Gregory P. Nowell
Humanities B16 (basement) and Richardson (downtown)
greg.nowell@hotmail.com; 442-5267

**POS 102X Comparative and International Politics (Class No. 6490)**

Class meets: Tu, Th, 11:45-1:05 LC07 (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: Thursday March 24
Papers due: Friday March 4th
Final exam (in class): check the registrar's [final exam schedule.](#) Looks like Friday May 13th 8 to 10 a.m.
(exam week is Fri May 6 through Fri May 13)

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. 25%
2. A final exam. 25%
3. Three in-section twenty minute quizzes to be scheduled by your TA’s. 25%
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.
5. A research and writing component to satisfy the Information Literacy Gen Ed requirement. 25%.
6. Two excel spreadsheet exercise. 5% bonus points.

**Grading:** TA’s or instructor may adjust final grades up or down by as much as 20% based on participation and attendance.

**De minimis requirement:** If any one of the midterm, final, or research paper is not completed the class grade will automatically be a fail. This means you can’t expect to miss one of these assignments and hope to get a C or D based on your other grades. If you do not complete the other items they will be averaged into your overall grade as zero values (fails).

**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. registrar's exam date postings As of this writing it is May 13th 10:30 to 12:30. (It has been known to change.)

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.

Participation in the simulation.

A research paper of approximately 8 double spaced pages in length, about 2,000 words, with complete citations and footnotes.

Research paper. 20% of grade


Task Two.

Find 5 articles on nuclear war and/or nuclear weapons on JSTOR and print out the citation exactly as you see it on the web site. Screen grabs are preferred, but you may also use the email utility (citations will be emailed to you).
Find 5 articles or books on nuclear war on WORLDCAT. Screen grabs are preferred.
Find 5 articles related to nuclear weapons on the New York Times web site that were published between 1983 and 1985 on nuclear weapons and the Soviet threat. You may also use the Washington Post. Get screen grabs of the articles.

Staple these materials together, organized by source, put your name on them, and turn them in to your T.A.

Task Three.

http://libguides.library.albany.edu/content.php?pid=151374&sid=1284869 Go to the link, look at lower left, find Proquest. Search the database for congressional hearings on nuclear weapons in the period 1980-1985. Choose a hearing and go to the library and get a copy of at least the first page of your hearing.

Task Four. Assemble a bibliography of all the materials above. Find and include a source for the Youtube video of Ronald Reagan saying he is going to outlaw and bomb the Soviet Union. Turn the bibliography (with your name and TA’s name included) in to your T.A.
**Task Five.** Choose six to ten sources from your bibliography. Write a paper of approximately 8 pages (2000 words) assessing the question: Is the movie *Fail Safe* more fact than fiction? How plausible is accidental nuclear war? Your bibliography from this paper will be ONLY the ones you directly use for writing the paper. The paper should follow the format sheet at the end of this syllabus. Turn the paper in to your T.A. for grading.

⇒ Parachute option. If you feel you can do better on your paper and have met academic standards (no plagiarism) you can rewrite and resubmit the paper in an effort to improve your grade. This is an option. The parachute optional rewrite is due April 1st. No late optional rewrites are accepted, as your paper already carries a grade and no rewrite means you’re OK with it.

**Bonus Tasks (both must be completed for credit), 5% bonus credit:**

**Task Six.** Copy the bibliography from your paper into excel and put a border around each citation. Turn the gridlines off, make it fit to one page. Put different backgrounds, shadings, or colors in. Make it look neat. This is a “get to know excel” exercise. Embed the excel graph in a word file. The word file must have a running header (such as this syllabus has in upper left, where it says “Nowell, POS 102, Spring 2016” with your name, TA name, date and section time in the running header, in eight point type.

**Task Seven.** Take the Global Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles on this page [http://tinyurl.com/wiki-nuke-stockpiles](http://tinyurl.com/wiki-nuke-stockpiles)

And, choosing THREE countries only, turn it in to a graph using Excel. Print it out and turn it into your T.A. Due Friday April 8th.
Week-by-week summary

Week 1 General Concepts in International Relations Theory
Thursday January 21

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?


Section Assignment: Task One.

Week 2 Screening of Fail-Safe.

Tuesday January 26
Thursday January 28

Readings:


Ravenal, Earl C. “Doing Nothing,” Foreign Policy No. 39 (Summer, 1980), pp. 28-39
Available: JSTOR through U Albany on-line library.
Discuss: Nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, rogue states, terrorist groups, etc.
Section Assignment: Task two.

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

Tuesday 2 February
Thursday 4 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)

Section Assignment: Task three.

Week 4 The State and Foreign Policy: Liberal theory

Tuesday February 9
Thursday February 11

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.”

