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Course Description
From our morning cup of coffee to the televisions we watch at night, each of us is to some extent reliant upon products obtained outside U.S. borders. As the global economy continues to seem closer to us, the link between politics and economics has become closer -- the actions of oil cartels are quickly apparent at U.S. gas pumps and meetings of economic organizations such as the WTO or IMF set off waves of protest. It is the purpose of this course to examine this complex nexus of interactions between political actors -- states and institutions -- and the panoply of economic actors within the global marketplace. Within the scholarly field of international relations, this area of study is known as international political economy (IPE).

This course is intended to introduce you to this field of scholarship. Specifically, a major goal of this course is to provide you with the conceptual and theoretical tools to understand and critically assess leading global economic processes, such as global trade and finance, as well as some of the key actors involved, including states, societal actors, multinational corporations, and international organizations. At the same time, you will become familiar with some of the key issues of contention within the global economy, including trade disputes, financial crises, and problems associated with globalization.

The course will be a mixture of lectures and class discussions. We will discuss both historical and current topics as they are relevant, but the main focus will be on understanding the political nature of global economy. In addition, I encourage you to follow international political and economic news regularly through one or more of the leading publications, such as the daily Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal or the weekly The Economist.

Required Text:
- Two case studies, available for purchase and download at [http://www.guisd.org](http://www.guisd.org):
Course Requirements:

Exams: (45% total). A midterm (20%) and a final exam (25%) will be administered in class. Dates are provided below. The final exam will not be cumulative.

Class Participation (10%)

The learning process is very much a “two-way street” requiring the active participation of both instructor and student, and keeping up with the required readings is a necessity for both enjoyment of class meetings and successful completion of this course. To this end, you will be evaluated on the level of preparation that you demonstrate in class discussions. I will regularly call on you in class discussion, and reserve the right to give pop quizzes! You should be able to provide the following information:

-For textbook chapters:
  - What are the main perspectives offered, and what are the main arguments that constitute these perspectives?
  - What are the primary assumptions underlying these perspectives?
  - How do the perspectives differ in terms their assumptions, units of analysis, and/or policy prescriptions?
-For articles:
  - What is the author's argument/thesis?
  - What evidence does the author use to support his or her argument?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument?
  - How does the argument compare with related concepts and readings?

Short Writing Assignments/Homework (15%)

Write an approximately 250-word response to a question based on the class reading(s). The question will be sent to you in advance, either in class or through Canvas. They are due before or at the beginning of class on the same day as the specific reading(s) will be covered. These assignments will not require any outside research, but are intended to facilitate comprehension of course concepts and preparation for the class meetings. You will get about 12 opportunities to complete these assignments, and are required to do 10.

Group Research Project (30%)

You will also complete a problem-based learning project. Instructions are at the end of the syllabus.

Important Due Dates:
- Sept 12 – Proposal
- Nov 10 – Draft of Policy Brief
- Dec 1 – Final Draft of Policy Brief

Course Policies:

Makeup/Late Assignments:
Make-up exams will be allowed ONLY in the case of a documented medical emergency. Papers turned in after the beginning of class on the due date will be assessed a ten-point penalty. Five points will be deducted for each additional day.
**Attendance:**
Attendance is necessary for successful completion of the course. Given the nature of the course schedule you will be allowed up to three absences without penalty. However, you are responsible for all material covered during each class (whether they are present or not) and any assignments due that day. Excessive absences will result in a much lower class participation grade.

**Academic Dishonesty:**
Any type of academic dishonesty will result in severe disciplinary action on the part of the instructor. Cheating and plagiarism will be grounds for receiving an “F” on the assignment/examination or an “F” for the course, depending on the severity of the offense. UAB policy regarding academic dishonesty is outlined in [https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/honor-code](https://www.uab.edu/students/academics/honor-code)

**Students with Disabilities:**
If you are registered with Disability Support Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted Disability Support Services, please call 205-934-4205 or visit DSS at 1701 9th Ave. South.

**Course Outline/Readings:**
(may be subject to change)

Week 1 (Aug 25, 27, 29)
Topics: Intro to IPE, World Trading System (part 1)
Readings:
- Oatley, ch. 1 “International Political Economy”
- Oatley, ch. 2 “The WTO and the World Trade System”

Week 2 (Sept 3, 5)
Topics: World Trading System (part II), Politics of Trade I
Readings:
- Oatley, ch. 3 “The Political Economy of International Trade Cooperation”

Week 3 (Sept 8, 10, 12)
Topics: Politics of Trade II
Readings:
- Oatley, ch. 4 “A Society-Centered Approach to the Politics of Trade”

Week 4 (Sept 15, 17, 19)
Topics: Politics of Trade continued
Readings:
• Oatley, ch. 5 “A State-Centered Approach to Trade Politics”

Week 5 (Sept 22, 24, 26)
Topic: Trade and Development: Import Substitution Industrialization
Readings:
• Oatley, ch. 6 “Trade and Development I”

Week 6 (Sept 29, Oct 1, 3)
Topic: Trade, Development, and Structural Adjustment Policies
Readings:
• Oatley, ch. 7 “Trade and Development II: Economic Reform”
• Palast, Greg. 2007. “Ecuador Gets Chavezed”

Week 7 (Oct 6, 8, 10)
Topics: Mid-Term Examination, Intro to MNCs
MID-TERM EXAMINATION October 6
Readings:
• Oatley, ch. 8 “Multinational Corporations in the Global Economy”
• The Economist. 1994. “The Invaders are Welcome: Mercedes in Alabama” (Jan 8) p. 32.

