Course Description and Purpose

What are the most pressing security issues facing global politics today? Security is a concept that cuts across the many obstacles—physical, intangible, and disciplinary—that society attempts to erect in the name of making the concept more fixed and less slippery. This has never been truer than in the globalized world. The flows of information, people, commerce, maladies, and violence that increasingly penetrate communities create challenges and stressors that test and sometimes threaten populations, the environment, and institutions. The insecurity that results from these broad-based, cross-cutting and often invisible pressures demands an equally broad-minded inquiry into their causes, their effects, and their potential amelioration.

This multi- and interdisciplinary course grounded in theories but conversant with practice encourage its students to consider a variety of security challenges and the debates that surround them. We will look at the ideas, issues, and behaviors that shape our contemporary world. It asks how we understand the world and why certain issues dominate global politics while others are seemingly ignored. It also examines the capacity for agents, organizations, businesses, and nations to cooperate in search of solutions to today’s pressing problems.

But what is a problem? In general discourse, ‘problems’ are questions to be well-thought-out, solved, or responded to. Contemporary international problems are issues to be considered, solved, or responded through theories, methods, and concepts used in the discipline of International Relations. Thus, given the huge arena of issues in the global system to consider, this course is shrouded in the dynamics of Nationalism, Migration, Climate Change, and Conflict.

The first module generally explores different ‘traditional/dominant’ and ‘non-traditional’ approaches to thinking about world politics and security. The second through the fourth module analyzes the causes and consequences as the well possible correlation of ‘Nationalism, Migration, Climate Change, and Conflict’. Then, we wrap up the semester with ‘Geopolitics and Cooperation’, offering a look into tensions in our globalized world that may limit cooperation. In each module, this course examines the competing debates and agendas within each topic.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key issues in global politics and understand their historical and situational contexts;
- Critically analyze and evaluate issues that currently confront international relations;
- Compose a political argument in a clear, coherent, and engaging manner;
• Encourage students to view contemporary international events through a variety of lenses including differing micro and macro perspectives; and
• Enhance communication skills and reading and research acumen of contemporary issues in international relations in a critical, coherent, and clear manner.

Note: This is a discipline-specific global learning course that counts toward your global learning graduation requirement

• **Global Awareness**: Students will be able to demonstrate of the dynamics of the international system and become aware of facts and concepts to explain current debates in the international system and their position regarding the issue.
• **Global Perspective**: Students will be able to analyze different perspectives to explain current political, security, and/or intercultural concerns in the international, regional, and local system and be able to evaluate the utility of various theoretical perspectives in solving and reflecting on global concerns.
• **Global Engagement**: Students will be able to utilize their knowledge to critically analyze a current issue and provide solution-oriented arguments and prescriptions for contemporary international problems.

**Active Learning Strategies**: Students will provide their reaction, engage in a reflection on attitudes and behavior, and identify, compare, and contrast concepts found in journal articles and in the recorded lectures and videos. In this course, videos and interviews are used as a springboard for critical thinking; thus, beyond memorized material.

Note: the syllabus is subject to change during the semester. The list of topics and readings in the course outline is a general guideline or schedule. This is not a strict plan to cover at all costs. I establish my class pace based on the progress I sense from the class. Some topics may need additional coverage while others may need less.

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**Important Information**

**Policies**

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- **Policies**
- **Netiquette** (Links to an external site.)
- **Technical Requirements and Skills**
- **Accessibility and Accommodation**
- **Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**
- **Academic Misconduct Statement**

Remember that the same technology that has made plagiarism easier to accomplish has also made it easier to detect. If you do not cite a source, it is plagiarism. If you do cite it, it is scholarship. For more information on these policies, see the [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution website](Links to an external site.).
Textbook and Course Materials

READINGS are found in Canvas. *Keep in mind that readings complement lectures and will be the foundation of your critical responses and research paper. All the readings will not be summarized and I will assume that you read them closely.*

Supplemental Readings—TRIANGULATE

In addition to the required text, you are to read a daily paper with good coverage on international news such as Reuters, Al Jazeera, the Independent, New York Times or the Washington Post, U.S. DoD, Defense News, BBC, CSIS, Reuters, Strategic Studies Quarterly, Rand Corporation, New York Times, Institute for the Study of War, and Al-Jazeera. This will allow you to not only gauge how various philosophers have influenced behavior in today’s environment and the distinctions and similarities in their opinion but also enhance the development of your understanding of the international community.

