

The MGIMO School of Government and International Affairs

CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ISSUES

Shortened Undergraduate Syllabus

Instructor

Assoc. Prof. Dr Anne Crowley-Vigneau

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This syllabus is designed in accordance with the MGIMO Educational Standard for the Bachelor's Program in International Affairs (program track *Government, International Politics and Law*).

Authors _____ Anne Crowley-Vigneau

Director MGIMO Library _____ Marina Reshetnikova

Purpose of the Course

This course provides students with an introduction to the Contemporary Global Issues Discourse. It is designed to be of value to students who have already acquired a basic understanding of contemporary history and international relations theory. Students will apply different theoretical frameworks to current international problems and assess the level of threat/opportunity each one presents.

The class has three goals:

- To provide students with new concepts and ideas to interpret the world around them;
- To provide a nuanced and balanced understanding of international political-economic affairs;
- To learn how to read and study academic articles in the field of international relations;
- To develop students' analytical and presentation skills, both written and oral.

Requirements and Grading

There are three graded elements of the course. The elements, and their percentage weightings in the final grade, follow:

- In-class tests (40%),
- Individual research projects and their presentation (40%),
- Grade for class participation (20%).

The numerical scale for each graded element of the course is listed below. The letter grades will be calculated on the basis of the weighted average score across the four elements of the course. Please note that the weighted average score will not be rounded up. Students will not be allowed to rewrite assignments in order to improve their grades.

90-100	A
82-89	B
75-81	C
67-74	D
60-66	E
<60	F

In class tests. Students will complete tests during the seminars to check they have learned the lecture materials and done the compulsory readings. All tests will be completed online on your own devices, in the classroom under teacher supervision.

Research project and presentation. Students will write a paper (maximum of 8 pages, double-spaced) which they will both submit and present orally to the class with a PowerPoint presentation. Materials from the additional readings that are particularly relevant to each research topic are marked with * or **. These articles constitute only a starting point for your research.

Class Participation. Students will be assessed based on their attendance and the quality of their participation in class.

Final Examination. All students who have completed the course with a grade over 60% will be allowed to take the final examination. It will be in written form and closed-book.

Week 1 Introduction and analytical tools

EQ: How do theoretical traditions in international relations differ on how to understand actors and their behavior on the global stage?

Lecture: Analytical tools and theories

- International Relations: the old and the new
- Interests versus strategies
- What are analogies with the past worth?
- Levels of analysis
- Schools of thought of International Relations

Seminar: Realist constructivism

- Presentation of course requirements
- Discussion on Realist constructivism

Compulsory materials:

Barkin, J. S. (2003). Realist constructivism. *International Studies Review*, 5(3), 325-342.
Watch video “Why are there so many theories of International Relations?”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKYB24k0anQ>

Additional materials:

Devetak, R., George, J., & Percy, S. (Eds.). (2017). *An introduction to international relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Sørensen, G., Møller, J., & Jackson, R. (2022). *Introduction to international relations: theories and approaches*. Oxford university press. (Part 2)
Steans, J., Pettiford, L., Diez, T., & El-Anis, I. (2013). *An introduction to international relations theory: Perspectives and themes*. Routledge.

Week 2 Foreign policy

EQ: Which factors most influence the foreign policies of states?

Lecture: Sources and outcomes of foreign policy

- Scope of foreign policy
- Foreign policy Interests versus Strategies
- Instruments of persuasion and coercion
- Decision and non-decisions in foreign policy
- Agency and structure

Seminar: Lying in international relations

- Presentation 1: How effective is sports diplomacy?*
- Presentation 2: The Israel lobby in US foreign policy**

Compulsory materials

1. Yarhi-Milo, K. (2018). After credibility: American foreign policy in the Trump era. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(1), 68-77.
2. Listen to John Mearsheimer on “Why leaders lie?”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4IcPZ31EkE>

Additional materials

Cull, N. J. (2013). The long road to public diplomacy 2.0: The Internet in US public diplomacy. *International Studies Review*, 15(1), 123-139.
Hudson, V. M., & Day, B. S. (2019). *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Rowman & Littlefield.
Mearsheimer, J. J., & Walt, S. M. (2006). The Israel lobby and US foreign policy.**
Mokhtari, S., Siraki, G. K., & Sheikhneshin, A. G. (2021). Opportunities and Challenges Facing the Track Two Diplomacy in Iran-US Relations (With an Emphasis on Sports Diplomacy). *International Journal of Political Science*, 11(3), 145-161.*
Snow, N. (2020). Rethinking public diplomacy in the 2020s. In *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy* (pp. 3-12). Routledge.

Week 3 Warfare

EQ: How have the nature and causes of warfare changed?

Lecture: Causes and types of warfare

- Typology of conflicts
- Theoretical perspectives on war
- Cyclical analysis of warfare
- Identity, religion, nationalism
- Old and New wars
- Technological change and warfare

Seminar: Can war be avoided?

- Presentation 1: Preemptive wars versus preventive wars*
- Presentation 2: Hybrid warfare

Compulsory materials:

1. Morris, Z. L. Just War Theory: North Korea and Preemptive War.
<https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Special-Report-pg101-111.pdf>

Additional materials:

- Barela, S. J. (2020). Preemptive or Preventive War: A Discussion of Legal and Moral Standards. *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy*, 33(1), 6.*
- Crawford, N. C. (2003). The slippery slope to preventive war. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 17(1), 30-36.
- Organski, A. F., & Kugler, J. (1980). *The war ledger*. University of Chicago Press.

Week 4 Interstate Peace

EQ: What factors make it more likely that states will resolve their differences and live in peace?

Lecture: Collective Security

- Negative, positive and structural peace
- Peace through limitation
- Peace through accommodation
- Democratic Peace Theory/Territorial Peace Theory
- Global balancing/ Economic interdependence Theory
- International peacekeeping

Seminar: Peace studies

- Presentation 1: US-China economic interdependence: a guarantee of peace?
- Presentation 2: Peace processes in Northern Ireland

Compulsory materials:

1. Barbieri, K. (1996). Economic interdependence: A path to peace or a source of interstate conflict?. *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(1), 29-49.
2. Watch a Ted Talk on Democratic Peace Theory
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frv5-J5OCm4>

Additional materials:

Doyle, M. W. (2005). Three pillars of the liberal peace. *American political science review*, 99(3), 463-466.

Hegre, H., Bernhard, M., & Teorell, J. (2020). Civil society and the democratic peace. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(1), 32-62.

Koschut, S. (2018). No sympathy for the devil: Emotions and the social construction of the democratic peace. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 53(3), 320-338.

Nausheen, S., Srivastava, V., & Seth, S. (2021). The Democratic Peace Theory: Is War a Means to Peace?. *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*, 25(2), 167-186.

Nye Jr, J. S. (2020). Power and interdependence with China. *The Washington Quarterly*, 43(1), 7-21.

Rosato, S. (2003). The flawed logic of democratic peace theory. *American political science review*, 97(4), 585-602.

Week 5 Weapons of Mass Destruction

EQ: How have nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction changed the practice of international relations?

Lecture: Nuclear proliferation

- WMD: a problematic category
- Abdul Qadeer Khan (individual level of analysis)
- Arms control agreements
- MAD versus NUTS
- Tactical nuclear weapons

Seminar: Chemical and biological weapons

- Presentation 1: Biological weapons and gene editing
- Presentation 2: Chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict*

Compulsory materials:

1. Watch Jacek Kugler explain why nuclear proliferation is a threat to peace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk21voEk-Xo>
2. Gutmann, A., & Moreno, J. D. (2018). Keep crispr safe: regulating genetic revolution. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(3), 171-177.
3. Take a quick look at a time lapse map of every nuclear explosion since 1945
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLCF7vPanrY>

Additional materials:

Bentley, M. (2014). *Weapons of mass destruction and US foreign policy: The strategic use of a concept*. Routledge.

Dando, M. (2022). *The New Biological Weapons*. In *The New Biological Weapons*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Price, R. (2019). Syria and the chemical weapons taboo. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 4(1), 37-52.*

Meyer, S. M. (1986). *The dynamics of nuclear proliferation*. University of Chicago Press.

Week 6 Cyberwarfare

EQ: How has cyberwarfare blurred the traditional understanding of war and peace?

Lecture: Capacity and prospects of cyberwarfare

- Cybersurveillance, cyberinterference, cyberwarfare
- Categories of cyberwarfare
- Allegations of cyberinterference in US elections 2016
- Military responses to cyberattacks?
- Postmodern warfare

Seminar: Cybersecurity

- Presentation 1: The Chinese cyber-threat: myth or reality?*
- Presentation 2: Deterrence in cyberspace**

Compulsory materials:

1. Nye Jr, J. S. (2016). Deterrence and dissuasion in cyberspace. *International security*, 41(3), 44-71.
2. Watch a short presentation on cyberwarfare
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVoDwtyvDJc>

Additional materials:

Brenner, J., & Lindsay, J. R. (2015). Correspondence: Debating the Chinese Cyber Threat. *International Security*, 40(1), 191-195.*

Craig, D., Diakun-Thibault, N., & Purse, R. (2014). Defining cybersecurity. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 4(10).

Lindsay, J. R. (2014). The impact of China on cybersecurity: Fiction and friction. *International Security*, 39(3), 7-47.*

Stern, E. (2011). Retaliatory deterrence in cyberspace. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 5(1), 62-80.**

Stevens, T. (2018). Global cybersecurity: New directions in theory and methods. *Politics and Governance*, 6(2), 1-4.

Week 7 Politics and World Economy

EQ: How is the world economy influenced by international politics?

Lecture: Economic policy and financial institutions

- Case 1: CAP and sugar protectionism
- Case 2: China from pegged exchange rate to managed float
- Case 3: Transnational corporations and Chiquita Bananas
- Case 4: WTO hormone beef trade war
- Case 5: IMF 2015 loans to Ukraine
- Case 6: World Bank and isomorphism in education

Seminar:

- Presentation 1: The securitization of food*
- Presentation 2: Covid, politics and the 2022 global economic crisis

Compulsory materials:

1. Watch a video on the history of the WTO-GATT
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j04P3SBBfAw>
2. Albert, M., & Buzan, B. (2011). Securitization, sectors and functional differentiation. *Security dialogue*, 42(4-5), 413-425.

Additional materials:

Griver, S., & Fischhendler, I. (2021). The social construction of food security: The Israeli case. *Food Security*, 13(5), 1303-1321.*

Lang, V. (2021). The economics of the democratic deficit: The effect of IMF programs on inequality. *The Review of International Organizations*, 16(3), 599-623.

Majewski, E., & Malak-Rawlikowska, A. (2018). Scenarios of the Common agricultural policy after 2020. *Problems of Agricultural Economics*, 1(354).

Please, S. (2020). *The hobbled giant: essays on the World Bank*. Routledge.

Šulović, V. (2010). Meaning of security and theory of securitization. *Belgrade Centre for Security Policy*, 1-7.

Week 8 International Economic Relations

EQ: How do governments use international economic relations to further national political objectives?

Lecture: Economic statecraft

- Capitalism and neoliberalism
- Crises of modern global capitalism

- Transnational corporations
- The Case of the Enron financial scandal
- “The Westfailure System”
- Economic Sanctions

Seminar: Trade wars and sanctions

Presentation 1: China-US trade war (2018-present)

Presentation 2: How effective are economic sanctions? (case of Iran)*

Compulsory materials:

1. Timofeev I.N. Economic sanctions as a concept of power politics. *MGIMO Review of International Relations*. 2018;(2(59)):26-42. (In Russ.) <https://doi.org/10.24833/2071-8160-2018-2-59-26-42>
2. Watch Obama on economic statecraft:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTkazqluJ_I

Additional materials:

Heine-Ellison, S. (2001). The impact and effectiveness of multilateral economic sanctions: A comparative study. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 5(1), 81-112.

Murphy, C. N. (2016). 3 ‘The Westfailure System’ fifteen years on. *Susan Strange and the Future of Global Political Economy: Power, Control and Transformation*, 33.

Peksen, D. (2019). When do imposed economic sanctions work? A critical review of the sanctions effectiveness literature. *Defence and Peace Economics*, 30(6), 635-647.*

Petrick, J. A., & Scherer, R. F. (2003). The Enron scandal and the neglect of management integrity capacity. *American Journal of Business*.

Week 9 Dilemmas of Development

EQ: How does participation in the world economy help or hinder the economic development of poorer countries?

Lecture: Development theories

- Approaches to development
- Structuralist versus world system theories
- The ‘oil curse’
- International aid
- Alternative development

Seminar: Responsibility and aid

- Presentation 1: Foreign aid and soft power*
- Presentation 2: The Millennium Development Goals**

Compulsory materials:

1. Velasco, A. (2002). Dependency theory. *Foreign Policy*, (133), 44.
2. Listen to M. Ross explain the 'oil curse'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MMz22q7DRs>

Additional materials:

Blair, R., Marty, R., & Roessler, P. (2022). Foreign Aid and Soft Power: Great Power Competition in Africa in the Early Twenty-first Century. *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(3), 1355-1376. doi:10.1017/S0007123421000193*

Kanbur, R. (2006). The economics of international aid. *Handbook of the economics of giving, altruism and reciprocity*, 2, 1559-1588.

Sachs, J. D. (2012). From millennium development goals to sustainable development goals. *The lancet*, 379(9832), 2206-2211.**

Week 10 Challenges to State Sovereignty

EQ: Can the state continue to overcome challenges to its sovereignty?

Lecture: Sovereignty and statehood

- Delegated sovereignty
- The post-modern state
- Failed states
- The ongoing quest for statehood
- The autocratic legacy of states
- Globalization and national sentiment

Seminar: Old states/ new states

- Presentation 1: Catalan independence*
- Presentation 2: Statehood and the Olympic games**

Compulsory materials:

1. Rossi, M. (2020). The Durability of Parastates: Declarative Statehood in the Absence of Constitutive Sovereignty. *Nationalities Papers*, 48(1), 24-41. doi:10.1017/nps.2019.59
2. Watch a review of the claim for Scottish independence
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBHZiXUDV6A>

Additional materials:

Aspremont, J. (2007). Regulating Statehood: The Kosovo Status Settlement. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 20(3), 649-668. doi:10.1017/S092215650700430X

Gauthier, R. (2020). Statehood and the Olympic Games. *AJIL Unbound*, 114, 380-384. doi:10.1017/aju.2020.74**

Hariri, J. (2012). The Autocratic Legacy of Early Statehood. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 471-494. doi:10.1017/S0003055412000238

Reniu, J. (2014). Could Catalonia Become Independent? *International Journal of Legal Information*, 42(1), 67-74. doi:10.1017/S0731126500028316*

Week 11 The Environment and International Relations

EQ: How does the natural environment influence international relations?

Lecture: Environmental problems and solutions

- Sources of problems for the global environment
- Negative externalities/tragedy of the commons
- Types of challenges for natural resources
- Focus on climate refugees
- Unilateral responses, bilateral efforts, multilateral approaches

Seminar: Current challenges

- Presentation 1: Prospects of a Climate Compensation Fund*
- Presentation 2: The energy transition to renewables**

Compulsory materials:

1. Crowley-Vigneau, A., Kalyuzhnova, Y., & Ketenci, N. (2022). What motivates the 'green' transition: Russian and European perspectives. *Resources Policy*, 103128.
2. Watch a video on whether rich countries should pay for the effects of climate change. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Okcu19z3_U

Additional materials:

Biermann, F., & Boas, I. (2008). Protecting climate refugees: the case for a global protocol. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 50(6), 8-17.

Doelle, M., & Seck, S. (2020). Loss & damage from climate change: from concept to remedy?. *Climate Policy*, 20(6), 669-680.*

Solomon, B. D., & Krishna, K. (2011). The coming sustainable energy transition: History, strategies, and outlook. *Energy Policy*, 39(11), 7422-7431.**

Week 12 Terrorism

EQ: How has terrorism reshaped the understanding of threats on the international stage?

Lecture: Threats and responses

- Categories of terrorism in function of their goals
- Historical waves of terrorist activity
- Can states be terrorist?
- Terrorism, human rights and migration policies
- Governments counterterrorism policies
- The prospects of Climate terrorism

Seminar: Terrorism, old and new

- Presentation 1: The UK Prevent Strategy and Islamophobia*
- Presentation 2: The FARC: goals, achievements and failures of a terrorist organization**

Compulsory materials:

1. Qurashi, F. (2018). The Prevent strategy and the UK ‘war on terror’: embedding infrastructures of surveillance in Muslim communities. *Palgrave Communications*, 4(1), 1-13.
2. Watch the TED talk: Does terrorism work?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uncSMetfK8>

Additional materials:

Caron, J. (2022). Why Decenter the “War on Terror” in Histories of the “War on Terror”? *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 54(2), 347-351.

doi:10.1017/S0020743822000411

Falcó-Gimeno, A., Muñoz, J., & Pannico, R. (2022). Double-Edged Bullets: The Conditional Effect of Terrorism on Vote for the Incumbent. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-21. doi:10.1017/S0007123422000096

Helbling, M., & Meierrieks, D. (2020). Terrorism and migration: An overview. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-20.

