**POLS\*3320: THE POLITICS OF AID AND DEVELOPMENT**

Course Outline

Department of Political Science

University of Guelph

**Fall 2019**

**Professor Craig Johnson**

Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays,

11:30AM - 12:50PM

RICHARDS, Room 2529

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Office hours: By appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

POLS\*3320 explores the politics, history and ethics of foreign aid and international development. A central theme concerns the challenge of delivering humanitarian aid and assistance in a context of political persecution, environmental degradation and social unrest. Particularly important is the role of international institutions in establishing and maintaining a “world order” based on principles of national sovereignty, collective security and respect for human rights. By the end of this 12-week course, students will have a basic understanding of how the United Nations works in relation to its constituent bodies (including the World Health Organization, the Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, as well as NGOs and nation-states). They will also develop a critical awareness of the threats and contradictions that now threaten the rules-based system of multilateral governance, including the rise of economic and political nationalism, the international refugee crisis, global health pandemics and climate change.

The course is divided into four parts. **Part One** first explores the history of humanitarianism, including the moral, religious, economic and geopolitical factors that led to the formation of the modern humanitarian movement. **Part Two** then examines the principal theories that have been used to understand and explain cooperation and conflict in international humanitarian affairs. **Part Three** explores the principal agencies and institutions that have assumed primary responsibility for delivering humanitarian aid, including the United Nations, Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières and CARE. This will entail a number of case studies (including the war in Syria, the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa, the war in Kosovo and the international refugee crisis) that help to illustrate the political and ethical dilemmas facing humanitarian aid agencies and officials. Finally, **Part Four** concludes the course by looking at a number of emerging issues (in health and the environment) that will challenge the humanitarian sector.

**LEARNING APPROACH**

Apart from the midterm exam, which is designed to assess your understanding of historical facts and theoretical concepts, this is a research-intensive course. The primary emphasis is on the essay questions, the research papers and the final exam, all of which are intended to develop the knowledge and critical insights you will use to understand and evaluate the ways in which humanitarian policies, programs and practices have been designed and interpreted in relation to the established academic literature on humanitarian policy and foreign aid. Like any 3000-level political science course, they are designed to develop your skills in independent research, writing and critical analysis.

The expectation is that you will complete **all of the** required readings and attend **all of the** lectures, which will be essential for writing your term papers and preparing for the final exam. By reading, writing and engaging in class discussion, you will develop a rich understanding of the historical, economic and ethical factors affecting the politics of humanitarian relief. This is by far the most important “learning outcome” you will experience, which is to say that the education you can expect to gain from taking this course will be directly proportionate to the amount of work that you put into it.

Please note that almost all of the required readings have been drawn from the required texts.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**There are **two** required texts for the course, both of which are available at the campus

bookstore, at the coop and on reserve in the library**:**

1. Michael Barnett (2013) ***Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*** 1st Edition

Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press  
ISBN-13: 978-0801478796  
ISBN-10: 0801478790

Available online through the U of G Library

1. Susan Park (2018) ***International Organisations and Global Problems: Theories and Explanations*** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

ISBN-978-1-107-43422-6