Montgomery College - Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus
Department of Humanities
POLI 203 - Introduction to International Relations
TEMPLATE

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the most important issues shaping global affairs in the 21st century and shows how to look behind news headlines to understand the forces driving international development. During this class, we will discuss some of the big questions about international affairs: Why do nations go to war? Why is international trade and investment so important? Why are there international disparities in wealth and poverty? What is the role of laws and human rights in international affairs? Most importantly, why do these answers to such questions change across time and by region? To build a better framework to argue standpoints around these issues, this course will also introduce students to theories of international relations used to explain their behavior and the main actors and institutions in the international arena.

Course Concepts

- Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:
- Describe and define key concepts and theories which explain international relations, including current events.
- Apply key concepts and theories to international events and issues to learn to identify and analyze the major theoretical and political questions of international life.
- Improve critical thinking and writing by providing the tools needed to evaluate the decisions of policy makers, states, and international organizations.

Reading List

1. **Required**: **Essentials of International Relations**, 8th edition, Karen A. Mingst and Ivan M. Arrenguin-Tofta (Can purchase online or through the bookstore)

   You may also purchase the e-version for $40 – 50. *Do not purchase older editions, as they do not properly align with lessons taught from the newest edition.*

2. Assigned Current Affairs Supplemental External Readings

Course Requirements

- Reading Assignments – 25%
- Blog Assignments – 20%
- Quizzes – 15%
- Midterm Exam – 20%
- Final Exam – 20%

Course Format
This course will be conducted entirely online. There will be no on-campus meetings. Course content will be provided on the course site within 14 weekly modules. **Weeks will run from 8 a.m. Mondays until midnight of Friday that same week.** Active participation in the online activities and completion of all homework and online assignments is required to pass this course. **No late assignments are accepted.**

Required readings: Students are responsible for completing all assigned readings within the weekly module under which they are listed on the course outline. I recommend that students complete the readings before other weekly activities, including viewing the PowerPoint/lecture notes, participating in discussion, or taking the quiz. These readings have been selected to complement other weekly activities and are essential to achieve adequate performance on discussions and assessments.

Weekly reading assignments [25%]: Students will be given short reading assignments to accompany the chapters covered during the week. These assignments will be due on Tuesdays and Thursdays by 11:59 p.m. each week.

Weekly quiz [15%]: Online quiz will be given each week to test the weekly learning objectives. Each chapter covered during the week will have a quiz. Students will be able to take each chapter quiz once. There are no more than 25 questions in each test. Once started, each quiz must be completed in one sitting. All answers must be submitted within minutes of starting the quiz. Remember - each quiz is due by Friday at 11:59 p.m.

Weekly blog postings [20%]: As this course takes place online, participation in weekly discussions is an integral aspect of the course. Students answer discussion prompts using blog postings. These assignments will replace the conversational discussion that takes place naturally in a face-to-face class. In each blog, you will be required to respond to a weekly prompt posted by the instructor, but you will also be required to reply to each other with feedback and suggestions. Students are required to read all discussion posts each week, and to join in on the discussion on multiple days throughout the week. Each blog submission should be 500 words. More details are available in each Chapter module under the "Blog Assignment" item or in the "Start Here" module on the Blackboard course site. Blog postings are due Thursday at 11:59 p.m.

Exams [40%]: There are two exams in this course, a midterm [20%] and a final [20%] that will test important concepts from class lectures and discussions, assigned text chapters and other readings. The final exam will include a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions, with one longer essay question on each. The final exam will be given during exam week and will not be cumulative. The final will test concepts covered from Chapter 6 – 13.

- The exam will be posted on the course site on the date that it is listed on the Course Schedule; all exams will be administered online via the Blackboard course site. However, you will take the test in the Testing Center. More information will be shared closer to the final exam.

