POLS 3402: Contemporary International Politics
Fall 2018 – TuTh 9:30 pm - 10:45 pm
Prof. Jeremy Pressman

Course Objectives:
Students will investigate current issues and problems in international affairs.
Students will investigate changes in the global system.
Students will investigate the question of Iran’s nuclear program. [simulation]

Required readings are available through HuskyCT, the library web site, or the internet. Do the readings before the listed class, and please bring a copy of the readings to class. I expect you to work hard in this class.

The class is heavily focused on readings and analyzing them together. The exams will focus on the readings and our class discussion of those readings. I do plan to call on you.

If you have any academic accommodations, please let me know. The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations also should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities.

I welcome feedback at any time. Let me know what works and what does not.

Do not plagiarize or cheat. All students who enroll in this course are assumed to have read the Academic Misconduct section of the Student Conduct Code regarding such matters as plagiarism and cheating on examinations. If you need help with proper citations, ask.

I do not accept late assignments. I sometimes add or change readings.

No texting or messaging during class. It distracts you, it distracts your classmates, and it distracts me. Step outside if you have an urgent problem that must be addressed.

ASSIGNMENTS:

First exam (25%) – In-class on October 4. Format: Multiple choice. Focused on the readings and class discussions. (Possibly short answer too. I will let you know in advance.)

Second exam (25%) – In-class on November 13. Similar format as first exam.

Memo (25%) – You will write a 1250-1500 word memo in preparation for the simulation on the Iranian nuclear question. Due in class on November 1. Include a word count. You will share your memo with other members of your simulation group. You will be expected to read the memoranda of the five or so people in your delegation. Note: If any of you want to function as a reporter during the simulation, let me know. You will have a different writing assignment.

Simulation (15%) – In-class Nov 27, 29, and Dec 4. Scenario in brief: You will each represent different countries and try to advance your interests vis a vis the Iranian nuclear question. You will write a post-simulation evaluation.
Participation: in-class discussion, work, and exercises (10%) – In class, we may do small-group work, worksheets, exercises, informal presentations, and the like. I may use quizzes if it appears people are not doing the reading.

Extra credit: +1 point on final course average for attending the talk, including Q&A and writing up a 250-word response. 1) Prof. Ali Kadivar, Wednesday, September 26 from 12:15-1:15 pm, Oak 408: “Development, Politics, Demography, and Diffusion: The Anti-Regime Protests in Iran, December 2017-January 2018”
2) Prof. Sarah Bush, October 23 from 12:30 to 1:30 p. More information to come.

Grades: A=93-100, A-=90-92, B+=87-89, B=83-86, B-=80-82 etc

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Tuesday, August 28 - Introduction

Thursday, August 30 – NO CLASS – I’ll be at the American Political Science Association annual conference in Boston

I. Great Powers and Aspiring Great Powers

Tuesday, September 4 - US National Interests


Thursday, September 6 - China and Russia: National Interests

Dmitri Trenin, “Russia’s Post-Soviet Journey,” Foreign Affairs, December 25, 2016. (3 pp)


Thursday, September 13 US-China


Tuesday, September 18 US-Russia


Thursday, September 20 – The Liberal International Order?


II. The Middle East

Tuesday – September 25 – Asad’s Syria and the Uprising and Protests


[and read something like this to get a sense of Syria’s civil war:
http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/syrian-civil-war-guide-isis/410746/ ]

Thursday, September 27 – Syrian Refugees


Tuesday, October 2 – Sectarianism?


Thursday, October 4 – **First Exam** (in class)

III. US Military Intervention

Tuesday, October 9 – The Vietnam War


Thursday, October 11 – Afghanistan: The US Role


Tuesday, October 16 – The Iraq War (2003 invasion)

Gregory Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 184-240. (ch. 6)

Thursday, October 18 – Iraq (the US occupation) – VIRTUAL CLASS (no office hours)

Gregory Gause, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 136-183. (ch. 5)

Tuesday, October 23 – The Islamic State


Thursday, October 25 – Iran

Watch: episode one of Frontline’s “Our Man in Tehran” – about two hours [first aired August 13, 2018]

Reading TBD

Tuesday, October 30 – The Civil War in Yemen


IV. Global Issues

Thursday, November 1 – Global Nationalist Resurgence [paper due]


Tuesday, November 6 – Climate Change


Thursday, November 8 – Nuclear Proliferation [mostly North Korea]

Reading TBD

Tuesday, November 13 – Second Exam

Thursday, November 15 – simulation preparation

Tuesday, November 27 – simulation

Thursday, November 29 – simulation (UN Security Council meeting)

Tuesday, December 4 – simulation

Thursday, December 6 – simulation debriefing / Course wrap-up