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**POS 102 Comparative and International Politics (Class No. 6490)**  
Class meets: Tu, Th, 11:45-1:05 LC018 (sections on Fridays)  
Uptown office hours: Tu 2-4p.m.  
Books: textbooks at Mary Jane Books and campus bookstore; other texts at MJB only  
Midterm: Tuesday March 24  
Final exam (in class): check the registrar's final exam schedule. Looks like Friday May 8th 10:30 to 12:30  
(exam week is Fri May 8 through Fri May 15)

The purpose of this class is to introduce basic principles of international relations and comparative politics for continued study within the “global” component of political science. The class is intended to foster systematic analytic thinking about major practical and theoretical problems in international relations.

The intellectual objectives of the class may therefore be stated:

1. An introduction to realism, liberal internationalism, radical political economy, and constructivism as core concepts in international relations; and further introduction to such concepts as development, democracy, authoritarianism, welfare state policies, political parties and ethnic and class conflict as components of the study of comparative and regional politics.

The academic objectives include:

2. In class writing assignments showing analytic skills, oral participation and group teamwork, satisfactory academic mastery of the topics in #1.

3. The assignments: a midterm exam, final exam, and three in-section quizzes of twenty minutes’ duration; watching the required movie (*Fail Safe*, 1964); participation in seminars and in lecture give-and-take.

4. A simulation of the Versailles peace conference (1919) which will require oral skills, knowledge of materials, and the ability to play the role of your assigned group.

The format of the class will usually be: Tuesdays and Thursdays, a lecture presentation on the assigned reading. Thursdays will have time reserved for questions.

Assigned materials for this class include a variety of on-line and in print materials. Links to most on-line materials are in the syllabus.  
Texts include materials relevant to
assessing “Democratic Peace” concepts and critiques of the same; as all of the materials are even technical aspects of nuclear war are relevant to the thesis that democracy promotes peace. Some works are classics in International Relations (Keynes, *Economic Consequences of the Peace*; Kant, *Perpetual Peace*) and others demonstrate core theses in Comparative Politics (Gerschenkron, *Bread and Democracy in Germany*). Two movies are assigned, including the 1964 version of *Fail Safe*.

4. Students who complete this class will have (a) learned basic vocabulary and concepts necessary to understanding international relations and comparative politics; (b) an introduction to basic college level in-class writing requirements; (c) conceptual linkage of theory to case studies as represented by a fictional international crisis leading to nuclear war, and real historical cases.

**Summary of work required:**

1. A midterm exam.
2. A final exam.
3. Three in-section twenty minute quizzes to be scheduled by your TA’s.
4. Five or more ungraded pop quizzes of five to ten minutes that will be reviewed by the TA’s to see how students are doing with reading comprehension and keeping up.

**Grading:** Nominally 35% for the final, and 20% for the midterm, and 45% for the three quizzes. TA’s or instructor may adjust final grades up or down by as much as 20% based on participation and attendance.

**Exam format:** questions will be handed out in advance, but exams must be written in class. Make-up exams require documented medical excuses (which includes the campus counseling center). Normally make-up exams and section quizzes will be oral examinations of up to half an hour’s duration with the TA or the instructor.

**Exam Content:** The exams will be constructed around the Gen Ed “social science” and “challenges of the 21st century” objectives as listed in an appendix to this syllabus, with specific content adopted from the course.

**Special needs students:** Must make their situation known and will be accommodated per university policy: “The University is obligated to make reasonable accommodation only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified disabled student,” and, such students must “identify themselves as needing accommodation in a timely fashion.” That means, in plain English: *at the beginning of the semester.*

**Summary of Due Dates and Things You Have to Do:**

FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED date is announced by the university here. As of this writing it is May 13th 10:30 to 12:30:

[registrar's exam date postings](#)
Midterm: Tuesday March 24
Pop quizzes: cannot be scheduled because they are pop. There are up to five.
In-section 20 minute quizzes: Three of them, they will be scheduled by TA’s.
Week-by-week summary

Week 1 General Concepts in International Relations Theory
Thursday January 22

Watch Movie: Fail-Safe (1964).

