Gregory P. Nowell
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POS 102 Comparative and International Politics
Class meets: M, W, F 10:25-11:20 LC002
Office hours: M, W 12-1 p.m.
Books: textbooks at Mary Jane Books and campus bookstore; other texts at MJB only
Midterm: Monday March 19
Final exam (in class): registrar's final exam schedule
Class No. 7945

Teaching Assistants: Steve Sin (ssin@albany.edu), Nolan Fahrenkopf
(npfahrenkopf@albany.edu), Rob Spice (rspice@albany.edu)

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. Learning to write a basic college level analytic paper, 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.

The format of the class will usually be: Mondays and Wednesdays, a lecture presentation on the assigned reading. Fridays will be more oriented towards questions.

Assigned materials for this class include two textbooks (Mingst and Sodaro) for general concepts, and three case studies, one in International Relations (Keynes, Economic Consequences of the Peace) and one in Comparative Politics (Gerschenkron, Bread and Democracy in Germany), and one work which fuses the two approaches, Mao Zedong’s On Protracted War. One movie is assigned, 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 three real historical cases (the peace settlement of WWI, the social constituency for fascism in Germany, China's war against Japan).

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.

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 final exam schedule

Midterm: March 19

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Week-by-week summary

Week 1 General Concepts in International Relations Theory
Wednesday January 18

Friday January 20

Reading: Mingst, chapters 8, 1 and 2

Watch Movie: Fail-Safe (1964).

Link:

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

The link is maintained by ITLAL and should play automatically. You may need to download Realplayer which exists in windows and XP versions. 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?

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Week 2 Screening of Fail-Safe.

Contending Theoretical Perspectives, and the IR “system”

Monday January 23

Wednesday January 25

Friday January 27
Reading: Mingst, chapters 8, 1 and 2

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

Week 3 Contending Theoretical Perspectives, and the IR “system”;

Monday Jan 30
Wednesday February 1
Friday February 3

Reading: Mingst, Chapters 3 and 4
Discussion: What sorts of theories describe the international system? Why are there different theories?

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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)

Week 4 The State and Foreign Policy

Monday February 6
Wednesday February 8
Friday February 10

Reading: Mingst, Chapters 5, 6

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.”

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Week 5 Political economy: tariffs, free trade, mercantilism, Marxist theory, &c.
Monday February 13
Wednesday February 15
Friday February 17

Reading: Mingst, Chapter 9

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Week 6 Case Study: WWI peace settlement & liberal internationalism

Monday February 20
Wednesday February 22
Friday February 24
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)

Case study: WWII peace settlement & liberal internationalism

Week 7
Monday February 27
Wednesday February 29

Friday March 2

Reading: Keynes, Economic Consequences, 2nd half

keynes economic consequences of the peace

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)

Liberal Internationalism (continued)

Week 8

Monday March 5

Wednesday March 7 Human Rights (Salkowe & Ribera)
Friday March 09

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

Monday March 12 NO CLASS

Wednesday March 14 NO CLASS

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Friday March 16 NO CLASS

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Week 10 The State

Monday March 19 MIDTERM
Wednesday March 21
Friday March 23

Reading: Sodaro chapters 3, 5, 6
Discuss: hypothesis testing, nation building, institutions

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Week 11 Democracy
Monday March 26
Wednesday March 28
Friday March 30

Reading: Sodaro chapters 9, 10, 19
Discuss: ""Everywhere do I perceive a certain conspiracy of rich men seeking their own advantage under that name and pretext of the commonwealth." (Thomas More, 1478-1535)

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Week 12 Democracy

Monday April 2
Wednesday April 4
Friday April 6 NO CLASS
Reading: Sodaro Chapters 9, 10, 22

Week 13 Political Economy – Democratic Development

Monday April 9 NO CLASS

Wednesday April 11

Friday April 13

Reading: Gerschenkron, Bread and Democracy, pp. 1-89, Sodaro chapter 14

Week 14 Political Economy and Democratic Development

Monday April 16

Wednesday April 18

Friday April 20

Reading: Sodaro Chapter 15

Reading: Gerschenkron, pp. 163-224 Sodaro Chapter 20
Week 15 Revolutionary politics

Monday April 23
Wednesday April 25
Friday May April 27

Reading: Sodaro Chapters 19, 21 Mao Zedong On Protracted War (1938).

Week 16 The Cold war and world development

Monday April 30
Wed May 2
Friday May 4

Readings: Sodaro pp. 233, 609-618, Mingst 37-49

Week 17

Monday May 7 LAST DAY OF CLASS. Discussion of exam.

Course Books


Please note that there are a few other Internet links to smaller readings in the day-by-day syllabus.