

POLS 171

Introduction to Comparative & International Politics

Instructor:	Christine Sylvester SCHU 14D Christine.sylvester@oneonta.edu (607) 436-3055 Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 11AM-12PM, or by appointment	Class:	Tues. & Thurs. 1:00-2:15PM SCHU 303 SUNY Oneonta Fall 2019 3 s.h.
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Course Description

This course examines the innerworkings of political systems around the world to provide a grounding in key components to international relations. We will explore topics including autocracies, democracies, supra-national organization, international organizations, international law, and deterrence before focusing within countries to explore the impact of variation in political institutions can have on states. With the aim of developing the tools needed to critically evaluate arguments about the political world, this course begins by introducing the tools commonly employed by political scientists. We then progress to delve deeply into four key challenges in today's world: justice, political violence, wealth & poverty, and sustainability.

We will be seeking answers to questions like - Why do some people enjoy safety, affluence, and a clean environment while others struggle against marginalization and oppression? What are the main actors tasked with addressing these challenges, and what solutions do they propose? The course utilizes case studies and problem-solving exercises to emphasize pragmatic global engagement. By the conclusion of this course students should: 1) be able to analyze and critique arguments about politics, 2) be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of relevant current events, historic background, and institutions of one non-Western state, 3) be able to articulate the key challenges faced by global justice, political violence, wealth & poverty, and sustainability, and 4) be able to present reasonable and feasible policy solutions to these key challenges.

Course Requirements

This course is grounded in core reading materials. All students are expected to come to class each week having completed all the assigned readings. Final grades for the course will be tabulated from a distribution of the following components:

Attendance & Participation (30%): You will be expected to have completed all reading assignments each week and to actively join in class discussions of them. Attendance is mandatory. Participation cannot be made up, if you don't show up or arrive late your participation for that day will be zero. Mere attendance (showing up but not contributing to discussion) is not enough. You will be graded on the depth and thoughtfulness of your comments not the volume. The two best rules to consider in discussions are "*Will this comment further substantive and supportive discussion amongst my classmates?*" and "*Does this comment provide insight into this or prior week's material?*" At the end of each class, if you think you have sufficiently contributed to the class, hand your instructor a piece of paper with your name, the date, and a detailed note on how you believe you contributed that day. Your instructor will either accept it or decline it. If you have submitted 18 of these by the end of the

semester, you get full participation credit. Less than 18 will result in partial credit. The semester will have 20 sessions where slips will be collected so students should keep track of how many they have done so far.

Weekly Assignments and Quizzes (10%): Throughout the course students will complete short assignments or quizzes that relate to the topic of the week. Students will have several quizzes and short written assignments over the course of the semester, either during class or as homework. The quizzes will not be announced in advance and will likely ask students to briefly explain key terms or concepts from the readings. Written assignments will be either announced in class or on Blackboard and must be submitted at the beginning of class. Unless otherwise specified, written assignments should be double-spaced and stapled. They must also use 12-point Times New Roman font, normal (one-inch) margins, and employ a proper method of citation (both in-text and bibliography). Failure to abide by these formatting requirements will result in a grade deduction (for example, an assignment receiving an A will be reduced to an A- etc.). Failure to employ a proper method of citation may be construed as plagiarism and result in disciplinary action. Students will be required to submit for all assignments a hard copy in class. No assignments will be accepted after class has begun or via email. At the end of the semester, the lowest score will be dropped.

Media Journals (20%): Throughout the course students will keep a media journal. Each entry entails keeping abreast of current affairs and world politics for at least one of the following countries by identifying and reading a news article on politics (broadly defined) and drafting a short summary and commentary on it. The countries students may choose from include: the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Brazil, Colombia, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Nigeria, Indonesia, Israel, Mexico, Turkey, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt. Each selected article should come from a reputable news source (see below) and be recent, within the last month. Each journal entry should run at least a couple of paragraphs and should include: a very brief description of what the story is about before diving in to offer some analysis or commentary on its significance. I will look favorable on entries which relate to concepts we have covered in class, the degree to which it reflects change or continuity, or its overall significance. As long as you meet the assignment requirements for journal entries you will get B. Higher levels of engagement and analysis will increase your grade. Students will complete a total of six journal entries, with two submitted each month (September, October, and November). It is at the student's discretion which weeks within each month they wish to submit their entries, but only two per month will be graded. Entries should be submitted at the start of class. Entries submitted through any other format will not receive credit. Entries should be formatted using the course guidelines. Failure to abide by these formatting requirements will result in a grade deduction (for example, an assignment receiving an A will be reduced to an A- etc.). The lowest entry grade will be dropped.

