

# POLS 3620: International Relations (Fall 2019)

## Bahgat Korany (Section 2)

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**Class Location:** Sunday's &  
Wednesday's 11:30 – 12:45 - C152

**Office Hours:** Sunday & Wednesday  
10.15–11:15 or by appointment  
Research Centers building: 2010/12

This document about POLS 3620 is actually **three in one** .

A-The 1<sup>st</sup> part is an overview of your **syllabus** ,i.e., the course's general objectives , its structure, your rights and obligations , and how the 100% grade is divided into four main components. For instance, there is no term paper in this course. It is important to read this syllabus carefully to make sure whether this is the class you want and you can fit in or it is better for you to look for another course. It is indeed crucial to make this basic decision as early as possible to avoid wasting your time and energy. This 1<sup>st</sup> part introduces clearly the course to help you make your decision, and especially to avoid traps. Some of these common traps that could endanger your success in this course are : e.g. missing your RPs ( on average one per month and none for Dec.) ; more than 3-week undocumented absences that could entail your exclusion from the class; issues of academic (dis)integrity that could exclude you from AUC. The 1<sup>st</sup> class will answer any questions to help you avoid these risks. You have also office hours where you can raise any issues. Though as a **basic or foundational course** this one is bound to be demanding ,

*all efforts are exerted by the instructor and his TAs to help you have a smooth sailing and even get an A when you work for it .*

*B- The 2<sup>nd</sup> part is a division of the material to be covered across the semester into specific classes , i.e .**the detailed outline**. It is your detailed map of the semester. Most of the readings are from the course's textbook, and additional materials are indicated . All readings are put on reserve in the library and/or copy center. This outline also specifies the possibility of other components such as an occasional and relevant film, an exercise in applying what you have learned through a simulation and also **the dates of your 3 mid-terms.***

*C-Since this course is basic for your formation in the IR field, this 3<sup>rd</sup> part –the succinct and general **bibliography** – is for those who want to go further, either at present or in the future. In other words, this short list is not part of the mandatory reading at present ,but a guide to the state of the IR field through some basic literature .*

## **A-Syllabus**

### **I- OBJECTIVES**

The “global” continues to affect the daily life of many: e.g. an international refugee crisis; the sharp fluctuation in the international price of oil , IMF dictat.... These come to add to a crisis-laden global order with such phenomena as some countries' financial crisis/ potential bankruptcy and of course Brexit . Though “domestic” or intra-state armed conflicts are plaguing the life of many people in Afghanistan, Yemen or Syria , no direct inter-state war declaration is taking place at present. Traditionally, inter-state war and its preparations have

been dubbed as the “high politics” in an “anarchical” international system of self-help. Socio-economic issues are, by contrast, conceived as “low politics”. Are They ? Though seemingly secondary, as the accepted term of “low politics” shows, non-state actors such as Da’ash or economic phenomena such as Venezuela’s current problems or Brexit could entail many calamities: for example, intensification of international refugees, the plague of the “F. state” syndrome ; the decline of both the Euro-zone and even the EU----usually perceived as THE model of successful regional integration. The Brexit case shows that we do not need an inter-state war or even a serious political conflict among enemies to have a major threat to international order. So-called “low politics” can be such a threat.

**What else do we learn from the occurrence and evolution of these crises or other contemporary international events?**

This question summarizes the aim of this course: how to decode the world of world politics that is invading our very daily life? How to render the complexity of the “global” intelligible without falling into the trap of over-simplicity for the young student starting in this IR field ? On a rather personal note, I have been focusing my IR teaching – here and abroad – on the graduate level. I realize, however, that basic IR-formation starts much earlier, really at the undergraduate level such as POLS 3620. Consequently, to help all of you acquire the required IR basis, I am here with two qualified TAs and a very appropriate (British) textbook. I think of all of us, primarily the students, **as forming a team** working together, smoothly and consistently, toward a common objective: develop your toolkit to decode IR and the problems of

international (dis)order, i.e. the basic challenges and possible mode of global governance.

## **II- STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE**

To attain this objective, the basic components of POLS 3620 are three:

- A) Interactive lecturing and RPs (reaction papers);
- B) debates, simulation, films (when possible); and
- C) Three mid-terms. Yes, there is no final term paper in this class. In other words, the 100% grade is distributed as follows:
  - 1- Participation (including 3 RPs): 25%
  - 2- Three mid-terms, each 25% (the last one is comprehensive)

The pedagogical approach adopted is interactive and aims to develop the student's analytical capacity rather than rota learning or *7afez mesh fahem* – حافظ مش فاهم. It encourages students to be pro-active and is based on critical reading, on average 35-45 pages per class, **BEFORE** we meet on Sundays and Wednesdays. In other words, the class discussions aim to clarify ambiguous/problematic aspects of the text, answer questions and push the topic forward. In no way should our class meetings focus on a summary of the readings already done in advance. This will be a waste of time and energy.

Since regular attendance is taken for granted (e.g. according to AUC rules, 3 weeks of unjustified absences could entail exclusion from the class), participation grade

is based on your effective input in the class and the 3 RPs (submitted on time). To help you improve your analytical capacity, you will have a written feedback on your RPs as well as your mid-terms.

### **III- BASIC GUIDELINES**

To be an effective member of this class team and contribute to its success, please follow these guidelines:

- 1- Do your assigned readings regularly and well **before each class**, highlighting points you do not understand or agree with and bring them to the class to share with the rest of the team. Don't be shy!
- 2- Have your own pro-active approach in the class itself.  
**Show how you can push the topic further. When you disagree, have your EVIDENCE ready for back-up.**
- 3- **Avoid traps.** The most common are:
  - a) Late arrival/early departure without a valid excuse
  - b) While enthusiasm in discussion is encouraged, this has to be done politely. Impoliteness in addressing anybody is not tolerated
  - c) Zero tolerance is also for any violation of academic integrity, e.g. signing attendance sheet for somebody else, plagiarism...Such violations could entail sending the file to AUC Integrity Committee, with the possibility of failure or semester suspension
  - d) Remember to switch off/put away your phone as soon as the class begins.

- e) In case of emergency, talk to the professor as soon as possible with the relevant document in support (e.g. AUC clinic document in case of medical emergency)

If you feel unable or do not want to respect these guidelines (once they are accepted in the first class meeting), you have the option of signing in for this course with another group/professor.

Though we will have some extra-readings depending on the class discussions, about 90% of the readings are from the main textbook: John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (BSO), The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations. Oxford and New York: OUP, 2017 (International seventh or latest Edition). All readings will be available on reserve in the AUC Library