**Course Description**
The course provides an overview of important international conflicts of our time, their causes, main agents, and recent developments. Investigating a number of case studies will allow us to not only identify and learn in detail about different areas of international controversy, but also to study models of international cooperation. Course participants are to analyze a variety of current conflicts by diagnosing the conflict, providing an outlook for the medium-term future, and proposing solutions. Classroom content is supplemented and enhanced by debate meetings with experts and practitioners from different organizations and institutions. The course addresses the following and other questions: In which policy domains do we find contemporary / future international controversies? What are the ways in which these controversies are diffused and settled? What are existing obstacles to the resolution and settlement of international conflicts? What major multilateral forums exist? Is global governance a realistic and desirable goal? What could possible forms look like?

**Learning Objectives**
By completing this course, students will:
- Synthesize a range of current positions and debates in international relations to develop a nuanced analysis of the controversies studied
- Develop a firm understanding of foundational theories of international relations
- Acquire practice in addressing pointed and critical questions to politicians and members of government bureaucracies.
- Further develop critical thinking and communication skills by regularly debating political topics of current significance – in writing and in class
- Improve team work and public speaking skills by preparing and delivering presentations in a group

**Course Prerequisites**
Students should have completed two courses in modern history, politics, or international relations.

**Methods of Instruction**
The methodology will be characterized by lectures, presentations and class discussions based on the assigned readings. Lectures will be enhanced by PowerPoint presentations whenever these are helpful to explain international conflicts and controversies. The class debates will be prepared and conducted in such a way that they can serve as preparation for discussions and meetings with politicians, civil servants, NGO representatives as well as independent experts. Classroom activities will include individual, partner and group work and will be complemented by homework exercises.

**Assessment and Final Grade**
1. Homework Assignments (2) 10%
2. Midterm Exam 15%
3. Individual Presentation 10%
4. Group Project 15%
5. Final Digital Project 30%
6. Participation 20%
Course Requirements

Homework Assignments (2)

There are two written homework assignments that students will be required to submit during the course. These assignments are short, 750-word reflective responses to topics that have been discussed in class. Instructions and questions for these written assignments will be distributed at least one week prior to their due dates.

Midterm Exam

Students will sit a midterm examination that will assess their understanding of foundational theories of international relations. This exam will be based on 3 essay questions completed within the allotted time.

Individual Presentation

Students will be required to select a real-life event that connects to one of the international relations themes discussed in the class. They are to prepare a short 10-minute presentation describing the issue, and connect it to the course literature on that theme.

Group Project

Working in small groups, students will be required to write a position paper (approximately 2000 words in length) whereby students must take and defend a position related to one of the controversial topics presented in the course. Students will be asked to use course literature, concepts, and theoretical frameworks covered in the course to defend their position.

Final Digital Project

Using multimedia resources, students will submit and defend a position paper on a current international political challenge or crisis. Students will be asked to carry out independent research on a subject of their own choice, but that connects to the general theme of the course. Students will be required to formulate a research question to guide their research, and use course literature to structure a response. The project will be developed in two parts: the first is the submission of a short, 4-minute video essay where the student presents and defends their position. Videos are expected to present edited images, graphs, and other media resources into the allocated time to demonstrate the argument. The second part of the submission is a ‘defense’ of the video, conducted in class in the final session. Students should have PPT slides and handouts at their disposal to respond to questions and critiques from the instructor. Each part of the project is worth 50% of the whole.

Participation

Participation is defined as meaningful contribution in the digital classroom, using the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to prepare in advance of each recorded session and regularly engage with the resources, discussions, reflective assignments, and all other online learning activities. Students are required to demonstrate engagement with course materials, for example, through insightful, constructive comments and by using subject-appropriate terminology in: online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after viewing the presentations of others), interaction with guest speakers, where available, and submissions related to other outside-of-class activities. Students should ensure that submitted commentary balances opinions, general impressions, and specific and thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Grades are based on the content, depth, and quality of the aforementioned types of meaningful contributions as measured per the Participation grading rubric in Canvas.

Students are also expected to use the Canvas inbox for communicating any clarifying questions they may want to ask about assessments or other course requirements.

Technology Requirements

Participation requires access to a computer with microphone (a headset and microphone are preferred over built-in sound devices) and webcam; a stable and strong internet connection; and a quiet and well-lit environment.

Attendance

Expectations: In an asynchronous online learning format, attendance takes the form of active student engagement:
• in instructional activities, course content, course tools
• with the course instructor, other students, and
• by timely completion of all assessments.