Three times during the term students will present a brief elevator talk for one of the articles they previously chose to write about. These presentations will take place in class on Oct 3rd, Oct 31st, and Nov 26th and cannot be made up, please plan accordingly. The elevator talks are designed to prepare each student to represent a policy issue or event. Being able to articulate a point and persuade your audience orally is just as important as being able to do so with your writing. Imagine you are a staffer for a member of congress and one morning on your way into work you find yourself alone in an elevator with the Congressperson. You have 120 seconds to tell them (i.e. myself and your classmates) about the situation in your country of study and why it is the most important issue they will address that day. No notes, computers, smartphones, or any other aid besides your memory. You will be graded on the quality of your presentation as well as the substance and persuasiveness of your argument.

Reliable In-depth News Sources:

- The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/>)
- The Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>)
- The Economist (<https://www.economist.com/>)
- The Wall Street Journal (<https://www.wsj.com/>)
- Washington Post (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/>)
- Time (www.time.com)
- BBC News (<https://www.bbc.com/news>)
- Al Jazeera (<https://www.aljazeera.com>)

Midterm Exam (10%): The mid-term examination will be a non-traditional format instead focusing on the development of practical skills regularly utilized in the professional policy-making world. Further details on the requirements and format of this examination will be provided during the semester.

Policy Memos (20%) and Final Briefing (10%): Students will draft four briefing memos, one for each of our key challenges. The memos should be both descriptive and analytical, meaning the best papers will provide a brief summary of the key challenge using a single case (the case must be different than the one used in class) and then outline reasonable and feasible policy proposal(s) to combat this challenge. Policy memos should be between 3-5 pages in length and following the formatting and citation guidelines for the course. Students will submit a hard copy of their paper in class. More detailed instructions on memo requirements will be discussed throughout the semester. Remember when drafting these memos, you are the policy expert, provide essential background to familiarize your reader with the topic and then lobby them on why your policy proposal(s) are the strongest.

Hard copies of briefing memos are due at the start of class on October 8th, 22nd, November 7th and 21st. Late papers will be penalized by one grade each calendar day they are late including those submitted after class has begun (for example, a paper receiving an A that is submitted 1 day late will receive an A-, 2 days late will receive a B+, etc.).

On December 3rd and 5th students will be responsible for presenting one of their briefing memos as an elevator talk. To complete this task students should select the global challenge they feel is most critical then adapt their briefing memo into a persuasive elevator talk. During the elevator talk each student will be given a maximum of five minutes to brief the class. These briefings should take the form of a slightly longer elevator talk and will be described in more detail throughout the term.

A Note on Missed Presentations. Presentations missed without a valid and prearranged excuse cannot be made up, effectively resulting in a zero. Missing presentation day will greatly reduce your chances of receiving a passing grade for the semester. Please plan accordingly.

Grading Scale: Your semester grade will be computed on a 100-point scale as follows: 95-100 = A; 91-94 = A-; 88-90 = B+; 84-87 = B; 81-83 = B-; 78-80 = C+; 74-77 = C; 71-73 = C-; 65-70 = D; 0-64 = F. You will receive a letter grade on your policy memo which corresponds to numeric grades as follows: A = 100; A- = 94; B+ = 89; B = 85; B- = 82; C+ = 79; C = 75; C- = 72; D = 67; F = 50. You will receive a numeric grade on participation, quizzes, assignments, and presentations.

Textbook. This course will draw upon one textbook (which is on sale in the Red Dragon Bookstore) and a selection of shorter readings.

- Scott Straus and Barry Driscoll. 2019. *International Studies: Global Forces, Interactions, and Tensions*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage/CQ Press. (henceforth "SD")

General Course Policies and Additional Resources

Announcements. Course announcements will be posted to the Blackboard page. Each student should ensure they have access to Blackboard and check it regularly for updates.

Attendance and comportment. Arriving after class has commenced is disruptive to both the instructor and other students, especially in such a small class space, please be mindful of this. Further, this class is an encouraging and supportive environment and as such students should refrain from disruptive behavior such as side conversations, whispering, or offensive remarks. I reserve the right to ask students to leave if they are disruptive.

Rules governing late submission. It is your responsibility to ensure that I receive your assignments on time. Late assignment grades will be reduced for each 24-hours the assignment is late. The date of exams and presentations is outlined in this syllabus and owing to term time limitations cannot be rescheduled.

Grade appeals must be submitted in writing. If you have a concern regarding your grade on an assignment you may write a one-page letter explaining your specific concerns and request your assignment be regraded. This letter should be submitted to me in hard-copy along with the original graded assignment within one week of the assignment having been returned to the class or instructor assignment comments being posted online. Once I have reviewed and considered your request I will respond in writing. The revised grade may be higher, lower, or the same as your original grade. Under no circumstances will I discuss appeals to your grade with you in person.

