"I was the fool because I thought
I thought the world
Turns out the world thought me."

-Eddie Vedder

Course Description

World Politics matters. As global citizens, it is almost impossible to avoid being drawn together by virtue of the ever-changing volume and the speed of money, goods, information, technology, people, ideas, and images that flow within and between countries. We study World Politics to help understand these dynamics, but also to decide how to engage with them, if at all. This means looking at the broad range of actors, structures, and issues on the international scene. It means looking at how states interact, but also how states serve as administrative containers for societies, identities, ideologies, economies, political systems, and individuals, and how these things cooperate and collide. While the state is a beneficial form of political organization for some societies, there are many who struggle on the world’s margins.

A key goal of this class is to acquire empirical knowledge about World Politics. But for a Political Science class, this is not quite enough. A second goal then is to train our minds to think theoretically about what explains the organization, patterns, and events of World Politics. In doing so, we ask questions such as: Why are there wars? Why are some countries better than others at upholding human rights? Why are some countries rich while others are poor? Students will learn how to connect academic theory to the real world.

The class proceeds in five parts. Part I will provide a basic introduction to World Politics and how the current international system came into being. Part II will look at the different actors on the world stage, in particular states, international organizations, and non-state actors. In Part III the class will step back and think theoretically about the different ways political science attempts to explain the behaviour of these actors. After Spring Break, Parts IV and V will look at a range of contemporary issues in World Politics. Part IV will examine warfare and violence, and Part V will look issues of the international political economy.
Course Objectives and Methodology

The main objective of this course is to learn how to connect academic theory to real time events in contemporary World Politics. In addition, students should come away from the course with the following:

** reading and critical comprehension (through required reading and writing assignments)
** oral communication, listening, presentation abilities (through class discussion)
** effective writing and development of arguments (through writing assignments)
** comprehension of other’s views and capacity to formulate, defend one’s own position (through reading, class discussions, exams, and writing assignments)
** time management and personal responsibility (through set-up of entire course)
** critical analysis and thinking (through reading, discussion, and lectures)

The course will be taught through readings, lectures, class discussions, and by following current events:

- **Readings.** Students will read a primary textbook, supplemented by weekly companion pieces. For the first half of the semester, companion pieces will be chapters from a book about the historical development of borders and why they matter. For the second half of the semester, companion pieces will be provocative articles from a range of contemporary news magazines. Students are expected to have completed the readings before the class sessions. Keeping up with these readings will be vital to your overall course performance, and it will be difficult to catch up if you fall behind. The knowledge acquired in the readings will be cumulative. That is, each week you will be introduced to new ideas that will become part of the "tool-box" you will use to analyze readings and lectures in subsequent weeks.

- **Lectures.** Each week will feature a specific topic and a corresponding lecture that will essentially serve as an additional “textbook” for the class, undergirding the readings and class discussions with key terms, concepts, cases, and historical context.

- **Discussions.** Class discussions will be fundamental to this class and students are expected to participate.

- **Current Events.** Students are expected to independently follow current events and trends in World Politics by reading *The Economist* magazine.

Course Requirements

These include a Midterm and a Final Exam, submission of 10 weekly memos, and participation in class lectures.

- **Exams (60%).** There will be a Midterm Exam (30%) on Wednesday, February 27th in class and a Final Exam (30%) on Monday, April 29th at 8:00am in Maybank 307.
• **Weekly Memos (30%).** One of the objectives of this class is to motivate students to habitually engage with foreign political events. Students will submit a 1 to 2-page memo about any *Economist* article from the previous week. These memos should not be summaries. They must show how contemporary political events illustrate the theories and concepts of World Politics covered in the previous week’s readings and lectures. Students will submit a total of **10 memos** throughout the semester. Memos will receive grades of **excellent, good,** or **fair.** **Hard copies only.** **No late submissions.** They are due on the following dates at the beginning of class:

- January 25
- February 1
- February 8
- February 15
- March 15
- March 22
- March 29
- April 5
- April 10 (this is a Wednesday)
- April 19

• **Class participation (10%).** The quality of this class depends on the quality of discussion, therefore students are expected to participate in class.