- If you cannot take the exam on the scheduled date due to extenuating circumstances (must be documented), I may be able to schedule an alternative time if you inform me of

the situation before the exam date. Students who do not inform me of any circumstances ahead of time and simply do not complete an exam before the deadline will receive an automatic "0". There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Class Procedures and Policies

This course is taught entirely online. All students are required to have strong computer literacy and be comfortable interacting in an online environment. All students should familiarize themselves with Blackboard, the course management system used for distance learning classes at MC. This content of this course is divided into 4 weekly modules. New modules will be available by 8 am on Monday mornings, and will close by midnight the following Sunday. The "Start Here" module has more information about Blackboard tutorials and support.

- For all general distance education related questions, contact the Office of Distance Education and Learning Technologies at 240-567-6000 or dl@montgomerycollege.edu.
- Follow the link to a pre-assessment survey to make sure you are ready for online learning: http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department2.aspx?id=24132
- An online course requires that you have access to Blackboard via a good, reliable internet connection on most days of the week. Students should complete course orientation activities promptly to make sure their browsers are set up correctly for using the course website. Failure to resolve any technical issues with the course site early on is not an adequate excuse for not participating in the course. Please consult the appropriate resources for help:
- For technical assistance with My MC or Blackboard, contact the Montgomery College IT Service Desk at 240-567-7222 or ITServiceDesk@montgomerycollege.edu
- You make experience system downtime on Sunday mornings from 12:01 AM to 6:00 AM each week while The Office of Information Technology conducts computer network maintenance. During this time, you may not be able to access My MC to login to Blackboard. Do not rely on this time to submit course work.

Email/Communications Policy

If you need to contact me or another member of the class directly, the best way to do so is through the "Blackboard Course Mail" function. I will respond to all course mail within 24 hours of receiving it. If your inquiry is of a general nature, (i.e. questions about course policies and/or assignments), that you think other students would benefit from knowing, please post your questions in the "Got POLI 203 Questions" thread in the course's "Discussion" section, rather than emailing me directly.

- If Blackboard is down, you can also email me at christina.tilghman@montgomerycollege.edu or call me at (202) 774-8299, but please do so only as a last resort.

- Class "attendance" policy: Students in an online course must be self-motivated and approach this course prepared for, and with a desire to learn.

- It is your responsibility to check into the course site regularly (5-7 days per week). **All assignments are listed in the course schedule by date; it is your responsibility to adhere to important deadlines.** Extensive absence in the online learning environment will seriously inhibit your progress in this course and is disruptive to the rest of the class as well.

- As the instructor, I will not reach out to you on an individual basis to see why you haven't been submitting assignments and/or participating in discussions. If you are seriously ill or have other unanticipated personal issues that prevent you from fully participating in the course during a given week, please contact me as early as possible to discuss your options for making up assignments. Again, regardless of your situation, it is your responsibility to contact me.

Class Cancellation Policy

In the event of a school-wide closing, all coursework will continue as normal and deadlines will remain as they are listed in the syllabus.

- If you are experiencing prolonged weather-related power outages that prevent you from accessing the course online, and you are unable to send email, please call me at (202) 774-8299 and leave a voicemail message to let me know. I will respond with further instructions. If I must cancel class for unforeseen reasons, explicit instructions for what to do next will be posted in the Announcements section of the course site.

Assignment Submission Guidelines

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments should be submitted via instructions in the weekly module during which it was assigned. All written assignments, including blog entries, should be written in a 12-pt. font with 1-inch margin on all sides and sources provided.

All assignments submitted must be compatible with Microsoft Word. No other files will be accepted. If you use a word processor other than Microsoft Word, please make sure to convert your paper into a word document. If I cannot access a paper you have sent, it will not be graded and will receive an automatic "0".

Before submitting your assignment, files must be saved as **LastName_FirstName_AssignmentName_Week#** (for example: Tilghman_Christina_GlobalPerspectives_Week2)**.** Failure to save your assignments as such will result in 10 points deducted from your grade.

- Return of corrected assignments: All assignments turned in on-time will be promptly reviewed and returned to you with comments and suggestions for improving your work on future assignments. My goal is to return all student work within 5 days of receiving it; this includes quizzes, exams, etc. In the event I cannot meet this goal, you will receive notice in the announcements section of the course site. This return timeline however, is not guaranteed for late assignments.

