

PS 235-401 World Politics
Spring 2005

Instructor: Mark Schroeder, M.A.
Class Times: Monday and Wednesday 6:00 pm – 7:15 pm
Location: CB 238 (White Hall Classroom Building)
Office: #1602 Patterson Office Tower
Telephone: 859-257-4436
E-mail: maschr2@uky.edu
Web: <http://www.uky.edu/~maschr2>
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm and by appointment

Required Texts:

Karen Mingst, Essentials of International Relations, Third Edition (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004).

Gregory M. Scott, Randall J., Jones, Jr., Louis S. Furmanski: 21 Debated Issues in World Politics, Second Edition, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004).

Course Overview

Understanding world politics presents opportunities and challenges that confront a 'Washington Consensus' approach for scholars and policy makers. This course explains the historical, political, social, and economic dynamics that drive the policies of different countries and regions of the world. Students will gain familiarity with theories of international relations, and will be introduced to the concerns and policies of different nation states and regions of the world. You will learn to evaluate the policies of and opinions held by individual and collective Western nation states towards other states and regions of the world.

Throughout the course you will be expected to contribute with news from the rest of the world by reading the print or on-line versions of the Wall Street Journal, The Economist, the New York Times, and other similar newspapers. Following the countries and regions of the world by reading these daily journals will give you considerable information on the interactions and international relations between nation states in the world.

Course Assignments and Grading:

25% Midterm Research Paper
20% Midterm Exam
20% Group project
25% Final Exam
10% Participation via quizzes, attendance, other short assignments

Late assignments, quizzes, research papers, projects, etc. will not be accepted later than seven calendar days following their due date. A penalty of one third of a letter grade per calendar day will be applied towards any late assignment. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and if found, for example, by “googling” your research paper, will result in a minimum of a failed grade; please refer to official University of Kentucky regulations regarding plagiarism.

Midterm Research Paper:

This is your opportunity to research how a foreign country relates to the world. You are to explain what drives the international relations policies of your selected country. How does your selected country view its position (for example: pro-Western, socialist, Islamist, neutral) in the world? How does your country understand the theories of and participate in international relations? What are the political, cultural, economic and historical values that have contributed to its current international relations position? Your purpose is not to determine whose “side” your country is on but to understand and explain why your country has its particular international relations position. More specifically: you are building a case to explain why your selected country takes the position in international relations it does on particular issues. You are not just stating what those positions are.

Begin by selecting a country that interests you. Perhaps it is one that you have traveled or would like to travel to. Since not all countries are concerned about all international issues, you will need to determine what world issues your country cares about. You will be providing these positions later in your paper. It is your job to present the motive of your selected country for taking those positions from their perspective. You are presenting the “why” of the case such that if you present your case well, it will seem obvious, given the characteristics of your selected country, that they would take the positions they have. You may find yourself disagreeing with the actions and positions of the country you are studying, but this is not a critique of what is right or wrong from your perspective, so you want to be careful to keep such commentary out of your paper. You are only interested in providing the reasons your selected country has for doing what they do, whether you agree with them or not.

This paper takes planning to do it effectively, and it will be well worth taking the time to outline your arguments before writing. I suggest that you consider at least several academic sources before writing. Be careful with your sources: Wikipedia, newspaper stories and country websites, while helpful for introductory purposes, don’t provide the substantive analytical content that your paper requires.

The paper must be 6-8 pages long, 12-point font, typewritten and double-spaced, and must include citations to all references used. E-mailed copies of your paper will not be accepted.

Group project:

You are to form groups of five people and select from a list of actionable topics that I will distribute in class. You are to research this topic, and, acting as diplomatic delegates of your selected nation to the United Nations, make a 15 minute presentation of this topic to the class. The class in turn will act as members of the United Nations Security Council. You are to convince the class that your topic requires the support of, intervention by, and/or a resolution from the Security Council, whichever is appropriate to your topic. Your presentation is worth 50% of the group project grade.

Following your presentation you are to submit to me an eight page, type-written and double-spaced paper outlining your country's case to the United Nations Security Council. Your paper is worth 30% of the group project grade. Attached on a separate page to your group paper, include a letter grade recommendation according to each member's participation.

Following each presentation, each student is required to submit to me a written evaluation of the presentation followed by a letter grade. This evaluation should include three aspects: the presenter's command of speech and delivery, the presenter's knowledge of the topic, and the presenter's ability to convince. The student evaluation is worth 20% of the group project grade.

Class Schedule:

Week 1 (January 12): Introduction to World Politics

Monday January 17: M.L. King Day—no classes

Week 2 (January 19): Introduction to World Politics

Readings: Mingst Ch. 1

Week 3 (January 24-26): History of World Politics

Readings: Mingst Ch .2

Week 4: (January 21-February 2): Theories of International Relations

Readings: Mingst Ch. 3, 21 Debated pp. 1-47

Week 5 (February 7-9): Understanding the International System

Readings: Mingst Ch. 4; 21 Debated pp. 48-64

Week 6 (February 14-16): The State and theories of International Relations

Readings: Mingst Ch. 5; 21 Debated pp. 65-81

Week 7 (February 21-23): The Individual and theories of International Relations

Readings: Mingst Ch. 6; 21 Debated pp. 152-159

Midterm Research Paper due at beginning of class on Wednesday Feb. 23rd

Week 8 (February 28-March 2): Non-State Actors in International Relations

Readings: Mingst Ch. 7; 21 Debated pp. 140-151

Monday March 7: Midterm Exam

Week 9 (March 9): The Politics of War

Readings: Mingst Ch. 8; 21 Debated pp. 160-176, 200-247

Week of March 14-16: Spring Break—no classes

Week 10 (March 21-23): International Political Economics

Readings: Mingst Ch. 9; 21 Debated pp. 82-103, 248-293

Week 11 (March 28-30): Globalization and the Environment

Readings: Mingst pp. 280-295; 21 Debated pp. 294-319

Week 12 (April 4-6): Globalization and Health, HIV/AIDS

Readings: Mingst pp. 274-279; 21 Debated pp. 320-328

Week 13 (April 11-13): Globalization and Human Rights

Readings: Mingst pp. 296-314; 21 Debated pp. 177-199

Week 14 (April 18-20): Group project presentations

Week 15 (April 25-27): Dead week, Review

Monday May 2: Final Exam from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm in CB 238