; professor at the ASA Conference.

WEEK OF 11/21/2011 CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES
Dynamics of International Relations, ch. 13.
Final Short paper due 11/25/2011

WEEK OF 11/28/2011 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY
Nye, Ch. 9.
Final Exam Review
Course Evaluations

12/05/2011
FINAL EXAM