Link:

http://tinyurl.com/fail-safe-2012

or

http://media.albany.edu:8080/ramgen/cellar/political_science/nowell/fail_safe2.rm

The link is maintained by ITLAL and should play automatically. You may need to download Realplayer which exists in windows and mac versions: paste the link into the realplayer browser. Please watch the movie through on your own time; it will be shown again in class with pauses for discussion.

Discussion: Is the “balance of power” an inevitable feature of the international system? Does it make the world safer?


Week 2 Screening of Fail-Safe.

Tuesday January 27
Thursday January 29

Readings:


Available: JSTOR through U Albany on-line library.

Discuss: Nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, rogue states, terrorist groups, etc.

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Week 3 Contending Theoretical Perspectives, and the IR “system”; levels of analysis or “images”
Tuesday 3 February
Thursday 5 February

Mingst Chapter 3, 4

Discussion: What sorts of theories describe the international system? Why are there different theories? How do we test hypotheses?

Realism? “The Peloponnesian War, which sealed the destruction of Hellenism, had so trivial an origin that no one has ever been able to determine what it was….The simple truth is that any pretext was good enough to set the Greeks to destroying one another….The foolish strategy of Pericles, which dedicated Athens to a sterile defensive, led the city to its ruin—to the misfortune both of the conquered and the conquerors….The truth is that these men, who had so much reason to close their ranks and to unite in consecrating themselves to the common task of liberating human intelligence, prized more than anything else the pleasure of mutual massacre. In a word, the Greeks, though so finely intellectual, had no sentiment of a common fatherland.”

(Clemenceau, Demosthenes, 1926, pp. 22-23)

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Week 4 The State and Foreign Policy: Liberal theory

Tuesday February 10
Thursday February 12

Mingst, Chapters 5, 9

Kant, Perpetual Peace, especially the printed page numbers pp. 106 through 142 in this edition (“First Section” and “Second Section”)

Discussion: What is the state? How do we theorize it?

Magna Carta 1215: “If we [=the king], or in our absence abroad the chief justice, make no redress within forty days, reckoning from the day on which the offence was declared to us or to him, the four barons shall refer the matter to the rest of the twenty-five barons, who may distrain upon and assail us in every way possible, with the support of the whole community of the land, by seizing our castles, lands, possessions, or anything else saving only our own person and those of the queen and our children, until they have secured such redress as they have determined upon. Having secured the redress, they may then resume their normal obedience to us.”
Week 5  More on the State….Marxist theory

Tuesday, February 17
Thursday, February 19  HOLIDAY

Reading: Bukharin, Nicholai *Imperialism and World Economy*, pp. 17 to 109  (starting with Part I: World economy and the process of internationalization of capital, through to and including chapter titled “World economy and the national state”).  

Bukharin  
*Imperialism and World Economy*

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Week 6  Marxist Theory of Imperialism

Tuesday February 24
Thursday February 26

Bukharin, Nicholai *Imperialism and World Economy*, pp. 110 to 170  (starting with Part III: Imperialism as the Reproduction of Capitalist Competition on a Larger Scale, through to the end).  

Bukharin  
*Imperialism and World Economy*

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Case study: WWI peace settlement & liberal internationalism  (Keynes)

Week 7

Tuesday 3 March
Thursday 5 March

*keynes economic consequences of the peace*  (Internet): hard copies ordered at Mary Jane Books.