Web Resources:

The internet can be an excellent source for quantitative data, for basic background information, for contemporary news, and for government documents relevant to the study of international relations. With that being said, there is also a lot of inaccurate information available on the Internet; please be careful out there...! Use the same rigorous standards that should be applied to printed materials in your evaluation of online information.

TIP: READING ASSIGNMENTS

As the contemporary international relations course includes a wide-ranging field that draws on a variety of disciplines (international affairs, political science, social psychology, cultural studies, international law, economics – to name a few), our readings will touch upon several disciplinary contributions that relate to the study of peace and conflict resolution. Thus, there will be a significant amount of reading in this course. Be prepared to stay on top of the readings!

Strategies on Completing the Reading:

To get through material as efficiently as possible, you may find it more effective to approach the reading in this manner:

1. Read the first few paragraphs of the introduction and then the conclusion to identify the author’s main argument(s).
2. Then scan section headings (or the first sentence in each paragraph) or choose a random few paragraphs in the middle of the reading to see how the author develops and supports the main argument.
3. Finally, reflect on your thoughts then engage in detailed reading for those sections that clarify the argument or provide supporting evidence. Give yourself time to think about the reading, challenging its arguments, or coming up with additional evidence that you believe supports the presented arguments.
Ask yourself the following questions regarding the readings:

- What is the author’s main point or argument?
- What evidence do they offer to support this view?
- Are the arguments and evidence compelling?
- What arguments/evidence that support and undermine this reading?
- How does it relate to previous readings?
- How does the reading correspond to a current event? Why do I care?
- Which skills does this help me develop?
- How might I use this piece in my own work?

Teaching Methods

This course is a fully online course that allows for active learning. You will show your level of understanding of the concepts and facts through conducting interviews and critically analyzing videos, recorded lectures, and journal articles.

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Student Responsibilities:

- review the getting started page located in the course modules;
- review and follow the course calendar;
- watch the entirety of recorded lectures and videos during scheduled weeks;
- submit assignments by 11:59 PM (Eastern Standard Time), no exceptions;
- log in to the course at least five times per week;
- visit FIU Writing Resources (Links to an external site.) webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills;
- all assignments must adhere to the Writing Specifications highlighted on the syllabus;
- any student requiring accommodations of any sort should notify the instructor by the first week of class to make any necessary arrangements;
- grade disputes must be brought to the instructor’s attention no later than one week after the grades are returned;
- assignments that are not properly cited will be issued a zero -Submit only Microsoft word files.
- interact online with instructor and peers;
- review and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;
- log in to the course 3-5 times per week.
The instructor will:

- post recorded lectures by Monday every week;
- post grades 7 days following the due date;
- respond to emails within 2 business days;
- be available to you for appointments.

**Communication & Questions**

The course has a web-assisted website that located in the Canvas environment on the FIU eCampus: [https://ecampus.fiu.edu/](https://ecampus.fiu.edu/). Here, you will find the information contained on this syllabus, where you submit assignments as well as grades from the assignments. You are required to check Canvas regularly. This will be my primary means of communication with you. I will notify you of changes to the schedule and other issues via Canvas. All assignments must be submitted under the assignment box in Canvas.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, and any other misrepresentation of work) is a violation of FIU’s Student Code of Conduct Procedures. Violations will result in a grade of failing in the course. Students may refer to FIU’s academic honesty code. If you are uncertain about what plagiarism is you should consult with your professor or the academic services office on plagiarism. All materials used or paraphrased must be cited and credited. Cheating refers to both the giving and the receiving of unauthorized assistance in the taking of examinations or in the creation of assigned and/or graded class work. Students who assist other students in, or contribute to, acts of academic dishonesty are subject to the appropriate penalties. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of F.

