

POLS*4720 Topics in Intern'l Relations (1 Credits)**Credit Weighting:** 1**Pre-/Co-Requisites:****Restrictions:** Restriction(s):
POLS*4770. This is a
Priority Access Course.**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION****Name:** Professor David B MacDonald**Email:** david.macdonald@uoguelph.ca**Office Location:** 508 MacKinnon Hall
Political Science Department**GENERAL DETAILS**

This course considers theories and problems in the field of International Relations. The theoretical and/or geographical focus of the course will reflect the interests of the instructor. This Honours level seminar series focuses on contemporary developments in IR theory. IR is a vast field of study, with dozens of journals and thousands of books approaching key issues from myriad perspectives. The purpose of this course is NOT to provide an exhaustive overview and representative sampling of the entire discipline but rather to focus on some interesting and relevant questions in IR, amenable to class discussion and debate. Many of the readings have been written against the backdrop of the invasion of Ukraine, the conflict in Israel/Palestine, the global economic downturn, the erosion of US primacy, and the (partial) post-positivist turn in IR.

Each week will be devoted to a central research focus. I will assume that you have some prior grounding in IR theory. I try to create a gender and racially balanced reading list with multiple and intersectional points of view stemming from different standpoints. Topics blend and merge into topics from other weeks. This course will be based around seminar presentations and discussion, with a week of group debate. The emphasis will be on examining primary sources and highlighting points of convergence and divergence. Most classes will begin with a brief introductory lecture on the topic, about 20 minutes, followed by discussion of articles or chapters which students will present and lead.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learn about the range of IR theories, primarily focused on contemporary developments in the field.
Enhance speaking, presentation, and group discussion skills.
Develop strong essay writing skills.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

1. Participation, presentations, preparation of article notes
2. 12-question multiple choice test on the lectures and readings from Weeks 1-7 inclusive.
3. PechaKucha debate presentation.
4. Either a written essay or video essay (and written discussion)
5. online exam – two questions of a choice of six based on course readings and discussion.

REQUIRED READING

Articles from journals assigned weekly and available on the library website - most are recent articles