



CIEE Paris, France

Course title:	Contemporary Controversies in International Relations
Course code:	(GI) INRE 4007 PAFR
Programs offering course:	Arizona State University Global Flex - Course + Internship, Arizona State University Global Flex - 3 Credit, Arizona State University Global Flex - 6 Course Credits, Paris Open Campus Block
Open Campus Track:	International Relations and Political Science
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3.00
Contact hours:	45.00
Term:	Spring Block I 2023

Course Description

The course provides an overview of important international conflicts of our time, their causes, main agents, and recent developments. Investigating a number of case studies will allow us to not only identify and learn in detail about different areas of international controversy, but also to study models of international cooperation. Course participants are to analyze a variety of current conflicts by diagnosing the conflict, providing an outlook for the medium-term future, and proposing solutions. Classroom content is supplemented and enhanced by debate meetings with experts and practitioners from different organizations and institutions. The course addresses the following and other questions: In which policy domains do we find contemporary / future international controversies? What are the ways in which these controversies are diffused and settled? What are existing obstacles to the resolution and settlement of international conflicts? What major multilateral forums exist? Is global governance a realistic and desirable goal? What could possible forms look like?

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Synthesize a range of current positions and debates in international relations to develop a nuanced analysis of the controversies studied
- Develop a firm understanding of foundational theories of international relations
- Acquire practice in addressing pointed and critical questions to politicians and members of government bureaucracies.
- Further develop critical thinking and communication skills by regularly debating political topics of current significance – in writing and in class
- Improve team work and public speaking skills by preparing and delivering presentations in a group

Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed two courses in modern history, politics, or international relations.

Methods of Instruction

The methodology will be characterized by lectures, presentations and class discussions based on the assigned readings. Lectures will be enhanced by PowerPoint presentations whenever these are helpful to explain international conflicts and controversies. The class debates will be prepared and conducted in such a way that they can serve as preparation for discussions and meetings with politicians, civil servants, NGO representatives as well as independent experts. Classroom activities will include individual, partner and group work and will be complemented by homework exercises.

Assessment and Final Grade

1.	Homework Assignments (2)	10%
2.	Midterm Exam	15%

3.	Individual Presentation	10%
4.	Group Project	15%
5.	Final Digital Project	30%
6.	Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Homework Assignments (2)

There are two written homework assignments that students will be required to submit during the course. These assignments are short, 750-word reflective responses to topics that have been discussed in class. Instructions and questions for these written assignments will be distributed at least one week prior to their due dates.

Midterm Exam

Students will sit a midterm examination that will assess their understanding of foundational theories of international relations. This exam will be based on 3 essay questions completed within the allotted time.

Individual Presentation

Students will be required to select a real-life event that connects to one of the international relations themes discussed in the class. They are to prepare a short 10-minute presentation describing the issue, and connect it to the course literature on that theme.

Group Project

Working in small groups, students will be required to write a position paper (approximately 2000 words in length) whereby students must take and defend a position related to one of the controversial topics presented in the course. Students will be asked to use course literature, concepts, and theoretical frameworks covered in the course to defend their position.

Final Digital Project

Using multimedia resources, students will submit and defend a position paper on a current international political challenge or crisis. Students will be asked to carry out independent research on a subject of their own choice, but that connects to the general theme of the course. Students will be required to formulate a research question to guide their research, and use course literature to structure a response. The project will be developed in two parts: the first is the submission of a short, 4-minute video essay where the student presents and defends their position. Videos are expected to present edited images, graphs, and other media resources into the allocated time to demonstrate the argument. The second part of the submission is a 'defense' of the video, conducted in class in the final session. Students should have PPT slides and handouts at their disposal to respond to questions and critiques from the instructor. Each part of the project is worth 50% of the whole.

Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided

- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.0 (Re)-Introduction to the International System

In this class students will evaluate their perspective on the international system through a thorough re-introduction. The international system will be reviewed in the context of recent significant international developments, including, but not limited to, changes in the EU, changes in US foreign relations, international positions on the Middle-East, and international positions on the Korean peninsula.

Reading:

Bova (2016, pp. 3-38), Frieden (2010, pp. 40-79), Xi (2017a, pp. 479-483).

Recommended Reading:

Betts (2012, pp. 1-53), Harston (2010), Young (2014), pp. 29-31

Week 2

Class: 2.0 International Actors and the Politics of Cooperation

Cooperation is an assumed necessity in international relations. This class examines this assumption through an analysis of contemporary international organisations and the main parties / actors involved. Students will visit an organisation connected with research and / or international policy development.

Reading:

Martin (2012), Risse (2012), O'Brian (2012).

Recommended Reading:

Mearsheimer (1995), Keohane (2005, pp. 49-64), Karreth (2014), Xi (2017b, pp. 588-601).

- **Homework Assignment 1 due**

Class: 3.0 Global/Alpha Cities

This class examines the emergence and in some cases intentional creation of "global cities" (aka "Alpha" cities) that function as essential sites for both exchange and intense competition in the global economy, e.g., Shanghai vs. Hong Kong (shipping), Hong Kong vs. Singapore (UNHWI), London vs. Berlin (as post-Brexit financial centers).