Remember that the same technology that has made plagiarism easier to accomplish has also made it easier to detect. *If you do not cite a source, it is plagiarism. If you do cite it, it is not scholarship.* For more information on these policies, see the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution website: [http://www.fiu.edu/~sccr/](http://www.fiu.edu/~sccr/).

**Social Justice Statement**

Florida International University is committed to social justice. The instructor concurs with that commitment and expects to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Florida International University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or national origin. Any suggestion as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. Any student with a disability that anticipates needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise the instructor within the first week of class to make appropriate arrangements. Please contact Disability Resource Center (305) 348-3532 with any questions.
Class Cancellation for Weather and Other Emergencies

At some point during the semester, it may be necessary for the University to cancel all or some classes due to poor weather, power failures, or other emergencies. Because of the very nature of an online class in which students are participating from all over the world, a University class cancellation or closure will not automatically apply in this course. The FIU eCampus will still be operational in times of a University shutdown. In times of a power outage or system wide failure, the instructor will make an announcement in the FIU eCampus classroom as soon as information becomes available. **Due dates are firm and will not automatically change if the University is closed. Always check our class site for updates and announcements concerning the class.**

Additional Notes

- Writing Support. Visit FIU Writing Resources webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.
- Any student having a prior commitment any time during the semester should notify the instructor by the first week of class to make any necessary arrangements.
- Any student requiring accommodations of any sort should notify the instructor by the first week of class to make any necessary arrangements.
- Assignments that are not properly cited will be issued a zero.
- Do not plagiarize or self-plagiarized—original work only.
- If the instructor is unable to open an assignment attachment, the assignment must be resubmitted within 24 hours or the assignment will be issued a zero.
- No extra-credit assignments will be granted.

Student Evaluation of Instruction

Effective teaching is a primary mission of Florida International University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about the student’s experience in the course for review and course improvement. Student participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about the evaluation will be provided towards the end of the semester.

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the Canvas Conversations Tutorial or Canvas Guide to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.
Web Resources

The internet can be an excellent source for quantitative data, for basic background information, for contemporary news, and for government documents relevant to the study of international relations. With that being said, there is also a lot of inaccurate information available on the Internet; please be careful out there...! Use the same rigorous standards that should be applied to printed materials in your evaluation of online information.

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Assignments

Please review the important information about the assignments page.

This is a writing and interactive intensive course, and each student is expected to submit their assignments on the outlined due dates or it will be subject to deductions. Be aware that your grades will also be based upon the quality and clarity of the content, discussion, and citation. No direct quotes only indirect (paraphrase)… cite your indirect quotes. All assignments must follow APA (6th edition) or Chicago format.

Please note that a core proficiency of this course is critical thinking and analysis. Critical thinking requires students to think through situations, facts, and issues in an open-minded and objective way in an effort to analyze and evaluate information in an informed manner.

As defined by the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, critical thinking is:

“The intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.”

(Scriven, M. & Paul, R. Presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987.)

Qualities of a critical thinker (and of arguments that embody critical thinking) include:

- Certainty is not always necessary for a critical thinker; possibility and probability should always be a consideration—in other words, just because the book tells you it is true, doesn’t mean that there may not be another solution or possibility to consider. The way that facts relate to one another—and not just fact alone—should be used to determine the truth—consider the spider web.
Critical thinkers are not only independent thinkers; they are also impartial-minded in that they are willing to consider all points of view, and they are careful to take every aspect of an argument into consideration—your way of thinking may not necessarily be the only way or the right way of thinking. Consider other perspectives.

Consider evidence (facts), source (from what source did your evidence come from), and motivations (what might be the underlying motivation behind these facts)—in other words, gather information from credible sources and evaluation sources/factual information in the context of what you have been asked to discuss/evaluate.

