

POL S*2200 International Relations Theory

Credit Weighting: 0.5**Pre-/Co-Requisites:****Restrictions:****INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION****Name:** Ian S. Spears**Email:** ispears@uoguelph.ca**Office Location:** Mackinnon Building, room 535**GENERAL DETAILS**

Welcome to POLS 2200: International Relations. This course is an introduction to the most significant traditional and contemporary theoretical approaches to international relations. The course begins with a discussion of three foundational paradigms followed by three alternative approaches. Readings and class discussion will then focus on the application of these paradigms to various issues in world politics, including technology, nuclear proliferation, and the environment. While every effort will be made to ensure the material is as accessible and useful as possible, students should be aware of the abstract and sometimes provocative nature of the course material. The issues considered here are meant to inform rather than to persuade. Much of this literature considered here offers critical and contrasting examinations of topics that students will find to be challenging and provocative.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, students are encouraged to "think theoretically" using various international relations "paradigms". Paradigms are like lenses in eyeglasses; they allow you to focus on some issues and disregard others. They serve as intellectual tools that bring order to a complex and dynamic world. This course emphasizes paradigms in two ways (1) paradigms as foundations and (2) paradigms as perspectives:

"Foundations" are things that you SHOULD know (even if you disagree with them) because they are a basis for learning other important ideas about how the world works. Realism, Liberalism, Marxism, Feminism and other paradigms are all important foundations.

"Perspectives" refers to DIFFERENT (and sometimes opposing) ideas about how the world works. I like the idea that "smart people can disagree." Realism, Liberalism, Marxism, Feminism and other paradigms disagree with each other in important ways. And yet they can all contribute to how we understand the world around us.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Students will complete two midterm exams, a final exam, and five short quizzes. The first midterm will follow a multiple choice format; the second midterm will consist of an in-class essay. The midterms and final exams will be based on the readings and lectures. Students will also complete five short quizzes on the course readings on days designated in the syllabus as "Q-Days." A final exam covering all the course materials will be written during the formal exam period.

REQUIRED READING

This course has a moderate to intensive reading load. Students will be able to purchase a textbook from the UofG bookstore and to acquire readings through the on-line course reserve. Unless otherwise indicated, the online readings can be accessed by going through the "Library" link on the University of Guelph home page, scrolling down and clicking on "course reserves" and selecting POLS 2200. Readings can also be accessed through CourseLink. The title of the textbook is: Elizabeth G. Matthews and Rhonda L. Callaway, International Relations Theory: A Primer.

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