Readings:

Sassen (2001), GaWC (2016), explore rankings and website, A.T. Kearney (2017), Knight Frank LLP (2015)

Week 3

Class: 4.0 Environmental Degradation and International Conflict

This class examines the correlation between environmental challenges and the rise of conflict throughout the world.

Reading:

Raleigh (2007), Theisen (2011), UNEP (2004), Schreurs (pp. 89-116).

Recommended Reading:

Raleigh (2007), Selby (2005), Gleick (2014), McBeath and Wang (2008, pp. 1-16), Li (2016, pp. 49-54).

- **Midterm Exam due**

Class: 5.0 The United States and Paris Agreement

This class examines the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2016), why and how the agreement was reached, and subsequently, the US decision to withdraw from the agreement (2017), and

consequences to-date.

Readings:

Klein et al, Ed. (2017), Chs. 3 and 22; NY Times Editorial Board (2017)

Week 4

Class: 6.0 Terrorism as International Conflict

Terrorism is often understood in public discourse as a particular form of conflict used by non-state forces, yet there are multiple, and often conflicting, definitions of the term. This class examines the conflicting definitions and discourses on terrorism and other non-state acts of violence and discusses their relevance for geopolitics.

Reading:

Buena de Mesquita (2012), Conrad (2014), Brookings (2008).

Recommended Reading:

Gal-Or (2015), Global Terrorism Database, Wang (2015, pp. 308-315), Tukmadiyeva (2013, pp. 87-108).

- **Individual Presentations due**

Class: 7.0 Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect

Students will hear from a guest speaker pertaining to human rights and discourses on mutual responsibilities

Reading:

Frieden (2010, pp. 408-443), Bellamy (2010), Amnesty International (2015), Angle (2008, pp. 76-94).

Recommended Reading:

Weiss (2007), Morris (2013), Bhattacharya (2013).

- **Homework Assignment 2 due**

Week 5

Class: 8.0 Crises in the Middle East

This class evaluates the multiple security and economic challenges in the context of the Middle Eastern crises. Students will hear from a Guest Speaker researching on the crises in the Middle Eastern region.

Class: 9.0 Case Study: The Rohingya

This class examines the case of the Rohingya and the alleged ethnic cleansing they are facing in Myanmar, the broader discrimination they face in South Asia, and global reactions to the same.

Readings:

Ibrahim (2018), Introduction, Conclusion and Epilogue; Chaudhury and Samaddar, Eds.

(2018), Introduction, Epilogue and Afterword

- **Group Project due**

Week 6

Class: 10.0 A New Cold War or Worse?

China's rapid economic rise and increasingly assertive foreign policy has led to an expansion of conflicts with its regional neighbors as well as the United States and others who more and more often view China as a strategic threat despite Beijing's assurances to the contrary. While some are predicting an inevitable war with China, it is clear that military positioning has already shifted, as well as on-going trade conflicts and increasingly, even, restrictions on cultural and educational exchanges. This class discusses these developments from contrasting perspectives in terms of existing conflicts and the potential for more serious ones to emerge. Class will include a screening of John Pilger's documentary, *The Coming War on China* (2016).

Readings:

Allison (2017).

Class: 11.0 The Future of International Conflict and its Management

In this final class before the exam, students review the course thus far, and examine the capacity and accuracy of forecasting international disputes.

Readings:

Gleditsch (2013), Ward (2013), Mumford (2013).

Recommended Readings:

Bercovitch (1996), *Crisis Watch* (2016).

Due - In-class final examination.

Course Materials

Readings

Allison, Graham (2017) *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Angle, Stephen C. (2008) "Human Rights and Harmony." *Human Rights Quarterly* 30(1), 76-94.

A.T. Kearney (2017) "Global Cities 2017," <https://www.atkearney.com/global-cities>.

Bhattacharya, Abanti (2013) "China and its Peripheries: Strategic Significance of Tibet." *ICPS: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Issue Brief 220* [JSTOR].

Bellamy, Alex J. (2010) The Responsibility to Protect - Five Years On. *Ethics and International Affairs* 24(2):143-69.

Bercovitch, Jacob, ed. (1996) *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner.

Betts, Richard (ed.) (2012). *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*. (4th ed.). Routledge

Bova, Russel (2016). *How the World Works: A Brief Survey of International Relations*. (3rd ed.). Pearson.

Buena de Mesquita, Ethan. 2012. "Terrorism and Counterterrorism." In *Handbook of International Relations*. (2nd ed.). Sage.

Chaudhury, Sabyasachi Basu Ray and Ranabir Samaddar (2018), *The Rohingya in South Asia: People without at State*. Routledge India.

Conrad, Justin and James Igoe Walsh (2014). International cooperation, spoiling, and transnational terrorism. *International Interactions*, 40(4), 453-476.

Foreign Policy (2016). 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016. See <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/03/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2016/>

Frieden, Jeffry, David Lake and Kenneth Schultz (2010). *World Politics: Interests, Interactions and Institutions*. (3rd ed.). W.W. Norton & Company.