Several criteria will be used to evaluate written assignments, which includes:

- Effective communication of ideas:
  - Clear and logical organization of ideas/structure
  - Clear explanations of key concepts
  - Style, grammar and spelling
- Understanding of topic, insightful and critical engagement with course materials:
  - Brief, accurate expression of key concepts and arguments in course materials
  - Insightful reflections on the authors’ arguments and approaches (strengths and weaknesses, etc.)
  - Identification of insightful questions raised by the course materials
  - Articulation and defense of clear, insightful arguments, and/or stimulation of debate around different approaches to the issue under discussion

**IS IT? Assignment**

*Answer the following:* Is there a correlation between nationalism, climate change, conflict, and equality? Briefly, discuss if there is or is not a correlation between nationalism, climate change, conflict, and equality. Do not provide a surface answer but must reflect critical thinking answer that holds details. (2-3 paragraphs)

*In addition,* you will choose one of the following countries (listed below) that you will examine in your three analytical observation assignments. **Thus, select the name of the country you will analyze in your three analytical observations throughout this semester.**

**Countries (choose one of the following):**

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**ANALYTICAL OBSERVATIONS (AO) ASSIGNMENT (3 submissions)**

Students will post an examination (between 3-4 pages, this does not include the reference page) of the topic, talking points, and the questions outlined in the assignment boxes. The goal of this assignment is: 1) To develop critical thinking and analytical skills by critiquing the arguments presented in the course literature; 2) To identify flaws in a given argument, concept, model, theory or paradigm; 3) evaluate the central points discussed in reading as a means to investigate its association to your specific aspects and events regarding your country of concern and 4) to spark reflections on your personal assumptions.

**Frame your mindset:** For this assignment consider yourself a scholar who is applying, comparing, and contrasting what is brought forth in one of the readings and indexes to the current realities (current events - news) of a specific country of concern throughout this semester. Facts, not conjectures.

**AO:** This assignment requires students to:

1. First, analyze the prompt provided and consider how the question correlates to the dynamics of your country of concern.
2. Second, students will critically analyze the complexities of the topic for the designated reflection and answer the question outlined within the prompt. Within the submission, students must identify, compare, and contrast two assumptions/arguments of one of the required readings and discuss how the central points of the reading compare or contrast to the dynamics of a specific country of concern using current events (news) and one of the resource/indexes provided.
   - Simply put, you will answer the question outlined in the assignment by focusing on your country of concern. In your answer to the prompt, you will integrate at least two assumptions/arguments from one of the required readings' and compare and contrast to the realities of your country of concern. In addition, review and integrate information/data from one of the resource links (i.e. the IMUNA country profiles) provided below each prompt to support your knowledge of your specific country of concern. Remember, to read the prompts in entirety and follow the writing specifications of this critical thinking and analysis course.
   - Discuss how the central points (two assumptions/arguments) of the reading compare or contrast to the dynamics of your selected specific country in the world today (use current events and the index) when answering the question.
   - No, you cannot integrate more than one of the required readings.
   - You can only use one of the required readings from the week the assignment is due.
o Yes, you must integrate at least two specific assumptions from the selected required reading to answer the questions when correlating to your country of concern
o Yes, you must integrate information/data from one of the resources/index pages provided regarding your specific country-- the indexes change in each prompt.
  ▪ Below, following each prompt I have provided a list of websites to support your knowledge of your specific country of concern.
  o No, you cannot integrate more than one country in the answer. Only your selected country of concern

Several criteria will be used to evaluate this assignment, including:

o the degree to which the student provides and integrates two assumptions/arguments from the reading to answer the question; 3 pts (1.5 pts per developed argument/assumption)

o the degree to which the student illustrates comprehension of the reading assumptions in the answer to the prompt 2 pt

o the degree to which the student illustrates identifies, compares, and contrasts assumptions found in one of the required reading when correlating to the environmental context of their chosen country of concern 5 pts

o the degree to which the student answers (fully or partially) the question regarding their country of concern; --2 pts

o the degree to which the student illustrates insightfulness and originality of comments about the complexities of their country when answering the question; --2 pts

o the degree to which students integrate information/data from the resource links (i.e. the IMUNA country profiles) provided in each prompt; --2 pts

o Grammar, spelling, and clarity of thought -- 2 pts

o Accurate in-text citation and reference page (APA or Chicago only, no exceptions) 2 pts
  ▪ Students must highlight (in-text citation) the chapters/articles from which the two assumptions/arguments were used as well as current event sources and any information/data from the resources page selected.

Submissions must be between 3 - 4 pages (this does not include the reference page). Highlight the chapters/articles from which the two concepts/arguments were used—citations must be used and include a reference page. Refer to the Writing Specifications in the syllabus for the technical requirements of the assignment.

