

# **Contemporary Global Issues**

## **Course Description**

## **Credit Hour System**

## **2018/2019**

### **Instructors:**

**Prof. Mahmoud Ismail** Office no.: 42

**D. Amira Abou Samra** Office no.: 62 Office Hours: Monday 1.30 pm : 2.30 pm , Wednesday 1.30 pm : 2.30 pm

### **Course Type:**

Undergraduate

### **Course Learning Objectives:**

This course seeks to make political science students acquainted with a number of the most pressing and vital contemporary global issues and problems. Such knowledge is indispensable for a graduate student seeking to join the labour market. By the end of this course, students should become in possession of necessary analytical and conceptual tools that help them understand the complexity of contemporary global issues and the controversial nature of these issues.

### **Course Content:**

The course approaches the study of contemporary global issues by drawing upon the features of a post-cold war globalized era distinguishing in the meantime between traditional and non-traditional security issues on the global

agenda. It is argued in this course that both a traditional as well as a non-traditional approach to the understanding of the most pressing global issues is indispensable. The course structure emphasizes the fact that global issues are strongly related to each other, and that their various aspects; political, military, economic, cultural, etc.. are strongly related to each other as well. It is also argued that a distinction between what is domestic and what is international is no longer possible in our contemporary globalized world. A special emphasis is made on presenting non-Western perspectives on global issues and on demonstrating the growing multiplicity of global actors.

Among the **suggested topics** for this course are traditional as well as non-traditional global issues such as issues of military power, nuclear proliferation, weapons of mass destruction, global terrorism, environment and resource depletion, automation and technology, human rights and humanitarian intervention, inequality and poverty, energy and resource security, global governance, dialogue of civilizations, the destruction of cultural heritage, human trafficking, health issues.

### **Student evaluation:**

- 1) 50% divided as follows:
  - 20% midterm exam
  - 10% (section activities including a written assignment)
  - 10% (participation in discussions and debates during lecture time)
  - 10% group assignment
  
- 2) 50% final exam

### **Course Outline:**

**1<sup>st</sup> week (11.02/13.02):** Introduction to the course.

**2<sup>nd</sup> week (18.02/20.02):** The Changing Nature of International Security

**3<sup>rd</sup> week (25.02/27.02):** Nuclear proliferation and weapons of mass destruction

**4<sup>th</sup> week (04.03/06.03):** New Wars in the South/ Failed and Weak states

**5<sup>th</sup> week (11.03/13.03):** Humanitarian Intervention

- 6<sup>th</sup> week (18.03/20.03):** Global Terrorism
- 7<sup>th</sup> week (25.03/27.03):** Global Financial Crises
- 8<sup>th</sup> week (01.04/03.04):** Ecology/ Climate Change
- 9<sup>th</sup> week (08.04/10.04):** Cyber International Relations
- 10<sup>th</sup> week (15.04/17.04):** Inequality and poverty
- 11<sup>th</sup> week (22.04/24.04):** Refugees
- 12<sup>th</sup> week (29.04):** presentations
- 13<sup>th</sup> week (06.05/08.05):** presentations
- 14<sup>th</sup> week (13.05/15.05):** General Conclusion of the course

**Please note** that one week is reserved for **the midterm exam**. The date of the exam will be announced once set by the administration of the University!

**Readings:** (Following is a list of suggested and essential readings, the essential readings will be specified in class. Additional readings and material might be suggested throughout the semester)

### **International Security:**

- Columba Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams, Critical Security Studies: an Introduction, Introduction: Mapping critical security studies, and travelling without maps, (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 1-13

- C. Elizabeth St. Jean, "The Changing Nature of "International Security": The Need for an Integrated Definition", Paterson Review, Vol. 8, 2007, pp. 22-33

- John P Williams , The Paradox of Human Security: Security From Below, Produced From Above, MA, Political Science Department, The University of Wyoming, May 2011