Week 8 (Oct 13, 15, 17)
Date: June 14
Topic: Politics of MNCs; CSR
Readings:
• Oatley, ch. 9 “The Politics of Multinational Corporations”
• Ottaway, Marina. 2001. “Reluctant Missionaries,” Foreign Policy.

Week 9 (Oct 20, 22, 24)
Topics: International Monetary Relations
Readings:
• Oatley, ch. 10 “The International Monetary System”
• Oatley, ch. 11 “Cooperation, Conflict, and Crisis in the International Monetary System”
• Cohen, Benjamin “The Triad and the Unholy Trinity”
• Frieden, Jeffrey. 2004. “Globalization and Exchange Rate Policies”

Week 10 (Oct 27, 29, 31)
Topics: Financial Crises in the Global Economy
• Oatley, ch 14 “Finance and Development I: Latin American Debt Crisis”
• Oatley, ch 15 “Developing Countries and Financial Crises II: A Decade of Crises”

Week 11 (Nov 3, 5, 7)
Topics: Financial Crises (cont), Globalization and IPE
Readings:
• Comisky, Mike and Pawan Madhogarhia. 2009. "Unraveling the Financial Crisis of
- Oatley, ch 16 “Globalization: Consequence and Controversies”
- Fox, Justin. 2014. “Piketty’s Capital, in a Lot Less than 696 Pages,” available at

**Week 12 (Nov 10, 12, 14)**
Topics: Globalization; Issues of Contention in the Global Economy I: Immigration and Human Trafficking
Readings:

**Week 13 (Nov 17, 19, 21)**
Topics: Issues of Contention in the Global Economy II: Pick a Problem!
Readings: TBA

**Week 14 (Dec 1, 3, 4)**
Topics: Presentation of Research

Final Examination: Monday, Dec 8 @ 10:45.

**Policy Brief – Problem Solving Exercise**

Goal: In this assignment, your job is to suggest ways to resolve to some of the leading problems in the world today. You will need to assess the historical background of the particular issue, as well as the actors involved and the relevant concepts. You will also need to examine the policy choices you face as well as the trade-offs that they entail. Finally, you will present a viable resolution or set of recommendations for this particular issue, as well as some indication of how you respond to potential criticisms and why your recommendation is superior to alternatives. By researching concrete examples, the activity will (a) help you to develop research and presentation skills and (b) deepen your knowledge of how the concepts and issues covered in PSC 461 apply to an actual international issue of contention.

**Tasks:** Each group will create a Policy Brief, and all groups/members will research the areas below in order to provide the necessary background for analysis.
I. **Historical Background:** The historical context surrounding the issue or conflict. The goal here is to provide the basic historical knowledge to help us understand the broader context behind the issue, not to provide an exhaustive historical sketch of the actors involved. In other words, the background should be focused on the issue being examined. For example, if you are examining the Greek financial breakdown, you would focus on such issues as Greek ascension into the EU and their adoption of the Euro, including the issues that arose during this process.

2. **Where Things Stand: The Current Status:** Coverage should begin with the proximate events that started the conflict or the instance when it was broadly recognized that a problem first existed. This group should discuss the nature and scope of this issue, covering in particular (a) the key events, (b) the key actors and their role (c) the primary issues involved—including but not limited to economics, environmental dilemmas, ethnicity, religion, and political ideology, (d) if applicable, the extent to which international organizations and/or NGOs are involved, and (e) the current status of the conflict or issue. In all, the primary purpose of this group is to provide a concise narrative of the conflict or issue -- for lack of a better phrase, "the facts of the case."

3. **Assessment and Policy Recommendations:** In this segment, you will provide a succinct, well-articulated set of concrete policy recommendations for resolving – or helping to respond to – the issue in question. Note that while your recommendation should take into account its intended recipient, you also need to take into account the broader context of your recommendations – for example, if you call for ending financial assistance to Greece (as head of the IMF) you should not ignore the effects of such a policy. The recommendations should include:
   a. at least three discrete policy actions, including some explanation of what these actions entail and their intended results
   b. a justification for the above policies, particularly why your recommendations are superior to either alternative responses and/or the status quo. This section basically gives you a chance to proactively respond to your potential critics.

**Assignments and Project Requirements:**
1. Each group will be required to turn in:
   a. Between 15 and 20 powerpoint slides, as well as the notes that accompany these slides. Pictures should appear in at least 75% of the slides, and using bulleted points, no more than 35 words should be contained in each slide. One of the slides should contain a map of the relevant region or area. The notes should basically be a short narrative that fleshes out the power point presentation. They can be included either as part of the powerpoint file or as a separate word file. If you choose the latter, please make sure to indicate which comments apply to which slide. Always use proper grammar. Print out your slides and a separate document containing your notes, and turn in to the instructor for your team before you begin your presentation. Short videos are welcome, though you need to be aware of time limitations.
   
   b. A policy brief (paper) that is about 20 pages in length. The paper should follow the basic outline laid out above. Proper citation format should be used.

2. The presentations themselves should last a total of 20 minutes, with additional time allowed for Q&A.
3. You will be graded on the **quality** of the submitted materials, the **effectiveness** of your presentation, and the **level of knowledge demonstrated** about the issue and course concepts relevant to the presentation. While most of the grade will be based on my impressions of the above, there will also be an opportunity for peer evaluation.

**Project Timeline/Grade Weighting:**
The specific problem to be solved, as well as the division of labor within the group, will be your responsibility. Below are the timelines related to the project:

- **Project Proposal** (due Sept 12; 3% of final grade): includes a one-page statement of the specific problem, your intended audience, and at least ten sources.
- **Policy Brief** – first draft (due Nov 10; 7% of final grade).
- **The final draft of the policy brief will be turned in on December 1 (10% of final grade).**
- **Presentations will take place on December 1 and 3 (10% of final grade).**