Discuss:  “The projects and politics of militarism and imperialism, of racial and cultural rivalries, of monopolies, restrictions, and exclusion, which were to play the serpent to this paradise, were little more than the amusements of his daily newspaper, and appeared to exercise almost no influence at all on the ordinary course of social and economic life, the internationalization of which was nearly complete in practice.”  (Keynes p. 12)

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Week 8  More Keynes and economic consequences of the peace

Tuesday March 10
Thursday March 12 Human Rights
Liberal Internationalism (continued)  WWI peace settlement as the triumph of realism over liberal internationalist path

Reading: *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, pp. 2nd half (pp. 113 to end) Discuss: “A general bonfire is so great a necessity that unless we can make of it an orderly and good-tempered affair in which no serious injustice is done to any one, it will, when it comes at last, grow into a conflagration that may destroy much else as well. As regards internal debt, I am one of those who believe that a capital levy for the extinction of debt is an absolute prerequisite of sound finance in every one of the European belligerent countries. But the continuance on a huge scale of indebtedness between Governments has special dangers of its own.” (p. 280)

Reading: Finish Keynes, Wilson’s *Fourteen Points for Peace*, *Star Trek’s Prime Directive*, the Valladolid debate

Discuss: Fourteen points for peace, self-determination, human rights, women’s rights, etc.

Week 9 NO CLASS

Tuesday March 17 NO CLASS
Thursday March 19 NO CLASS

Week 10  Gerschenkron – a comparative political approach, part I.

Reading: Gerschenkron, pp. 17-112

Tuesday March 24 MIDTERM
Thursday March 26

Week 11  Gerschenkron – a comparative political approach, part II.

Gerschenkron, pp. 113-224

Tuesday 31 March
Thursday 2 April
NO FRIDAY SECTIONS THIS WEEK (April 3rd)
Week 12 Causes of War
Mingst Chapter 2, 8
Tuesday April 7
Thursday April 9

Week 13 Movie: *Black and White in Color* (if available)
Tuesday April 14
Thursday April 16
Reading: Background materials on WWI and Treaty of Versailles

Week 14 Simulation: Treaty of Versailles
Tuesday April 21
Thursday April 23
Reading: Background materials on WWI and Treaty of Versailles

Week 15 Simulation: Treaty of Versailles
Tuesday April 28
Thursday April 30 (wrap up and discussion)
Reading: Background materials on WWI and Treaty of Versailles

Week 16
Tuesday May 5 LAST DAY OF CLASS. Discussion of exam.

FINAL EXAM: Friday May 8th 10:30-12:30 (as posted in January, double check registrar’s times here: [final exam schedule](#). Times often change for inexplicable reasons)
Course Readings


Ravenal, Earl C. “Doing Nothing,” Foreign Policy No. 39 (Summer, 1980), pp. 28-39

This course is currently approved for two Gen Ed Requirements:

Social Sciences Gen Ed Requirement

Social Sciences: Approved courses provide theory and instruction on the role of institutions, groups and individuals in society. The focus of these courses is on the interaction of social, economic, political, geographic, linguistic, religious, and/or cultural factors, with emphasis on the ways humans understand the complex nature of their existence. Courses include discussion of skills and practices used by the social sciences: data collection, hypothesis development, employment of mathematical analysis, and critical evaluation of evidence. Opportunities to experience social science methods in the field may be provided.

Approved courses generally fall into one of three categories:

1. introductions to the various disciplines of the social sciences
2. introductions to disciplinary subfields, designed for majors, non-majors, or both
3. courses open to majors and non-majors on broad topics that are addressed by one or more social scientific disciplines

Challenges for the 21st Century:

This category is a new requirement, specific to UAlbany. At least one course in this category will be required for all students matriculating in Fall 2013 and thereafter. Since it is a “local” requirement, even students who have completed all their general education courses at another SUNY college/university, or have completed their A.A. or A.S. at another SUNY campus, must complete 3 credits in this local UAlbany category.

Approved courses in the category of Challenges for the 21st Century address a variety of issues focusing on challenges and opportunities in such areas as cultural diversity and pluralism, science and technology, social interaction, ethics, global citizenship, and others, and may include interdisciplinary approaches. Courses in this category will be expected to address the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of challenges that lie ahead as students move into the world beyond the University at Albany.