

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS IN WORLD POLITICS**

Political Science 3397f (Fall 2012)

Time: Thursdays 12:30-14:20

Location: Social Sciences 2024

Prof. Radoslav Dimitrov,

Office: 4219 Social Sciences

Monday 10 a.m. - 13 p.m.

Tel. (519) 661-2111 ext. 85023

Email: [rdimitro@uwo.ca](mailto:rdimitro@uwo.ca)

**Course description** The course explores contemporary issues in world politics through active student engagement. Students will examine world politics “as it happens” through news in the mass media, and conduct a “reality check” by testing academic theories of international relations against current affairs. The course emphasizes class discussions and political analysis in international security, global political economy, environmental politics and human rights issues. Theoretical topics include types and sources of power, the use of force versus diplomacy, the role of international institutions, morality and ethics in politics, and the interplay between domestic politics and international relations.

### **Course objectives and outcomes**

The course is designed to be demanding and rewarding. We will pursue the following objectives: 1) Deepen knowledge of contemporary international affairs; 2) Refine your ability to engage in political analysis and synthesize ideas and factual information; and 3) Develop appreciation of the multiplicity of perspectives on the social world where black and white are just two colors of the spectrum.

The course promotes student progress toward Ontario Degree Level Expectations:

- \* Breadth and depth of knowledge;
- \* Application of knowledge;
- \* Communication skills;
- \* Awareness of limits of knowledge; and
- \* Autonomy and professional capacity.

**Required readings** include academic journal articles, chapter books and articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy* and *The Economist*. Book chapters are placed in Weldon library reserve. All other readings are in electronic format on Sakai (<http://owl.uwo.ca>). Students need to complete the readings for each class period prior to class. We will follow the following news sources: BBC, Deutsche Welle (Germany), Al-Jazeera (Middle East), *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *The Guardian*.

### **Grading policy**

Participation & attendance	20%
Editorial articles	20%
Research paper	20 %
Presentation and debate	20 %
News diary	20%

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Participation** in classroom discussions on current events is essential to this course. Students are expected to actively participate in discussion every class period. Criteria for marking participation are 1) use of factual information from the news, 2) demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings, 3) skill of relating facts to academic ideas, and 4) ability to listen to others and respond to their political statements. Let's talk politics!

### **Class presentation/debate**

Each student will engage in one debate on a controversial issue in world politics. Please sign up for a date on September 13. The assignment consists of two components: prepare a group presentation to introduce the issue to the class (10%) and engage in a two-sided debate to defend an argument (10%). The mark will be based on three aspects: the scope and depth of background preparation, the argument's clarity and justification, and your ability to respond to counterarguments.

### **Global news journal** due Nov. 1

Please write a personal journal reflecting world news. Make one entry per week every week on the day before the class period. Each entry (no more than two pages) should summarize concisely but informatively two major events of the week, providing key numbers and factual information and a brief personal commentary with your reaction. Each entry should indicate mass media sources used and the Internet addresses of the news articles. For instance: "Germany and France agree to work together on solution to Eurozone crisis," *The Guardian* Aug. 27, 2012. At <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/aug/27/germany-france-eurozone-crisis-accord>"

### **Editorial articles** due Sept. 27 & Oct. 25

Please write two 3-page editorials for a major newspaper, on current events in world politics. Every good editorial article 1) introduces concisely a policy issue using specific factual information, 2) takes a clear political standpoint, and 3) makes a reasoned argument justifying this opinion. These are the three criteria for marking the assignment. Please read actual editorials in newspapers as a source of knowledge and inspiration.

### **Research paper** due Nov. 22

Students will write a 10-page research paper assessing IR theories against current world politics. The ultimate test of academic theories is the 'real world' seen in political outcomes. How do current events confirm or refute theories of international relations? Please choose at least 2 mainstream theories and test them against at least 2 major current developments in world politics.

ATTENTION: All written assignments should be double-spaced, font Times New Roman size 12, and 1-inch margins. See Appendix for detailed research paper guidelines.

## CONSULTATIONS

Office hours provide you with a good opportunity to discuss issues and deepen your understanding of course material. I encourage you to talk to me throughout the year about course content and expectations. If you have special needs, medical or family emergencies, please let me know and we will work it out.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Western Ontario seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in this class, please give prior notice to the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

## COURSE CALENDAR

Tentative topics include: Terrorism, Syria's civil war, Iran and nuclear proliferation, The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, The European financial crisis, Political change in the Arab world. *NB: The finalized list depends on world events in fall 2012. The course follows current affairs and changes to the calendar and readings list are to be expected. Please follow announcements each week on Sakai.*

<b>SEPTEMBER 6</b>	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>Scope and content of course, significance of topic, and course expectations. What will I learn, why does it matter, and how difficult will it be?</p>
<b>SEPTEMBER 13</b>	<p><b>THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b></p> <p><i>Sign up for class debates.</i> <u>Attendance mandatory</u></p> <p>Elke Krahnemann, "American Hegemony or Global Governance? Competing Visions of International Security," <i>International Studies Review</i> (2005) 7, pp. 531-545.</p> <p>Kenneth Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Why states act through international organizations," <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> vol. 41, no. 1 (February 1998), pp. 3-32.</p> <p>David Halloran Lumsdaine, <i>Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989</i> (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993). Read Chapter 2, "Why Was There Any Foreign Aid At All?" pp. 30-69. <u>Weldon Library reserve</u></p>
<b>SEPTEMBER 20</b>	<p><b>SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR</b></p> <p>Michael S. Doran and Salman Shaikh, "Syria: The Ghosts of Hama," in <i>The Arab Awakening</i> edited by Kenneth Pollack et al. (The Brookings Institution 2011). <u>Weldon Library reserve</u></p> <p>The Economist: "Syria after the big bomb: How long can the regime last?" <i>The Economist</i> July 21, 2012</p> <p>Daniel Byman and Kenneth Pollack, "The Syrian spillover: Is anyone prepared for the unintended consequences of the war for Syria?" <i>Foreign Policy</i> August 10, 2012</p>

<p><b>SEPTEMBER 27</b></p> <p><b>Editorial due</b></p>	<p><b>THE ARAB SPRING</b></p> <p>Kenneth M. Pollack, “Understanding the Arab Awakening,” in <i>The Arab Awakening</i> edited by Kenneth Pollack et al. (The Brookings Institution 2011). <u>Weldon Library reserve</u></p> <p>Daniel Byman, “Israel: A Frosty Response to the Arab Spring,” in <i>The Arab Awakening</i> edited by Kenneth Pollack et al. 2012. <u>Weldon Library reserve</u></p> <p>Russett, Bruce. <i>Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World</i>. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993. Read chapters 1 and 2. <u>Weldon Library reserve</u></p>
<p><b>OCTOBER 4</b></p>	<p><b>ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT</b></p> <p>Daniel Byman and Natan Sachs, “The Rise of Settler Terrorism,” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> September/October 2012, pp. 73-86</p> <p>Alon Ben-Meir, “Obama’s Peace Offensive,” <i>Global Change, Peace and Security</i> 22(1): 141-147.</p> <p>Rosemary Hollis, “The Israeli-Palestinian road block: Can Europeans make a difference?” <i>International Affairs</i> 80, 2 (2004): 191-201.</p> <p>Brian Eberling, “Troubled Waters: Water and the Israeli-Palestinian Dilemma,” Air Command and Staff College Report 2009.</p>
<p><b>OCTOBER 11</b></p>	<p><b>AFGHANISTAN</b></p> <p>Stephen Biddle et al. “Defining success in Afghanistan” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> July/August 2010.</p> <p>Stephen Hadley and John D. Podesta, “The Right Way out of Afghanistan,” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> July/August 2012</p> <p>James Meernik, “United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy,” <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> vol. 33, no. 4 (Nov. 1996), pp. 391-402.</p>
<p><b>OCTOBER 18</b></p>	<p><b>GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLITICS</b></p> <p>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “Fourth Assessment Report, Summary for Policymakers.”</p> <p>Radoslav S. Dimitrov, “Inside UN Climate Negotiations,” <i>Review of Policy Research</i> no. 7 (November 2010). <i>NB: This is a long article -- allow abundant time for it.</i></p>

<p><b>OCTOBER 25</b></p> <p><b>Editorial due</b></p>	<p><b>EUROPE'S FINANCIAL CRISIS</b></p> <p>Timothy Garton Ash, "The Crisis of Europe," <i>Foreign Affairs</i> Sept/October 2012, pp. 2-15</p> <p>C. Fred Bergsten, "Why the Euro Will Survive," <i>Foreign Affairs</i> Sept/October 2012, pp. 16-22</p> <p>Philip Gordon, "Bridging the Transatlantic Divide," <i>Foreign Affairs</i> (2003).</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 1</b></p> <p><b>Diary due</b></p>	<p><b>TERRORISM</b></p> <p>Cronin, Audrey Kurth. "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism." <i>International Security</i> 27, no. 3 (2002): 30–58.</p> <p>John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "The Terrorism Delusion: America's Overwrought Response to September 11," <i>International Security</i> vol. 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012), pp. 81-110.</p> <p>Wyn Rees and Richard J. Aldrich, "Contending cultures of counterterrorism: Transatlantic convergence or divergence?" <i>International Affairs</i> 81, 5 (2005): 905-923.</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 8</b></p>	<p><b>IRAN AND WORLD POLITICS</b></p> <p>Nihat Ali Ozcan and Ozgur Ozdamar, "Iran Nuclear Program and the Future of US-Iran Relations", <i>CQ Global Researcher</i> 2009.</p> <p>Mohsen Milani, "Tehran's Take: Understanding Iran's US Policy" <i>Foreign Affairs</i> July/Aug 2009.</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 15</b></p>	<p><b>CIVILIZATIONS AND WORLD POLITICS</b></p> <p>Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" <i>Foreign Affairs</i> (1992).</p> <p>Errol A. Henderson and Richard Tucker, "Clear and Present Strangers: The Clash of Civilizations and International Conflict," <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> (June 2001), pp. 317-338.</p>

**NOVEMBER 22****RELIGION IN WORLD POLITICS****Research paper  
due**

Risa Brooks, "Muslim Homegrown Terrorism in the United States: How Serious is the Threat?" *International Security* vol. 36, no. 2 (Fall 2011), pp. 7-47

Graham E. Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam," *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2002.

Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations," *International Studies Review* vol. 3, no. 3 (Fall 2001), pp. 53-73.

**NOVEMBER 29****POWER IN WORLD POLITICS**

Michael Beckley, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure," *International Security* vol. 36, no. 3 (Winter 2011/2012), pp. 41-78.

Joseph Nye, "The American Colossus," in *The Paradox of American Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-40. Weldon library reserve

Chris Hedges, "The seduction of battle and the perversion of war" a chapter in his award-winning book *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*. Weldon library reserve

## APPENDIX

**RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES**

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, font Times New Roman, size 12, with 1-inch margins on all four sides. Please insert page numbers. The papers are to be organized in sections with their own subtitles. A bibliographical list of sources that you have used and in-text references to each of these sources are required.

Evaluation criteria reflects the following components of an excellent research paper in social sciences:

- 1) **Clear central argument:** What is my overarching point?
- 2) **Logic of analysis:** a logical progression of analytical steps building the argument. What type of evidence do I need for a persuasive argument?
- 3) **Solid empirical support** of the argument(s) is of central importance. What are the facts that lead to my conclusion?
- 4) **Clear and visible structure:** introduction, subtitled sections forming a chain of arguments, and conclusion. Dividing the paper in titled subsections is important.
- 5) **Style and language:** rich vocabulary, readability, correct grammar and spelling, no colloquialisms or slang.
- 6) **Bibliographic support:** The research paper needs to draw on respected sources of information: books, journal articles, mainstream news outlets, government documents and official policy reports from international organizations. Plan on a minimum of six published books and/or journal articles.

**References:** At the end of your paper, please list ALL sources of information that you have used during your research. Please follow the format of the American Political Science Association Style Manual (available online). **In-text references:** When you present concrete information, please refer to the original source in parentheses. For published sources, indicate author's last name, year of publication, and page numbers (Keohane 2009, p. 24). Such reference should be provided after direct quotes (marked with quotation marks) and after specific factual information found elsewhere.

NO ENDNOTES PLEASE, just footnotes. References to Internet sources should be made in footnotes and include the website's name and exact Internet address. For instance: "Iran, Saudi Arabia Fight Proxy War in Syria," Deutsche Welle, Aug. 27, 2012. Available at: <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,16176531,00.html>

**Evaluation criteria**

Below is a sample of the evaluation sheet you will receive with your graded paper. Further information about the evaluation criteria will be given in class.

Prof. Rado Dimitrov

	<b>Research</b>	<b>Analysis and argumentation</b>	<b>Language and style</b>	<b>References</b>
Excellent				
Good				
Decent				
Lacking				

**MARK:**

COMMENTS:

**APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility**

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

**Essay course requirements**

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

**Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")**

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning.

Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

**Security and Confidentiality of Student Work** (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar* (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>))

"**Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams** - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

**Duplication of work**

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

**Grade adjustments**

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

**Academic Offences**

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>."

## Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS **MUST** BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

Students registered in Social Science should refer to <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/> <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp> for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

## Plagiarism

"Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

**Plagiarism Checking:** "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> )."

**Multiple-choice tests/exams:** "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

### **PLAGIARISM\***

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

**A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.**

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

**B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.**

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

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Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

**Accessibility at Western:** Please contact [poliscie@uwo.ca](mailto:poliscie@uwo.ca) if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

**Mental Health at Western:** If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.