Assignments are due on Saturdays by 11:59 PM. No late submissions will be accepted.

APPRAISING SECURITY ASSIGNMENT


Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.
Students will ask three individuals - a grandparent, family member, and/or friend - about their knowledge of the most pressing security concerns today and in twenty years. Once you have conducted the interview (questions available in Canvas) and collected information from the interview (phone), you will write a synopsis about the individuals you interviewed and provide an analysis utilizing the reading listed above. Details outlined below.

Why is this an important activity?

Learning about and writing an analysis of individuals' perception aids students in distinguishing between stories that are fictional and the real-life dynamics of our world. In addition, it aids in understanding the evolution of security concerns and how those concerns are compared to peoples’ values; thus, mindset (view of the world).

Respondent Questionnaire:

- Students will conduct a PHONE interview of an individual from each of the following age groups, 20-39; 40-59; 60-up
  - Three distinct interviews
- Students will utilize the interview questionnaire form in Canvas for each respondent
  - Create an alias (a name you made up) or refer to the respondent as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc.
- Review the interview guidelines available in Canvas prior to your interview
- Listed below are deadlines to submit your interviews for the three respondents.
  - There is no particular order to submitting the respondent answers that are based on one of the age groups listed above. However, make sure you have a respondent from each age group.

Final Submission must include: (between 4 ½ - 5 pages- does not include the reference page)

Make sure each of the three sections/headers below is outlined accordingly in your final submission. Simply, add section headers to your submission.

1. Interviewee (phone) Observation and Application: 10 points
   - In your submission, describe what you have drawn (broad assumptions) about the experiences of each person interviewed. (2 paragraph per person)
     - Reference each interview in the context of your analysis with either the respondents’ alias (a name you made up) or as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, or Respondent 3.
   - Then, compare and contrast each respondents’ answers regarding security concerns to the arguments brought forth in the Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, “Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods” and Buzan and Hansen, “The Evolution of International Security Studies, 7: Widening and Deepening Security article (2 paragraphs –one paragraph per article) (2 paragraphs per person)
     - Draw specific assertions from the reading to compare to the respondents’ responses (in-text citation is required)

2. Self-Analysis and Application: 14 points
Florida International University
Contemporary International Problems: INR 3081
Summer 2020

Discuss how this assignment and course impacted your thoughts about security and how individuals define what is security and its correlation to our values. (2 paragraphs)

What do you (not the respondents) believe is the most pressing security concerns in the world today? (1 paragraph)

How has nationalism influenced the most pressing security concerns in the world today? (1 paragraph)

What do you (not the respondents) believe will be the most pressing security challenges in twenty years? (1 paragraph)

How would you resolve this forecasted (in twenty years) security challenge? In your answer consider the complexities of the social, political, and economic environment of the international community. (2-3 paragraphs)

3. Three Interviews (place in the Appendix) -12 points

To ensure that your submission develops in a timely fashion, a number of benchmarks have been instituted for the project.

- Interview #1
- Interview #2
- Interview #3
- Appraising Security Final Submission

If you do not submit the three interviews on the specified dates outlined in the syllabus, you will be deducted 2pt for each submission that was not submitted by the deadline from the final grade.

Late submissions of your final submission can be submitted and will be deducted 3 points for every day it is late.

Follow the three “C”s: Clarity, Conciseness, and Correctness (Accuracy)
Avoid: Ambiguity, Exaggeration, and Repetition

WRITING SPECIFICATIONS

All assignments for this course require adherence to these specifications:

- Font style: Times New Roman; Font size: 12
- 1-inch margins on all sides of the document
- Double spacing throughout the write-up
- Separate reference page
- Only APA citation style or Chicago citation style; all write-ups require citations and a separate reference page with the list of readings used.
  - APA citation style
  - Chicago citation style
- Failure to cite any materials used will result in an automatic zero for the assignment.
- All assignments must be submitted in MS Word (.doc) format. Failure to comply will result in the assignment being counted as a non-submission.
GRADING

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COURSE OUTLINE *(subject to change)*
See Weekly Modules in Canvas.