Ospina Ovalle, C. A. (2017). Was FARC militarily defeated?. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 28(3), 524-545.**

Riedel, R. (2021). Religion and Terrorism: The Prevent Duty. *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, 23(3), 280-293. doi:10.1017/S0956618X21000363

Turkoglu, O., & Chadefaux, T. (2022). The effect of terrorist attacks on attitudes and its duration. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1-10. doi:10.1017/psrm.2022.2**

Week 13 Propaganda and soft power

Lecture: Communication wars

- Post-truth in international relations
- The three barriers to disinformation
- The “communicative turn” in IR and soft power

- The weaponization of information and countermeasures
- The case of the alleged Russian influence on the Brexit vote

Seminar: Education as soft power

- Presentation 1: British universities and soft power*
- Presentation 2: Foreign aid and great power competition**

Compulsory materials:

1. Watch J. Nye speak about Soft power
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q75uTqz5XS4>
2. Crowley-Vigneau, A. & Kalyuzhnova, Y. (2022). “That’ll Teach Them”: Investigating the Soft Power Conversion Model through the Case of Russian Higher Education. *Higher Education in Russia*, 31(1), 120-140.

Additional materials:

Albert, M., Kessler, O., & Stetter, S. (2008). On order and conflict: International Relations and the ‘communicative turn’. *Review of International Studies*, 34(S1), 43-67. doi:10.1017/S0260210508007791

Blair, R. A., Marty, R., & Roessler, P. (2022). Foreign aid and soft power: Great power competition in Africa in the early twenty-first century. *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(3), 1355-1376.**

Crilly, R. (2018). International relations in the age of ‘post-truth’ politics. *International Affairs*, 94(2), 417-425.

Lomer, S. (2017). Soft power as a policy rationale for international education in the UK: a critical analysis. *Higher Education*, 74(4), 581-598.*

Week 14 Challenges to Democracy

EQ: Is democratic governance is passing phase or the future of humanity?

Lecture: The future of democratic governance

- Challenges to ‘getting to Denmark’ (Fukuyama)
- The populist threat to democracy
- The ‘identities threat’ to democracy
- The spread of authoritarianism
- Social control and technological innovation

Seminar: The Orwellian state?

- Presentation 1: China’s Social Credit System*
- Presentation 2: Democratic resilience**

Compulsory materials

1. Wong, K. L. X., & Dobson, A. S. (2019). We're just data: Exploring China's social credit system in relation to digital platform ratings cultures in Westernised democracies. *Global Media and China*, 4(2), 220–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059436419856090>
2. Watch the featurette (or entire episode if you have access) of “Nosedive”, an episode from the Black Mirror series that shows how social media can curtail personal and political freedom
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R32qWdOWrTo>

Additional materials

Chorzempa, M., Triolo, P., & Sacks, S. (2018). *China's social credit system: a mark of progress or a threat to privacy?* (No. PB18-14).*

Galston, W. A. (2018). The populist challenge to liberal democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 29(2), 5-19.**

Menand, L. (2018). Francis Fukuyama postpones the end of history. *The New Yorker*, 3.

Miller, M. L., & Vaccari, C. (2020). Digital threats to democracy: comparative lessons and possible remedies. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 25(3), 333-356.

Weyland, K. (2020). Populism's threat to democracy: Comparative lessons for the United States. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(2), 389-406.

Week 15 Facing the Future

EQ: Will the international system undergo fundamental change in the future?

Lecture:

- Interpretative theories
- Predictive models
- The danger of liberal assumptions
- A borderless world
- Global crisis

Seminar:

Presentation 1: A Chinese unipolar world*

Presentation 2: A world state**

Compulsory materials:

1. Lecture by G. Friedman on forecasting at MGIMO
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62XUYrANDZA> and check out his website
<https://worldview.stratfor.com/>
2. Read “Wonks gone wild” by D. Drezner
<https://www.tbsnews.net/feature/panorama/wonks-gone-wild-188029>

Additional materials:

Christensen, T., & Snyder, J. (1990). Chain gangs and passed bucks: Predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity. *International Organization*, 44(2), 137-168.

doi:10.1017/S0020818300035232

Friedman, J. (2012). System effects and the problem of prediction. *Critical Review*, 24(3), 291-312.

King, G., & Zeng, L. (2001). Explaining rare events in international relations. *International Organization*, 55(3), 693-715.

Layne, C. (2018). The US–Chinese power shift and the end of the Pax Americana. *International Affairs*, 94(1), 89-111.*

Wendt, A. (2003). Why a world state is inevitable. *European journal of international relations*, 9(4), 491-542.**

Final Examination