Gal-Or, N. (2015). *International Cooperation to Suppress Terrorism (RLE: Terrorism & Insurgency) (Vol. 10)*. Routledge.

GaWC (2016) "The World According to GaWC 2016," Geography Department at Loughborough University, <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2016t.html>.

Gleditsch, Kristian S., and Michael D. Ward. (2013) Forecasting Is Difficult, Especially about the Future: Using Contentious Issues to Forecast Interstate Disputes. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(1):17-31.

Gleick, Peter. (2014). Water, drought, climate change, and conflict in Syria. *Weather, Climate, and Society*, 6(3), 331-340.

Ibrahim, Azeem (2018) *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. London: C. Hurst.

Karreth, Johannes, and Jaroslav Tir. (2013) International Institutions and Civil War Prevention. *Journal of Politics* 75(1):96-109.

Keohane, Robert (2005). "The Concept of Cooperation." In *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton University Press.

Klein, Daniel, et al Ed. (2017) *The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Analysis and Commentary*. Oxford University Press.

Knight Frank LLP (2015) "Global Cities Survey," <https://content.knightfrank.com/resources/knightfrank.com/wealthreport2015/wealthpdf/04-wealth-report-global-cities-chapter.pdf>.

Li, Anthony H.F. (2016). "Hopes of Limiting Global Warming? China and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change." *China Perspectives* 1(105), 49-54.

Martin, Lisa and Beth A. Simmons (2012). "International Organizations and Institutions." In *Handbook of International Relations*. (2nd ed.). Sage.

McBeath, Jerry and Bo Wang (2008). "China's Environmental Diplomacy." *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 15(1), 1-16.

Mearsheimer, John (1995). "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19(3), 5-49.

Mitchell, Ronald B. (2012). "International Environmental Politics." In *Handbook of International Relations*. (2nd ed.). Sage.

Morris, Justin (2013). Libya and Syria: R2P and the spectre of the swinging pendulum. *International Affairs*, 89(5): 1265-1283.

Mumford, Andrew (2013). Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict. *The RUSI Journal*, 158(2), 40-46.

Nye, Joseph Jr. and David A. Welch (2012). *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation*. (9th ed.). Pearson.

New York Times Editorial Board (2017) "Our Disgraceful Exit from the Paris Accord" *New York Times* (June 1, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/opinion/trump-paris-climate-change-agreement.html>.

Pape, Robert (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review*, 97(3), 343-61

Raleigh, Clionadh, and Henrik Urdal (2007). Climate change, environmental degradation and armed conflict. *Political geography*, 26(6), 674-694.

Risse, Thomas. (2012). "Transnational Actors and World Politics." In *Handbook of International Relations*. (2nd ed.). Sage.

Sassen, Saskia (2001), "The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier," *India Seminar*, <http://www.india-seminar.com/2001/503/503%20saskia%20sassen.htm>.

Schreurs, Miranda A. "Transboundary Cooperation to Address Acid Rain: Europe, North America, and East Asia Compared," *Beyond Resource Wars: Scarcity, Environmental Degradation, and International Cooperation*, Shlomi Dinar, Ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 89-116.

Selby, J. (2005). The geopolitics of water in the Middle East: fantasies and realities. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(2), 329-349.

Theisen, Ole., Helge Holtermann and Halvard Buhaug (2011). *Climate wars? Assessing the claim that drought breeds conflict*.

Tukmadiyeva, Malika (2013). "Xinjiang in China's Foreign Policy toward Central Asia." *Connections* 12(3) 87-108.

Ward, Michael D., Nils W. Metternich, Cassy L. Dorff, Max Gallop, Florian M. Hollenbach, Anna Schultz, and Simon Weschle (2013). Learning from the Past and Stepping into the Future: Toward a New Generation of Conflict Prediction. *International Studies Review* 15(4):473-490.

Wang, Jay (2015) "Terrorism and Violence in and from Xinjiang." *Shared Destiny*, Geremie R. Barmé and Linda Jaivin, Eds. Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 308-315.

Weiss, Thomas G. (2007) *Humanitarian Intervention*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Xi Jinping. (2017a) "China's Diplomacy Must Bepit Its Major Country Status," *The Governance of China, Volume II*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, pp. 479-483.

---. (2017b) "Towards a Community of Share Future for Mankind," *The Governance of China, Volume II*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, pp. 588-601.

Young, Alex (2014) "Western Theory, Global World: Western Bias in International Theory." *Harvard International Review* 36(1), pp. 29-31.

Online Resources

Brookings Institute (2008). "Combating International Terrorism". See <https://www.brookings.edu/research/combating-international-terrorism/>

International Crisis Group (2016). "Crisis Watch: 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2017". See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2017>

Global Terrorism Database. See: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

O'Brian, Emily and Richard Gowan (2012). "What Makes International Agreements Work?" Center on International Cooperation: Overseas Development Institute. See: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7839.pdf>

UNEP (2004). "Conflict and the Environment". See http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/sudan/04_conflict.pdf

UN Office on Genocide Prevention. "Responsibility to Protect". See: <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html>