“Attendance” is more than just logging into the course on Canvas. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities in order to comply with this requirement.

Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:

• submitting an academic assignment;
• taking an exam or quiz;
• attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;
• participating in an online discussion about academic matters, designed by the instructor; or
• initiating contact in Canvas with the instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do NOT include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

• logging into an online class without active participation
• contributing to or engaging in the CIEE Orientation or Community Course(s)

First Week of Class: Online courses officially commence on the first day of the term. Students must demonstrate engagement in class by no later than day 5 of the term, or risk being administratively dropped from the course with no opportunity to re-enroll. Students administratively dropped from the course for failure to engage will be considered withdrawn from the program and subject to CIEE financial withdrawal policies and fees.

Duration of Course: Continued, regular class engagement is required throughout the scheduled duration of the course, and disengagement will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for completing courses online, consistent failure to engage in the course on a weekly basis (defined as failing to engage for two or more weeks of online learning) will result in a formal written warning from the CIEE Center Director.

CIEE instructors / staff will monitor student engagement on a weekly basis.

The weekly schedule below outlines due dates for asynchronous learning activities for this course.

N.B. Please note the class schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: 1.1 (Re)-Introduction to the International System

In this class students will evaluate their perspective on the international system through a thorough re-introduction. The international system will be reviewed in the context of recent significant international developments, including, but not limited to, changes in the EU, changes in US foreign relations, international positions on the Middle-East, and international positions on the Korean peninsula.

Reading:


Recommended Reading:


**Week 2**
Cooperation is an assumed necessity in international relations. This class examines this assumption through an analysis of contemporary international organisations and the main parties/actors involved. Students will visit an organisation connected with research and/or international policy development.

Reading:


Recommended Reading:
This class examines the intentional creation of “global cities” (aka “Alpha” cities) that function as essential sites for both exchange and intense competition in the global economy, e.g., Shanghai vs. Hong Kong (shipping), Hong Kong vs. Singapore (UNHWI), London vs. Berlin (as post-Brexit financial centers).

Readings:

Class: 3.1 Environmental Degradation and International Conflict

This class examines the correlation between environmental challenges and the rise of conflict throughout the world.

Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Class: 3.2 The United States and Paris Agreement

This class examines the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2016), why and how the agreement was reached, and subsequently, the US decision to withdraw from the agreement (2017), and consequences to-date.

Reading:

Class: 4.1 Terrorism as International Conflict

Terrorism is often understood in public discourse as a particular form of conflict used by non-state forces, yet there are multiple, and often conflicting, definitions of the term. This class examines the conflicting definitions and discourses on terrorism and other non-state acts of violence and discusses their relevance for geopolitics.

Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Class: 4.2 Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect

Students will hear from a guest speaker pertaining to human rights and discourses on mutual
**Week 5**

**Class: 5.1 Crises in the Middle East**

This class evaluates the multiple security and economic challenges in the context of the Middle Eastern crises. Students will hear from a Guest Speaker researching on the crises in the Middle Eastern region.

**Class: 5.2 Case Study: The Rohingya**

This class examines the case of the Rohingya and the alleged ethnic cleansing they are facing in Myanmar, the broader discrimination they face in South Asia, and global reactions to the same.

Readings:

Ibrahim (2018), Introduction, Conclusion and Epilogue; Chaudhury and Samaddar, Eds. (2018), Introduction, Epilogue and Afterword

**Homework Assignment 2 due**

**Week 6**

**Class: 6.1 A New Cold War or Worse?**

China’s rapid economic rise and increasingly assertive foreign policy has led to an expansion of conflicts with its regional neighbors as well as the United States and others who more and more often view China as a strategic threat despite Beijing’s assurances to the contrary. While some are predicting an inevitable war with China, it is clear that military positioning has already shifted, as well as on-going trade conflicts and increasingly, even, restrictions on cultural and educational exchanges. This class discusses these developments from contrasting perspectives in terms of existing conflicts and the potential for more serious ones to emerge. Class will include a screening of John Pilger’s documentary, The Coming War on China (2016).

Readings:

Allison (2017).

**Class: 6.2 The Future of International Conflict and its Management**

In this final class before the exam, students review the course thus far, and examine the capacity and accuracy of forecasting international disputes.

Readings:


Recommended Readings:


**Due - In-class final examination.**

**Course Materials**

**Readings**


**Online Resources**


Global Terrorism Database. See: https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/


UN Office on Genocide Prevention. “Responsibility to Protect”. See: