

International Relations
OP Jindal University, May 2014
Instructor: Sarah Fisher
Teaching Assistant: Arpita Roy

Course Description and Objectives:

The course centers around major perspectives on international relations and decision making as applied through a variety of political simulations. These simulations require students to adopt a particular country's or leader's perspective and create solutions in conjunction with other students acting as distinct members of the international community. For instance, students participate in a simulation detailing the ongoing Egypt/Ethiopia dispute over the Nile river. After discussing and agreeing on compromises for this real world issue, students apply knowledge to the constitutional convention of a newly formed fictional country with a muddled historical past filled with civil conflict and ethnic divisions. The course culminates in a Model United Nations crisis committee centered around ongoing events between Ukraine and Russia. Through discussion, debates, and simulations students gain new theoretical perspectives on international affairs and applied these theories to real world problems.

Objectives:

- Understand and articulate major theories of international relations;
- Describe some of the problems facing the world community today and some possible solutions to these problems;
- Understand and articulate theories of decision making in everyday life, historical settings, and modern politics;
- Practice group interaction, facilitation, and relationship-building skills;
- Practice developing and writing a paper as well as delivering a presentation.

Assignments and Evaluation:

In-Class Debates & Simulations: Throughout the course, there will be numerous in-class debates devoted primarily to the debate/discussion of key issues facing international relations today. During these debates, and simulations the class will be broken up into several, equally-represented groups who will be charged with making the case for and defending the particular side of the debate they are assigned.

Model United Nations Debrief: This course will culminate in a Model United Nations crisis committee. The actual content of the crisis will be announced in class in accordance with current events. Each student will be assigned a country and be required to participate in a Model United Nations exercise. After the simulation, students will write an essay detailing how their assigned country acted during the simulation. Was the country behaving as a realist? A liberal or constructivist? This essay will

bring together the theoretical component of the course with hands-on analysis of difficult problems foreign policy leaders face during crisis scenarios.

WEEK ONE: Laying the Groundwork for Studying International Relations

Class 1: Monday, May 12th Introduction to International Relations (IR)

Morning: Introduction to the Course

Introduction to Political Science

Activity: cartoon analysis

What does politics “entail”?

Afternoon: States in International Relations

Mini-Lecture/Discussion: States in IR- Actors in International Relations

Activity: Top five problems for each of the types of states

Evening: Knowing Your Neighbor

- *Activity:* Interviewing classmates- How do you view the world? Why?
First experience (person, etc.) of something international

Class 2: Tuesday, May 13th Defining Terms and Theories of International Relations

Supplies: Tape, small pieces of paper

Morning: Power in International Relations

Lecture/Discussion: What is power? What makes a country powerful? Can we measure power?

Afternoon: Defining Terms

Actors- other actors in IR continued

Game- post it 20 questions

Class 3: Wednesday, May 14th: Theories of International Relations

Morning: Major Theories of IR- Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism

Lecture: Major Theories of IR

Realism and Liberalism

Discussion: How would x theory explain x example? Are you drawn to one theory or another?

Are there things that x theory has difficulty explaining?

Afternoon: Major Theories of IR continued Constructivism

Activity/Evaluation: International Relations Pocketbooks

Evening: Norm Cycles

Class 4: Thursday, May 15th: Theories of International Relations Continued

Morning: Theories of IR Synthesis

Activity: Three Corners- students were instructed to sort themselves into theoretical corners

Evaluation: Boardwork and Postermaking

Afternoon: Guest Speaker- Susan Lamb

Discussion: Peacekeeping, the United Nations, and the ICC (as per Professor Lamb's presentation).

Activity continued: Posters of the major theories of IR

Evening Activities: Post Colonialism- Arpita

Class 5: Friday, May 16th: Other Theories of International Relations Decision Making in International Relations

Morning: Other Theories of IR

Startup: Taboo

Mini-Lecture: Marxism, Communism, and Socialism (as per student request)

Afternoon: Activity: Quick skits- A _____ and a _____ are sitting next to each other on a train talking about _____.

Class 6: Saturday, May 17th: Model UN Day 1

Assign countries

Talk about Model UN

-time to research

-clarify why exactly they need to focus on

-individual check-in meetings with instructor

WEEK TWO: International Relations Today

Class 7: Monday, May 19th: Decision Making

Guest lecture- Dr. Sreeram Chaulia

Mini Lecture: What are we having for dinner? When are we going to war? Theories of Decision Making- Rational Choice & Prospect Theory

Activity: Prisoner's Dilemma Game

Afternoon: Monsters Under the Bed: Threat Perception and Threat Construction

Lecture: How do we perceive threats?

Analysis: Propaganda

Evening: Nile River Briefing

Class 8: Tuesday, May 20th: Interstate Conflict- Nile River Simulation

Morning: Nile Case Study (30 min.)

Presenting Map

Defining roles- Egypt, Ethiopia, international negotiators

Afternoon: Simulation

Evening: Simulation Continued (reach an agreement or an impasse)

Class 9: Wednesday, May 21st: Monsters Under the Bed- Threat Perception and Construction

Morning: Threat Perception

Lecture: How do we perceive threats?

Analysis: Propaganda

Afternoon: Constructing Threats

Discussion: Analogical Reasoning and Heuristics

Activities: Constructing Threats

Evening: Propaganda Analysis- Koney 2012

Class 10: Thursday, May 22nd: Constitutional Convention

Morning: Setting the Stage for the Constitutional Convention Simulation

Discussion: Constitution, Executive, and Legislative briefing

Afternoon: Legislative briefing and discussion

Evening Activities: Introduction to the Democratic Republic of Qarth

Class 11: Friday, May 23rd: Constitutional Convention

Morning: Convention Begins

Afternoon: Constitutional Convention Continued

Class 12: Saturday, May 24th: Model UN Research Time

Morning: (in computer lab)

-Individual meetings to discuss Model UN and weekly check in meeting with instructor

-continue researching given Model UN handout

WEEK THREE: Model United Nations and Conclusions

Class 13: Monday, May 26th:

Morning: Constitutional Convention Continued

Guest Speaker- Social Entrepreneurship & IR

Afternoon: Model United Nations Research

Evening: Constitutional Convention Continued

Class 14: Tuesday, May 27th: Model UN (Final Project)

Morning: (in moot court room) Model UN

Afternoon: Model UN Continued

Evening: Model UN Debrief

Class 15: Wednesday, May 28th: Model UN Debrief and Primary Source Analysis

Morning: Essay Prompt: From what theoretical perspective was your country acting in during the Model United Nations exercise yesterday? Why? What types of decision making were apparent throughout the day?

In addition: course evaluations

Afternoon: Primary Source Analysis: The Melian Dialogue

Evening: Academic Article Reading Circle

Class 16: Thursday, May 29th: Primary Source Analysis & Synthesis

Morning: Primary Source Analysis- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Afternoon: Unanswered Question Bonanza

Evening: Finish Up Academic Articles from yesterday- individual meetings with Sarah

Class 17: Friday, May 30th: Course Summary, Review, and Personal Evaluations

Morning: Course Wrap-up

Know, want, learn chart & discussion

Finish Academic Articles from previous night

Afternoon:

Clean room, pass out certificates, concluding thoughts.

Saturday, May 31st: Student Departure