

POLS 184  
Summer 2008  
University of Illinois at Chicago

Dr. Brandon Valeriano  
BSB 1115  
TR 10:45-1:15pm

### **International Politics and Film**

This course will use the medium of film to explain and discuss important topics in international politics. Film provides a window to the world and this course will explore how various aspects of international politics have been covered and dramatized by movies and television. Emphasis will be placed on international conflict, but topics such as diplomacy, civil-military relations, nationalism, international interventions, clash of civilizations, and espionage will be covered. Film will be used to explain theories, events, and history. This is not a film course, but a politics course, so filmmaking nuance and subtext will not be analyzed.

#### **Course Goals**

*By the end of this semester, each student should be able to:*

1. Understand morality and justice from the international perspective
2. Be aware of diverse international concerns and perspectives
3. Be able to critically analyze United States' actions in a global context
4. Understand the concepts and causes of international community and discord

#### **Required Books**

- James Blight and Janet Lang, The Fog of War: Lessons From the Life of Robert S. McNamara. (ISBN: 0742542211)

The following is not required but recommended if you have not had Introduction to International Politics before.

- John Vasquez, ed., Classics of International Relations, 3rd ed. (ISBN: 0131466488)

#### **Course Requirements**

Midterm (15%) and Final (20%)  
Final Paper (40% Total)  
Participation (15%)  
Fog of War Report (10%)

#### **Office Hours**

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## The Course

The course is divided into three main sections. The first section will deal with the morality of conflict and its possible use in the international system. This section will illustrate the main theories of international relations and how they relate to the use of force. We will look at the worldviews of Realism, Idealism (Liberalism), and Radicalism.

The second section will deal with the causes of conflict in the international system. We will ask what conditions lead to war and what do we know about war to this point? This section will focus on understanding the deadliest state of international affairs, conflict.

The third section will deal with the causes of peace. What is required to build a lasting peace in the international system? Can a lasting peace even be built in the current era? This section will focus on understanding the common conditions for peace in the global system.

We will start each day by talking about current events. ***Each student is required to keep up with the international news and be able to participate in class discussion.*** Next we will move to a short lecture on the concepts to be discussed for the day. There is no mandatory attendance policy, but missing class will adversely affect your participation grade. Missing an excessive amount of class is grounds for failure automatically. It will be difficult to finish any exam if you do not have notes for the class from each day, simply reading the book and avoiding class is the surest path to failure.

## The Paper

Your paper assignment for this term will be to find a movie and discuss its relevance to International Politics. You can choose any movie; you just need to connect it back to international relations and the course in general (use your readings or the textbook as a guideline for topics). The paper should outline the movie briefly, discuss the concept you think is most relevant, and how the movie relates to that concept. You should do some background research on both the movie and concept you choose to discuss. I will give an automatic A to the person who writes about a movie I end up adopting for next year. The paper should be at least 15 pages in length. **War movies are poor choices!**

You will also have to write a 5-7 page paper on Fog of War and the corresponding book. Topic to be discussed later

## **News**

Each day we will start off with the discussion of the international news if events take place that are relevant to international politics. Students should be prepared to bring up and discuss these events. Any reputable national news source is acceptable. I prefer the New York Times. Finding news events that are relevant will take time and skill. Some of reports are buried in the news coverage of the day and it is your responsibility to find the relevant ones that others may have missed.

## **Participation**

Participation is simply showing up and contributing to class. Either asking questions, bringing up news articles, following up on lecture points, or private conversations with the professor/teaching assistant (if you are more comfortable with that) all count towards your participation grade. I do not take attendance and feel that missing class will be reflected on your final grade because you will miss important material.

## **Exam**

There will be a midterm and a final. Each test will basically be a movie comprehension test that includes important class concepts. Some questions will center on events in the movie, others will focus on applying themes of the course to the movies. A few questions will reflect directly on the readings.

## **Disclaimers**

Writing Deficiency Policy - Students who exhibit writing deficiencies will be required to seek help from the Writing Center and provide documentation that they have done so. You may seek help from the Writing Center if you think it would help you even if I do not refer you.

## **Schedule**

June 17

Introduction

*Duck Soup* (Humor and Prestige)

June 19

*Lord of the Flies* (Anarchy)

Read “morality and politics” (p 1-8)

Aquinas (in Classics)

June 24

*300* (Power Politics)

Read: Thucydides and Machiavelli

June 27

*Munich* (Morality vs. Power Politics)

Read: Morgenthau, Kennan, Wolfers

July 1

*Wilson* (Liberalism)

Read: Wilson (Classics)

July 3

*High Noon* (Bush Doctrine)

Read: US National Security Strategy (my UIC webpage)

July 8

*All Quiet on the Western Front* (Marxism)

Read: Tolstoy, Zinn (all Classics)

## **Midterm**

July 10

*Fog of War*

Discussion (Fog of War Book)

Read: Fog of War Book

July 15

## **Fog of War Paper Due**

World War II Series (Steps to War)

Read: Clausewitz, Bremer (Classics)

July 17

*Battle of Algiers* (Civil War)

July 22

*Lawrence of Arabia* (Middle East, Long)

July 24

*Butter Battle War*

*Dr. Strangelove* (Deterrence)

Read: Kahn, George and Smoke, and Cohn (Classics)

July 29

*Gandhi* (Peace, Long Class)

Gandhi (Classics)

July 31

*Tae Guk Gi* (Cold War Diplomacy)

**Paper Due**

August 5

*Thirteen Days* (Diplomacy)

August 7, Final

**Other Options (All are in my office):**

Lord of War  
Good Night, Good Luck  
The Great Dictator  
Casualties of War  
Constant Gardener  
Blood Diamond  
Animal Farm  
V for Vendetta  
Platoon  
Team America  
Saving Private Ryan  
No Man's Land  
Hero  
Jarhead  
Napoleon  
Bravo Two Zero  
Longest Day  
Big Red One  
Patton  
Glory  
Uncovered  
Tora Tora Tora  
Mouse That Roared  
Bridge on the River Kwai  
Hotel Rwanda  
A Bridge Too Far  
Paths of Glory  
Saving Private Ryan  
Full Metal Jacket  
Manchurian Candidate  
Triumph of Will  
Apocalypto  
Letters from Iwo Jima  
Flags of Our Fathers  
Wag the Dog  
Band of Brothers  
Team America  
Enemy at the Gates  
Braveheart  
K 19  
Crimson Tide  
Patton  
Hunt for Red October  
Canadian Bacon  
Fail Safe  
Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country  
Elizabeth  
Rules of Engagement  
Dances with Wolves  
Clear and Present Danger  
Paths of Glory