### **Military power, deterrence, proliferation and weapons of mass destruction:**

- Bjorn Moller, "The Role of Military Power in the Third Millennium", in Charles Kegley, Jr. and Eugene Wittkopf (eds.), *The Global Agenda*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), pp. 37-56
- The Global Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime, Report by International Institutions and Global Governance Program, May 21, 2012, <https://www.cfr.org/report/global-nuclear-nonproliferation-regime>
- Anne I. Harrington, "Power, violence, and nuclear weapons", *Critical Studies on Security*, 4:1, 2016, pp. 91-112
- Austin Alex H. Chung, Postcolonial Perspectives on Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Conference Paper for the ISAC-ISSS Joint Annual Conference 2014, 14-16 November 2014, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, link: <http://web.isanet.org/Web/Conferences/ISSS%20Austin%202014/Archive/253053b8-52cd-4251-8a5d-1dd0163cb460.pdf>
- Jo-Ansie van Wyk and Linda Kinghorn, "The International Politics of Nuclear Weapons: A Constructivist Analysis", *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, Vol 35, Nr 1, 2007, pp. 1-28
- Richard K. Betts, "The New Threat of Mass Destruction", in Charles Kegley, Jr. and Eugene Wittkopf (eds.), *The Global Agenda*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), pp. 69-81
- Bill Keller, "Nuclear Nightmares", Annual Editions, Global Issues 04/05, 2004, 20<sup>th</sup> ed.
- Andrew Heywood, Nuclear Proliferation and Disarmament, Global Politics, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 270-288
- Sarah Kreps and Micah Zenko, "The Next Drone Wars: Preparing for Proliferation", Foreign Affairs, March/ April 2014, pp. 68-79
- Nabil Fahmy, An Assessment of International Nuclear Nonproliferation Efforts, 42, *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2006

### **New Wars in the South/ Failed and Weak States:**

- Mary Kaldor, "In Defense of New Wars", Stability: International Journal of Security and Development, 2(1), 2013
- Francisco Cecon, International Security and Failed States: A Cause for Concern?, e-IR, 2014

- Stewart Patrick, "Failed" States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas, International Studies Review, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter, 2007), pp. 644-662

### **Human Rights, Humanitarian Intervention and Refugees:**

- Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 310-337
- Alan J. Huperman, "Obama's Libya Debacle: How a Well-Meaning Intervention Ended in Failure", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, pp. 67-77
- Silvia Boarini, *A Refugee Crisis with no end in sight*, 2016, link: [globalissues.org](http://globalissues.org)
- Sharon Stanton Russell, *Refugees: Risks and Challenges Worldwide*, [migrationpolicy.org](http://migrationpolicy.org), 2002
- *The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Refugees, Conflict and International Law*, (London: Democratic Progress Institute, 2016), [democraticprogress.org](http://democraticprogress.org)
- Zaatari Camp: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Goj6lulFr4o>
- The Syrian Refugee Crisis: <https://nyti.ms/2ifQaKK>

### **Global Terrorism**

- Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 289-309
- Richard Jackson, "Constructing Enemies: "Islamic Terrorism" in Political and Academic Discourse", Government and Opposition, Vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 394-426
- Audrey Kurth Cronin, "ISIS is not a Terrorist Group: Why Counterterrorism Won't Stop the Latest Jihadist Threat", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, pp. 87-98
- Daniel Byman, "ISIS Goes Global: Fight the Islamic State Targeting Its Affiliates", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2016, pp. 76-85
- Stephen M. Walt, "ISIS as a revolutionary state: New Twist on an Old Story", Foreign Affairs, November/ December 2015, pp. 42-51

- Kenneth M. Pollack, *Fight or Flight: America's Choice in the Middle East*, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2016, pp. 62-75

### **The Global Environment**

- John Barkdull, "Why Environmental Ethics Matters to International Relations", Annual Editions, Global Issues 04/05, 2004, pp. 188-191, 20<sup>th</sup> ed.
- Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, "Ecological Myths: One Planet, One Experiment", in Charles Kegley, Jr. and Eugene Wittkopf (eds.), *The Global Agenda*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), pp. 393-403
- Veerabhadran Ramanathan, Jessdica Seddon and David G. Victor, "The Next Front on Climate Change: How to Avoid a Dimmer, Drier World?", Foreign Affairs, pp. 135-143
- Suggested videos: "An inconvenient Truth"

