

POLS 3620: International Relations (Fall 2020)

Bahgat Korany (Section 2)

Contact Info:

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Class timing: Sunday's & Wednesday's 2.00 – 3.15

Office Hours: Sunday & Wednesday 10.15–11:15 or by appointment

This document about POLS 3620 is the 1st part of a two –part presentation and mapping of this course .Giving this class with its big number on line is going to be a challenge .We have all to collaborate to overcome the challenges and make the class a success.

A-This 1st part is an overview of your syllabus ,i.e., the course's general objectives ; main thrust and learning outcome its structure; your rights and obligations; and how the 100% grade is divided into four main components. For instance, in addition to the three midterms , in this course the written work is in the form of RPs rather than a final term paper. 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 1st document details basic information clearly 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. piling up your RPs to the end of the semester when you are under pressure; too many undocumented absences that could entail your understanding of the class material; issues of academic (dis)integrity that could

exclude you from AUC. The 1st 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 TA to help you have a smooth sailing and even get an A when you work for it .

B- The 2nd part- available after our 1st meeting - 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 dates of your three mid-terms , and the possibility of components other than conventional lecturing (if this Covid context permits it) such as an occasional and relevant film , an exercise in applying what you have learned through a simulation .

-Since this course is basic for your formation in the IR field, this syllabus document includes a succinct and general bibliography . These bibliographical suggestions are 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 in the form of books or principal journals .

A-Syllabus

I- OBJECTIVES

Long before Covid-19 ,the “global” continued 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 financial crisis/ potential bankruptcy of some countries . 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

Though seemingly secondary, as the accepted term of “low politics” shows, non-state actors such as Da’ash or economic phenomena such as Libya’s problems or Brexit could entail many calamities: for example, rise of international terrorism, Greece’s bankruptcy and the plague of the “F. state” syndrome within the very gates of Europe itself; the decline of both the Euro-zone and even the EU---- usually perceived as THE model of successful regional integration. The Greek example or Brexit 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. Would the present pandemic force us to revise further these categories of “high” and “low” politics ?

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

II-MAIN THRUST AND LEARNING OUTCOME

The above question emphasizes the focus 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 ? This is done in this course through the analysis of six main IR schools . These schools are confronted with issues of the empirical world to assess their explanatory capacity. These issues are interdisciplinary and wide-ranging, e.g. war , world economy ,human rights... 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 a very appropriate (British) textbook. I think of all of us as forming a team working together, smoothly and consistently, toward a common learning : develop your toolkit to decode IR complexity 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 learning, 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): 15%

2- Three mid-terms, each of the first two 25% and the last comprehensive one is 35%

The pedagogical approach adopted is interactive and aims to develop the student's analytical capacity rather than rote learning or 7afez mesh fahem – حافظ – فاهم مش. 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 video 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) 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 next semester with another 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

"ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Students are expected to commit to the principles of academic integrity.

Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons' work as one's own, using Internet or other sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.

Plagiarism for assignments and/or reports may result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or the report in question. Cheating during an examination may result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, would also be implemented.

You should be aware that all written work might be submitted to “Turnitin.com”, the detection prevention software. By signing this syllabus, you will acknowledge that you have understood that any detected plagiarism will have to be reported.

The University's statement on academic integrity, from which the above statement is drawn, is available at
<http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity/Pages/default.aspx>