

## **POLS 5140-01 : Development and the New International Relations**

**Bahgat Korany**

**Wednesday – 5:00 – 7:25**

**HUSS/El-Waleed , C127**

**Office Hours : Wednesday**

**2.45-4.15 (open house), or by  
appointment**

### **I- THE OBJECTIVE**

The most established explanation of IR is inspired by and/or based on Realism. Basically Realism emphasizes state's centrism – if not uniqueness - in the international system, the prevalence of the (in)security dilemma, and the international disorder of “war of all against all”. This geo-political mode of explanation – the so-called ‘Three S’s of State-Centrism, Survival and Self-Help - has been so prevalent it is usually accepted as the conventional wisdom. Indeed, this geopolitical paradigm of high politics is based on the 17-century Westphalia IR model that conditions most policy-makers as well as the proverbial man in the street. It is usually offered as the eternal truth, valid at all time and place.

The basic question, however, is this: could the 2<sup>nd</sup> decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century be a mere replica and continuation of earlier times, even earlier centuries ? For instance with the rise of a multitude of non-state actors – from Da’ash to human rights organizations- , the impact of new media and increasing global interconnectedness , how good is this state-centric “eternal truth”? Even if we accept the centrality of the state in many countries, are all present-day states really “Like-units” as the most influential statement of this school tells us? What kind of similarity between Switzerland and Yemen are we talking about? Could it be that this paradigm’s convincing simplicity is so dangerous as to seduce and mislead us? To avoid this risk, are we not advised to access this paradigm’s assumptions and propositions and confront them with the *empirical* world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Can we really understand the present international environment without giving prominent place to issues such as questions of development/ misdevelopment; religion/religious organizations; fragile/failed states? If we agree on the importance of these aspects, how can we *operationalize* – i.e. make applicable - an alternative or at least a complementary explanation that reflects the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Though this course’s focus is IR, it is primarily interdisciplinary and inter-specialization. It emphasizes the linkages among strict IR, Comparative Politics and Development.

### **II- STRUCTURE AND AN OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS**

You have in a separate document a detailed outline with the specific readings/dates for each class (these readings are in the copy center and also on reserve in the library ). Here is, however , a synopsis of this course's structure and an overview of content.

We start with the presentation of the IR conventional and influential wisdom : Realism, based on its primary sources/original authors . We quickly move to the alternative view : IR from below , People's IR , IR's Global Civil Society. For instance , beyond the current "Refugees Crisis" and its international ramifications , it is known that populations movements had a sizable impact not only on international processes but also on the very structure of the global system. How can we understand IR without factoring in an immigration country such as the U.S. ? Moreover , increasingly there is the impact of social movements on pillars of the IPE such as the World Bank or IMF , of Development issues on the U.N.—e.g.MDGs , SDGs ; the increasing prevalence of the Fragile/Failed State phenomenon. For many , these intra-state/civil society aspects are the new shapers of contemporary IR .

The challenge is not only to bring them from analytical exile but especially to submit them to rigorous scientific analysis and *demonstrate* how they influence the present characteristics and evolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed, the major objective *and* challenge is how to integrate all these neglected and under-researched elements into a COHERENT/OPERATIONAL and applicable alternative framework. To be appropriate and credible in this respect, any suggested alternative has to address the problem accepted by everybody as *the be all and end all of IR: Security*. Changes in the military environment, such as new wars and the rise of private military organizations are brought in. But the emphasis is on elaborating the framework of COMPREHENSIVE human security. This framework specifies empirically some components of (in)security: from gender or food (in)security, to state-incapacity and the growth of PMOs. To demonstrate the impact of these issues , we include a concrete application on how many of these elements manifest themselves by means of an specific case study on Africa.

### III- GRADING

Please remember that any (undocumented) 3-week absence or lack of academic integrity (e.g. false information, plagiarism) entails exclusion from the class and potential follow-up at the departmental level.

*The basis of success in this course – getting even the top grade – is active involvement in the class and its discussions. The readings are not only to be done regularly, but especially BEFORE coming to the class. The class meetings are not to summarize the texts but to analyze them and move forward, explaining any ambiguity or difficulties*

The total grade is divided as follows

- a. Participation (including 3 reaction papers of 1000 words each on class readings chosen by the student , i.e. a minimum of one RP per month ) . 30%
- b. A mid-term (in class for undergraduates; and a literature review for graduates) 30%
- c. Final term paper 40%

**BEST OF LUCK**