DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS*2200 International Relations Theory

Credit Weighting: 0.5 **Pre-/Co-Requisites:** **Restrictions:**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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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 (realism, liberalism, Marxism) followed by three alternative approaches (feminism, constructivism, developing world perspectives). Readings and class discussion will then focus on the application of these paradigms to various issues in world politics, including nationalism, nuclear proliferation, the environment, and/or technological change. While some of the material is abstract, every effort is made to ensure the material is as accessible as possible so that it can help you understand and make sense of the world you live in. Students are encouraged to explore new ways of thinking about complex contemporary issues and to engage in spirited debate!

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 be expected to complete one multiple choice midterm, one short essay, and five short quizzes. The test will be based on the readings and lectures; the essay will be based on course readings and additional research. The tentative date for the mid-term test will be, in class, October 17, 2023. The short essay will be written/due later in the term. More information will be provided on the short paper early in the term. 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 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.