Blog Forum Conduct

Since learning in this course takes place entirely online, the weekly blog forums are an integral part of this course. You should approach the online discussion as you would a regular class discussion, prepared to respond to the instructor's prompts, as well as to your classmates. Here are some guidelines for participating in the online blog forum:

- You are expected to read all posted messages!
- Respond to each other promptly. Try to participate early, and on multiple days of the week.
- Use a person's name when you reply to a message. It helps us maintain a clearer sense of who is speaking and who is being spoken to. This will also help us get to know one another better.
- Change the subject line when you introduce a new topic. This helps as the number of messages grows.
- Reinforce each other's ideas with comments such as "Good Point" or "I agree" or "Thanks for the comments." (These comments won't add to your grade, but they are nice to hear!)
- Avoid angry or rude comments. The use of objectionable, sexist, or racist language is not acceptable.
- Use emoticons to communicate humor, e.g. :-) ;-) :-0 :-/ :-(and so on...
- Oh, and have fun!

Privacy Policy

Your electronic communications in discussion forums or elsewhere on the site are not guaranteed to be private. In addition to the instructor, technical staff or administrative personnel may also access the course. In order to respect your privacy, the sharing of personal information or posting of photographs is voluntary, not required.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Copying or using someone else's words in any writing assignment without acknowledging the original writer is a serious matter. A detailed discussion of what constitutes plagiarism can be found in the MC Student Code of Conduct:
http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Plain.aspx?id=2074#student_code_of_conduct

- In this course, plagiarized papers will automatically receive a "0" for the assignment, and may be subject to harsher penalties (course failure and/or dismissal from the college). Cheating in any way is a violation of the Academic Code of Conduct for Montgomery College. These are serious offenses that can result in a final grade of F for the entire course.

Students with Special Circumstances

Students who need accommodations due to a disability should send me a letter from Disability Support Services and make an appointment with me to discuss your needs (either online via chat, or in person during my office hours). For more information visit the DSS website at http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/secondary5.aspx?urlid=52

- If you are a veteran or on active or reserve status and you are interested in information regarding opportunities, programs and/or services, please visit the Combat2College website at http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/secondary5.aspx?urlid=53 and/or

contact Joanna Starling at 240- 567-7103 or Joanna.starling@montgomerycollege.edu. A Final Note on my Grading Policy: Your grade in this course is highly determined by the amount of effort you are willing to put into your work. I do not try to (nor want to) give out failing grades. If you are having trouble understanding concepts from class or your requirements, I will be happy to help you outside of class. Please contact me via course mail or during my office hours (virtual or in-person) and we can discuss options and/or strategies for improving your performance on assignments. Please don't just give up after one bad grade. There are a variety of types of assignments in this course for you to demonstrate your effort and abilities.

- However, you should also pay attention to the college's drop deadlines to avoid a poor grade when you are unable to realistically complete course requirements. If you choose to drop the course, you must complete the steps to do this on your own, I do not drop students from my course roster, and students who simply stop participating in class and/or submitting assignments without notice will receive an ―F grade, not an ― Incomplete

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Important Student Information Link

*In addition to course requirements and objectives that are in this syllabus, Montgomery College has information on its web site (see link below) to assist you in having a successful experience both inside and outside of the classroom. It is important that you read and understand this information. The **link below provides** information and other resources to areas that pertain to the following: student behavior (student code of conduct), student e-mail, the tobacco free policy, withdraw and refund dates, disability support services, veteran services, how to access information on delayed openings and closings, how to register for the Montgomery College alert System, and finally, how closings and delays can impact your classes. If you have any questions, please bring them to your professor. As rules and regulations change they will be updated and you will be able to access them through the link. If any student would like a written copy of these policies and procedures, the professor would be happy to provide them. By registering for this class and staying in this class, you are indicating that you acknowledge and accept these policies.* **http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/mcsyllabus/**