Seminar in International Relations Theory

This seminar provides an overview of the field and study of international relations. Each week, a different approach to explaining international relations will be examined. By surveying major concepts and theories in the field, the seminar will also assist graduate students in preparing for the comprehensive examination and further study in the department's more specialized offerings in international relations.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the various approaches to the study of international relations through direct engagement with trends in scholarship within the discipline of political science.

2. Recognize and apply the specific approaches of the sub-discipline of international relations through research and reflection, written and oral communication, and both formal and informal modes of interpersonal interaction.

3. Describe the primary and alternative theories of international relations and explain how IR theories help scholars answer research questions concerning global relations.

Required Reading

We will be reading each of these complete books over the fifteen weeks of the semester.


2. The Things They Carried | by Tim O'Brien ISBN: 9780547391175


Assessment and Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation – 10%

You are expected to attend class, to participate in our class discussions, and complete the online weekly writing assignments. This is not a lecture class; it is a seminar. Bring your readings, your questions, your answers, and your insights to class and be ready to articulate and discuss them.

Book Review – 25%

Students will write a book review on one of the three books required for this course. A book review will generally focus intensively on one or two related books; the analysis should be about 1500-2000 words. Due December 4th.

Global Relations Research Project and Presentation – 25%

The capstone assignment in this course is a final research paper and presentation – it represents 25% of the final course grade and will be treated as a semester-long process. Students will write about 6000 to 7000-word research paper that poses an analytical question related to one of the sub-themes related to global politics; adopts a theoretical framework through which to analyze the topic; reviews the literature; develops an appropriate methodology and hypotheses for testing; and forms reasonable conclusions based on the analysis.

This assignment is scaffolded. Students will submit a research design proposal, formulate an annotated bibliography, and develop a draft outline/storyboard of their project early on during the semester. Students are also required, where appropriate to their research design, to collect and analyze the necessary data for their papers (e.g. using World Bank Development Indicators, the Uppsala Conflict Database, the Minorities at Risk database, The Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Country Watch, the Political Risk Yearbook, the Human Security Report, the Human Development Report’s Human Development Index).

Individual consultations will be scheduled with students to discuss their initial research design proposals. Guidelines for developing a research design proposal will be posted in Canvas and discussed in class, and deadlines for these organizational aspects of the research paper are as follows:

- Research Design Proposal and Bibliography Due Date: 18 September.
- Outline/Storyboard Due Date: 16 October

Three separate working drafts of a student’s research paper will be submitted during the semester – each represents a different part of the overall paper:

- Part 1 will set out/introduce the analytical question/puzzle to be explored and
articulate the position being taken by the author to analyze the puzzle. It will also concisely review and assess the parameters of the debate over this issue in the existing literature. This draft should be approximately 1,500 words in length. Due Date: 30 October.

Part 2 will build upon Part 1 by describing and providing justifications for both the theoretical framework being used to analyze the puzzle and case selection. This draft should be approximately 2,000 words in length. Due Date: 20 November.

Part 3 will build upon earlier drafts by presenting the central argument, empirical evidence, and analysis. It is in this draft that students will form a clear and coherent argument by articulating a series of analytic claims that are substantiated by evidence and data. This draft should be approximately 3,500 words in length. The remaining 500 or so words should be reserved for concluding remarks, which should be focused on restating the analytic puzzle and main argument, as well as developing several prescriptions for the future. Due Date: 4 and 11 December.

The final sessions of this course will be devoted to individual research paper presentations. Guidelines for this aspect of class participation will be discussed in-class. Due Date: 4 and 11 December.

Midterm Exam – 20% ~ This will be an essay examination taken in Canvas on 23 October. This examination will cover the first two books of the course.

Final Exam – 20% ~ This will be an essay examination taken in Canvas on 11 December. This examination will cover the second two books read in the course.

Please note that both exams will be essay format and must be complete online in Canvas by the due date- late exams will be docked one complete letter grade.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies: Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated.

Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.
The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy: Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability Services: In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services office in UC 3150, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance: Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities: If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement: It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation: Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not reenter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.