Electronic policy. Cell phone use in class is disruptive and discourteous to others, as such, cell phones should be silenced and stored so they are not visible. Students using their cell phones during class will be asked to leave and will be marked as absent for that day. Laptops will be used to aid collaborative work and may only be used when you have been instructed. Students using laptops or tablets outside of these designated times or for purposes other than the task at hand will be asked to leave and marked as absent for that day. No other electronic devices may be used in the classroom and class sessions may not be recorded.

Extreme Content. Material in this course may at times cover subject matter of a violent nature. These materials are used to meet clear course objectives and I will do my best to warn students prior to upsetting material.

Disability-Related Equal Access Accommodations. "All individuals who are diagnosed with a disability are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As such, you may be entitled to certain accommodations within this class. If you are diagnosed with a disability, please make an appointment to meet with Accessibility Resources, 133 Milne Library, ext. 2137. All students with the necessary supporting documentation will be provided appropriate accommodations as determined by the Accessibility Resources Office. It is your responsibility to contact Accessibility Resources and concurrently supply me with your accommodation plan, which will inform me exactly what accommodations you are entitled to. You will only receive accommodations once you provide me with an Accessibility Resources accommodation plan. Any previously recorded grades will not be changed."

Emergency Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place Procedures. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from Schumacher 303, please evacuate to the IRC Lobby so that College officials can account for you. All students are encouraged to review the College's Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Shelter-in-Place Procedures at the following link:

(<http://www.oneonta.edu/security/documents/EmergencyEvacuationProcedures.pdf>). All students are

also encouraged to register for NY Alert at <http://www.oneonta.edu/security> for immediate notification of campus emergencies on or near the campus.

Academic Integrity. The College provides explicit guidelines in the SUNY College of Oneonta's Student Code of Conduct (<https://suny.oneonta.edu/policy-library/policies/code-student-conduct#article2>). I expect the work you submit for grading to be yours and yours alone. Not acknowledging another's work with proper references, taking credit for someone else's work, letting your work appear in another student's paper, or fabricating "results" are grounds for failing the assignment and/or the course in addition to any penalty imposed by the college. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask me. You may also find the library's tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and integrating sources useful to review

(http://lgapi.libapps.com/widgets.php?config_id=1434381445673&enable_navigation=1&guide_id=300602&output_format=1&page_id=0&site_id=376&widget_embed_type=2&widget_type=9).

Resources for Students in Distress. If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, I encourage you to seek support. I am available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in my class. However, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis may require additional professional support. The College provides a variety of support resources:

Health & Wellness Center: (607) 436-3573
College Police: On campus emergency, 911
Counseling Center: (607) 436-3368
24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (844) 732-6228
Interpersonal Violence Prevention: (607) 436-3540
Academic Advisement: (607) 436-3390

Student Learning Center. SLC offers free tutoring for undergraduate students. All SLC tutoring appointments must be scheduled online at <https://suny.oneonta.edu/student-learning-center/tutoring>. If you have any questions about SLC, call 607-436-3010, email slc@oneonta.edu, or visit their website.

Course Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule of topics, readings, assignments, and presentations that will be covered in this course. I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule, including dates, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of these changes. Date changes will be announced well in advance during class. **All readings are required.**

27 August – Introductions & Course Requirements

29 August – What started it all?: International Relations & Global Politics

3 September – The Global Age

Readings: SD Chapter 1

Assignment: Answer Question #4 (page 48) in typed maximum one paragraph

5 September – The State

Readings: SD Chapter 2

Assignment: Answer Question #1 (page 76) in typed maximum one paragraph

10 September – International Organizations

Readings: SD Chapter 3

Assignment: Answer Question #1 (page 101) in typed maximum one paragraph

12 September – Civil Society: Agents of Change

Readings: SD Chapter 4

17 September – Culture, Nationalism, and Identity

Readings: SD Chapter 5

Assignment: Answer Question #3 (page 149) in typed maximum one paragraph

19 September – Global Capitalism

Readings: SD Chapter 6

Assignment: Answer Question #4 (page 178) in typed maximum one paragraph

24 September – Challenge #1 Justice: Representation

Readings: SD Chapter 7

Assignment: Answer Questions #1 & #2 (page 206) in typed maximum one paragraph each