Section Assignment: Task Four

Week 5 More on the State….Marxist theory

Tuesday, February 16
Thursday, February 18


Task Five (start)

Week 6 Marxist Theory of Imperialism

Tuesday February 23
Thursday February 25 International Careers Panel organized by Prof. Weiss


⇒ No Friday Sections February 26
Task Five (continued)

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

Week 7

Tuesday 1 March
Thursday 3 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)

Task Five (complete): paper due Friday March 4th.
Week 8  More Keynes and economic consequences of the peace

Tuesday March 8
Thursday March 10 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.

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Week 9 NO CLASS

Tuesday March 15 NO CLASS
Thursday March 17 NO CLASS
NO SECTIONS

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

Reading:  Gerschenkron, pp. 17-112

Tuesday March 22
Thursday March 24 MIDTERM

Receive your papers back from TA’s. (March 25)

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Week 11  Gerschenkron – a comparative political approach, part II.
Gerschenkron, pp. 113-224

Tuesday 29 March  
Thursday 31 March

⇒ Friday April 1. Parachute option papers due. There is no such thing as a late parachute paper. (If you don’t turn it in on this day it means you’re OK with the grade you received).

Week 12 Causes of War

Mingst Chapter 2, 8

Tuesday April 5  
Thursday April 7

Task 6 and Task 7 (Bonus points) due Friday April 8th

Week 13 Movie: *Black and White in Color* (if available)

Tuesday April 12  
Thursday April 14

Reading: Background materials on WWI and Treaty of Versailles

Week 14 Simulation: Treaty of Versailles

Tuesday April 19  
Thursday April 21

Reading: Background materials on WWI and Treaty of Versailles

=>No Sections 22 April

Week 15 Simulation: Treaty of Versailles

Tuesday April 26  
Thursday April 28 (wrap up and discussion)

Reading: Background materials on WWI and Treaty of Versailles
Week 16

Tuesday May 3 LAST DAY OF CLASS. Discussion of exam.

FINAL EXAM: Friday May 13th 8 to 10 a.m. (as posted in January, double check registrar’s times here: final exam schedule. Times often change for inexplicable reasons)

Course Readings


Lenin, V.I. (1917)

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

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.

Information Literacy:

Approved courses introduce students to various ways in which information is organized and structured and to the process of finding, using, producing, and distributing information in a variety of media formats, including traditional print as well as computer databases. Students acquire experience with resources available on the Internet and learn to evaluate the quality of information, to use information ethically and professionally, and to adjust to rapidly changing technology tools. Students are encouraged to complete this requirement within the freshman or sophomore year.

Approved courses will have three characteristics:
1. Classroom activities on finding, evaluating, citing, and using information in print and electronic sources from the University Libraries, World Wide Web, and other sources. Courses should address questions concerning the ethical use of information, copyrights, and other related issues that promote critical reflection
2. Assignments, course work, or tutorials that make extensive use of the University Libraries, World Wide Web, and other information sources. Assignments should include finding, evaluating, and citing information sources
3. At least one research project that requires students to find, evaluate, cite, and use information presented in diverse formats from multiple sources and to integrate this information within a single textual, visual, or digital document
Check Off List for Paper Requirements for All Courses for Prof. Nowell. Papers not adhering to these requirements are subject to penalties.

1. This page stapled on cover of paper, and signed by you. Reason: Too many students ignore requirements otherwise. Check here ______

2. Title page, including your name, my name, my department, course number, date. Reasons: This information, often omitted, allows me to see what paper I’m grading for what course. If the paper is misplaced by you or me, it increases the chances that someone will return it to me or you. Check here ______

3. Title of paper. Titles, often omitted, are required. Check here ______

4. Text double-spaced. So I can make comments and notations between lines. Check ______

5. Margins 1" on all sides. Use 11 or 12 point type. Standardizes assigned length, gives me room for comments. Check here ______

6. Every page has a page number. So they can be put back when out of sequence, so comments can be made referring to specific pages. (use “header” command in your word processor) ______

7. Every page has your last name on it. Allows scattered sheets to be reunited with the right paper. Check here ______

8. No binders or plastic covers for papers less than 30 pages. They’re heavy, they fall apart, they tear other papers. Check here ______

9. No paper clips. They don’t work in a large mass of similar papers. Check here ______

10. All papers STAPLED in upper left corner. It’s cheap, it’s easy, it’s light weight, it works. Check here ______

11. No use of contractions. No “don’t” “isn’t” and similar forms. 1) They do not belong in formal presentations. 2) It eliminates, in theory, the possibility of confusing “it’s” (=it is) and “its” (belonging to it). ______

12. Citations mandatory. Footnotes or endnotes. Hacker’s Writer’s Reference required. ______

13. Bibliography mandatory. Even if it contains only one book. ______

14. Proofread manuscript. For content, grammar, spelling. ______

15. Back-up copy mandatory. Electronic or hard copy. If for any reason papers in my possession are lost or stolen you must be able to produce another copy. ______

Your signature here ____________________________________