**Course Policies**
Here are the rules of the road:

**Grading Scale**

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<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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**Attendance Policy.** Attendance is **REQUIRED.**

**Submission of Work.** Late work will not be accepted. Work submitted electronically will not be accepted.

**Honor Code.** All students are expected be familiar with the College of Charleston Honor Code, and to abide by it. Violations will not be tolerated and will be dealt with appropriately.

**Learning Disabled.** If you have a learning disability, please let me know as soon as possible so special arrangements can be made for certain class requirements.

**Other Special Circumstances.** I normally will do business with anyone who lets me know in advance of any special circumstances. But please note that the expression “it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission” was not invented by a College Professor.
**Required Readings**
The following books are available at the campus bookstore:


Students will take out student six-month digital subscription to *The Economist* magazine ($50) available at [https://subscriptions.economist.com/ODR/index.php](https://subscriptions.economist.com/ODR/index.php)

**All other readings will be posted on OAKS or are available online.**
Course Outline and Readings

Part I: Setting the Scene

1. January 9-11: The rest of the world? Who cares?
   
   *Global Politics* Chapter 1, “Introduction to Global Politics,” pp. 2-25
   
   *Borders* Chapter 1, “A very bordered world,” pp. 1-18

2. January 14-18: The modern world system
   
   

Part II: Actors

   
   *** No class January 21 MLK ***

   *Global Politics* Chapter 5, “Making Foreign Policy,” pp. 132-170
   

   *Memo 1 Due 1/25*

4. January 28-February 8: Meddlers and Managers
   
   *Global Politics* Chapter 6, Global and Regional Governance,” pp. 170-207
   
   *Borders* Chapter 4, “The practice of bordering,” pp. 59-81

   *Memo 2 Due 2/1*

5. February 4-8: Firestarters and Smokejumpers
   
   *Global Politics* Chapter 7, “Nongovernmental Actors,” pp. 208-241
   
   *Borders* Chapter 5, “Border crossers and border crossings,” pp. 82-100

   *Memo 3 Due 2/8*
Part III: Ideas

6-7. February 11-18: ISMs

*** No class February 20-22 Model AU ***

*Global Politics* Chapter 3, “Realism and Liberalism,” and Chapter 4, “Critical Approaches,” pp. 68-130

*Borders* Chapter 6, “Cross-border institutions and systems,” pp. 101-120

Jack Snyder, “One World and Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy* (November/December 2004), pp. 52-62

*Memo 4 Due 2/15*

8. February 25-March 1: Review and Midterm

***MIDTERM EXAM WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27***

9. March 4-8: SPRING BREAK

Part IV: War and Peace

10. March 11-15: Warfare

*Global Politics* Chapter 8, “Security and Military Power,” pp. 244-281

Seymour M. Hersh, “Iran and the Bomb: How real is the nuclear threat?” *The New Yorker* (June 6, 2011)
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/06/06/110606fa_fact_hersh?currentPage=all

*Memo 5 Due 3/15*


*Global Politics* Chapter 9, “Terrorism,” pp. 282-307

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/08/08/110808fa_fact_schmidle

*Memo 6 Due 3/22*

*Global Politics* Chapter 10, “Human Rights and Human Security,” pp. 308-343


*Memo 7 Due 3/29*

**Part V: Political Economy**

13. April 1-5: The Majority World

*Global Politics* Chapter 13, “Poverty, Development, and Hunger,” pp. 406-433

http://harpers.org/archive/2009/06/let-them-eat-cash/

*Memo 8 Due 4/5*

14. April 8-12 Global Tree Hugging

***No class Friday, April 12 MPSA Conference***

*Global Politics* Chapter 14, “Environmental Issues,” pp. 434-464

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/05/14/120514fa_fact_specter

*Memo 9 Due 4/10*

15-16. April 15-24: Global Boom and Bust


*Memo 10 Due 4/19*

**FINAL EXAM REVIEW**