26 September – Challenge #1 Justice: Human Rights

Readings: SD Chapter 8

Assignment: Answer Question #4 (page 231) in typed maximum two paragraphs

1 October – Midterm

3 October – Media Journal Elevator Talks (No assigned reading)

8 October – Challenge #1 Justice: Northern Ireland

Readings:

- John Campbell. 2019. "Brexit: What is the Irish border backstop?" *BBC News*
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-politics-44615404>
- "Why the Brexit Backstop is so important for Northern Ireland and Britain." *DW News*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF5IY1xDLc>
- "The Northern Ireland backstop." *Institute for Government*
<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/northern-ireland-backstop>

Assignment: Policy Memo #1 Due

10 October – Challenge #2 Wealth & Poverty: Development

Readings: SD Chapter 9

Assignment: Answer Question #2 (page 264) in typed maximum two paragraphs

15 October – NO CLASS (College closed)

17 October – Challenge #2 Wealth & Poverty: Migration

Readings: SD Chapter 11

Assignment: Answer Question #1 & #3 (page 328) in typed maximum one paragraph each

22 October – Challenge #2 Wealth & Poverty: Rohingya Refugees

Readings:

- Meghan Prichard. “Rohingya refugee crisis: Quick facts.” *Mercy Corps* <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/bangladesh/rohingya-refugee-crisis-quick-facts>
- Eleanor Albert & Andrew Chatzky. 2018. “The Rohingya Crisis.” *Council on Foreign Relations* <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis>
- Murray Hiebert. 2018. “Whither U.S. Myanmar Policy after the Rohingya Crisis?” *CSIS* <https://www.csis.org/analysis/whither-us-myanmar-policy-after-rohingya-crisis>
- “Bangladesh 'to be tougher' on Rohingya refugees.” 2019. *BBC News* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49460386>

Assignment: Policy Memo #2 Due

24 October – Challenge #3 Political Violence: Global Security Efforts

Readings: SD Chapter 10

Assignment: Answer Question #2 (page 296) in typed maximum one page

29 October – Challenge #3 Political Violence: Terrorism

Readings:

- Meagan Smith & Sean Zeigler. 2017. “Terrorism before and after 9/11 – a more dangerous world?” *Research & Politics* <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2053168017739757>
- Anthony Cordesman. 2017. “Global Trends in Terrorism: 1970-2016 Executive Summary.” *CSIS* https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/170828_exec_summary_0.pdf?o8kn_MPI_a.l28khE4CdmsLpFzygXaSI

31 October – Media Journal Elevator Talks (No assigned reading)

5 November – Challenge #3 Political Violence: Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Readings:

- “History of Nuclear Weapons” Read 1945-1993 portions <https://www.ctbto.org/the-treaty/>
- George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger, and Sam Nunn. “Toward a World without Nuclear Weapons: The groundbreaking *Wall Street Journal* op-ed series.” *Nuclear Threat Initiative*. https://media.nti.org/pdfs/NSP_op-eds_final_.pdf

7 November – Challenge #3 Political Violence: Boko Haram

Readings:

- Claire Felter. 2018. “Nigeria’s Battle with Boko Haram.” *Council on Foreign Relations* <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/nigerias-battle-boko-haram>

- Video – “Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement: A discussion with the author, Dr. Alexander Thurston.” CSIS <https://www.csis.org/events/boko-haram-history-african-jihadist-movement>

Assignment: Policy Memo #3 Due

12 November – Challenge #4 Sustainability & Health: Global Environment

Readings: SD Chapter 13

Assignment: Answer Question #2 & #3 (page 390) in typed maximum one page each

14 November – Challenge #4 Sustainability & Health: Food Security

Readings: SD Chapter 14

Assignment: Answer Question #5 (page 417) in typed maximum one page

19 November – Challenge #4 Sustainability & Health: Global Health

Readings: SD Chapter 12

Assignment: Answer Question #1 (page 361) in typed maximum one paragraph

21 November – Challenge #4 Sustainability & Health: South Sudan

Readings:

- Richard Downie. “South Sudan: The painful rise and rapid decline of the world’s newest nation.” CSIS https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/190115_SouthSudan_IndependenceMovements.pdf
- USAID. “Food Assistance Fact Sheet – South Sudan.” <https://www.usaid.gov/south-sudan/food-assistance>
- World Food Programme. “WFP South Sudan Country Brief.” https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000107489/download/?_ga=2.245759236.1270910256.1566875164-1740381221.1566875164

Assignment: Policy Memo #4 Due

26 November – Media Journal Elevator Talks (No assigned reading)

28 November – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

3 December – Policy Briefs “Elevator Talks” Day 1 (No assigned reading)

5 December – Policy Briefs “Elevator Talks” Day 2 (No assigned reading)