### **Inequality, Poverty and food security:**

- Andrew Heywood, *Poverty and Development*, Global Politics, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 359-389
- Nancy Birdsall, "Life is unfair: Inequality in the World", in Charles Kegley, Jr. and Eugene Wittkopf (eds.), *The Global Agenda*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), pp. 359-372
- "Power to the Poor: Provide Energy to Fight Poverty", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, pp. 133-138
- Ronald Inglehart, "Inequality and Modernization: Why Equality Is Likely to Make a Comeback?", Foreign Affairs, January/ February 2016, pp. 2-10
- Francois Bourquinon, "Inequality and Globalization: How the Rich Get Richer as the Poor Catch Up", Foreign Affairs, January/ February 2016, pp. 11-15
- Pierre Rosanvallon, "How to Create a Society of Equals: Overcoming Today's Crisis of Inequality", Foreign Affairs, January/ February 2016, pp. 16-22
- Anthoy B. Atkinson, "How to Spread the Wealth: Practical Policies for Reducing Inequality", Foreign Affairs, January/ February 2016, pp. 29-33

- Jonathan Tepperman, Brazil's Antipoverty Breakthrough: The Surprising Success of Bolsa Familia, Foreign Affairs, January/ February 2016, pp. 34-44
- Nancy Birdsall, "Middle-Class Heroes: The Best Guarantee of Good Governance", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2016, pp. 25-32
- Benjamin Shepherd, "Thinking critically about food security", Security Dialogue, 2012
- Suggested videos:  
The End of Poverty, www.confutatis.org link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= xpKKHcC8eU>

### **The Trouble with Race:**

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Race in the Modern World", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, pp. 1-8
- "The trouble with Race", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, pp. 10-56
- Roxanne Lynn Doty, The Bounds of 'Race' in International Relations, in: Dominique Jacquin Berald, Andrew Oros and Marco Verweij (eds.), Culture in World Politics, (Macmillan Press and Millennium, 1998), pp 134-155
- Peter Newell, "Race, Class and the Global Politics of Environmental Inequality", Global Environmental Politics, 5:3, (The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, August 2005), pp. 70-96
- Nicola Short and Helen Kambouri, "Ambiguous universalism: theorising race/nation/ class in international relations", Journal of International Relations and Development, 2010, 13, pp. 268–300

### **Cyber IR:**

- Sarah Kreps and Micah Zenko, "The Next Drone Wars", Foreign Affairs, March/April 2014, pp. 69-79
- Charles Weiss, "New Tools and New Challenges", Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 4, no. 2, Summer/Fall 2003, pp. 107-110
- Nazli Choukri and Daniel Goldsmith, "Lost in Cyberspace: Harnessing the Internet, International Relations and Global Security", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist, No. 68 (2), pp. 70-77

- Chintan Vaishnav, Nazli Choukri and David Clark, Cyber International Relations as an Integrated System, Working Paper no. 2012-16, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Political Science Department, electronic copy available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2084155>

### **The Global Financial Crises:**

- Tareq Alrifai, Islamic Finance and the New Financial System: A Ethical Approach to Preventing Future Financial Crises, (Singapore: Wiley, 2015)

### **Globalization and the global agenda**

- Moises Naim, “The Five Wars of Globalization”, Foreign Policy, January/February 2003, pp. 28-37
- James Rosenau, “The Complexities and Contradictions of Globalization”, Annual Editions, Global Issues 04/05, 2004, pp 53-57
- Stanley Hoffman, “Clash of Globalizations”, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2002, pp. 104-115
- Robert Wright, “Mr. Order meets Mr. Chaos”, Foreign Policy, No. 124, May/June 2001, pp. 50-60

### **Assignments:**

- 1) **Section assignment:** Each student has to address one specific contemporary global **problem** in no more than 5-10 pages (at least 5 different references are required/ to have a clear research question is a must)

Topics have to be selected and registered with our **Teaching Assistant** during the first three weeks of the semester, as no repetition of topics is allowed.

*Examples:*

The Refugee problem (Syria, Rohingya)



Military conflict in South East Asia (example)

Hate speech as a global cultural phenomenon (example)

The impact of rainforests fire (example)

Competition over energy sources (example)

- 2) **Group assignments:** they are written assignments that are to be prepared for class discussion. They could take the form of debates or an analytical discussion of a contemporary global issue raising **ethical concerns** (ex. Human trafficking, working conditions, aids). They will be further discussed throughout the semester.