INTL 4700: section 1

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
SENIOR CAPSTONE

Northeastern University – Course Syllabus, Spring 2018
Professor: Dr. Robert Cross

Class Location: Snell Library 001
Time: MR 11:45 AM - 1:25 PM*
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00 PM & by appointment (Renaissance Park 215G)
Email: r.cross@northeastern.edu

Course Description:

This course is a senior research and writing seminar that guides you though deep investigation of a significant research puzzle of your own choosing. You will decide upon this research topic during the first part of the course when we survey several major issues of importance in contemporary world politics. Your topic may also be drawn from other aspects of your undergraduate education, including any experiential components. This first part of the course will culminate in a written book review that you will briefly present to the class. The book you choose will be your first step into investigating the literature pertaining to your research puzzle.

The second part of the course will be run like a paper-writing workshop as you begin to research and write the various components of your paper. This will consist of feedback from the professor, peer review, and class discussion focused on your (1) research question, (2) literature review, (3) main argument, and (4) evidence. Papers may be based on a single case study or several.

In the final section of the course, students will receive individual feedback from the professor, and present their finished research to the class. At this stage, you should be able to deal with Q&A as you solidify your own expertise in the topic. Active participation is crucial in this course. Guidance will be given on how to deliver effective presentations.

Logistics of the Course:

Books (both available online through the NEU library website and Blackboard):

Requirements:
- **Readings:** Students are expected to do all of the readings, and must be prepared to discuss the main points during each class
- **Participation:** Attendance, class participation, peer review, and paper workshops
- **Book review:** 3-4 page professional-style book review (choose your own book)
• **Presentations:** Students will present certain reading assignments and their own research as it evolves
• **Paper components:** Students will have occasional assignments pertaining to the writing of the final research paper, i.e. research puzzle, literature review, introduction, paper draft
• **25-30 page paper:** This paper is to address a research puzzle of your choosing

*All of the above is required. Extensions will not be granted unless student is suffering from a serious illness, and receives advance permission. Blaming lateness on the internet or your computer is unacceptable.*

**Grades:** An A grade is for excellent work that demonstrates preparedness, thoughtfulness, and the ability to take a stand on an issue. A B grade is good work, but work that does not evoke much. A C grade contains some significant flaws, and a D grade has very significant flaws that are concerning. Work that is late, incomplete, negligent, or not done at all will receive an F. Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating will fail the course.

- Class participation & attendance: 20%
- Book Review: 15%
- Presentations: 10%
- Research paper draft & components: 15%
- Final Research paper: 40%

**Readings:** You must read all of the assigned readings before each relevant class meeting. Please note that since the course only meets on a weekly basis, the first part of the course – which explores major topics in international affairs – may have more reading than for one typical day in a usual lecture course. Please plan ahead to make sure you can complete it in time.

**Participation:** Students will have numerous opportunities to explore their opinions in class through discussion, paper workshops, and presentations. This is a seminar rather than a lecture course so most of the time will be spent on discussion.

**Book Review:** 3-4 pages. Papers must be in Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and page numbers. We will review the components and style of book reviews in class. Students must get their chosen book approved by the professor in advance, either during office hours or through email.

**Paper components & drafts:** Students must turn in various components of their research papers throughout the semester. They will receive feedback on these components, in preparation for writing a full draft. These assignments will be graded, taking into account that they are just drafts. Students are encouraged to put as much effort into these assignments as possible in order to best prepare for writing the final paper. Here are the specific **deadlines** throughout the semester:

1. List of up to 5 possible research topics
2. Book Review (3-4 pages)
3. Preliminary research question

   - January 25, 2018
   - February 8, 2018
   - February 15, 2018
Final Capstone Paper: Your paper must advance an argument, which should be expressed clearly with a thesis statement at the beginning. The argument must answer a “why” question, not a “why should...” question. In other words, this is not intended to be a policy paper, or a purely descriptive paper. Your paper should rely on at least fifteen outside sources, of which at least ten should be scholarly publications. Papers must be in Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, page numbers, and a consistent form of citation (either in-text or footnotes). Further paper guidelines will be given throughout the semester.

Absence Policy: If you miss class more than two times without an excuse, your overall grade will drop. If you have four or more unexcused absences you will fail the course entirely. Whenever possible, let me know in advance if you cannot come to class. I may grant you an excused absence, which will not impact your grade.

Special Circumstances: Please let me know by the second week of class if you have a disability and require special accommodations.

Academic Honesty Statement: Warning. The University takes very seriously the issue of academic honesty. Any student who appears to violate the University’s Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy (see www.osccr.neu.edu/policy.html) may be referred to the University’s Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a proven violation involves an exam or course assignment, the student shall receive a failing grade for the assignment, in addition to sanctions imposed by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Individual faculty, with the support of the Department, can impose harsher penalties as they deem necessary. The Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy includes cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and other types of dishonest activities. Plagiarism is defined broadly as taking ideas, concepts, or actual words of another person and passing them off as your own work. Of particular note in recent years is the increase in cut-and-paste plagiarism, which involves downloading phrases from websites or other Internet sources. Your instructor will clarify specific guidelines on fair use of material for this class, but you should regard this as your official warning.

A few other things that must be mentioned:
• Tardiness, etc. – Please be on time to class, as tardiness interferes not only with your own ability to learn, but disrupts things for everyone else. Severe tardiness will be treated as an unexcused absence. Also, there should be no eating in class, getting up and leaving, cell phone use, internet surfing, etc....you get the picture.
• Email & office hours – Come see me – I am here to help. I prefer not to answer too many questions regarding the contents of the material by email because they are much better dealt with in person. Office hours should be the first option, and meetings outside of office hours will only be made if the student has a valid reason why s/he cannot make it to my set hours.
CLASSES & READINGS

Part I: Exploration of Research Questions in International Affairs
The first section of the course will involve a broad-level overview of some of the kinds of research puzzles that exist in the field of International Affairs. We will review a few major issues and debates with the aim of determining a specific area of research interest for each student. At the same time, we will begin to look closely at what goes into a well-researched and well-written research paper. **Recommended journals for exploring topic ideas:** *Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, Security Dialogue, Current History,* and *International Affairs*

(1/11) **Week 1 Thurs – Introduction to Capstone: Geopolitics & the International System**

(1/18) **Week 2 Thurs – International Institutions, Regimes, Norms, and Laws**
- Sten Rynning, “The geography of the Atlantic peace: NATO 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall,” *International Affairs,* 90(6), 2014, pp. 1383-1401. (blackboard)
- Michael Walzer, “On Humanitarianism: Is Helping Others Charity, or Duty, or Both?” *Foreign Affairs,* July/August 2011. (blackboard)
- **Craft of Research,** Part I, “Research, Researchers, and Readers (pp. 1-26)

(1/25) **Week 3 Thurs – Regional & Transnational Politics**
- Assignment: List of up to 5 possible topics (one topic is fine too!) due as a Word document attachment by email to Professor Cross: r.cross@northeastern.edu
- Thomas Risse, “Transnational Actors and World Politics,” *Handbook of International Relations,* Chapter 17 (blackboard)

(2/1) **Week 4 Thurs – States, Societies, and Individuals**
(2/8) Week 5 Thurs – Book Reviews
• 3-4 page book review due
• Students will briefly present their chosen books to the class
• *Craft of Research*, Ch. 3 (and part intro) “From Topics to Questions” (pp. 27-48)

**Part II: Paper Components**
This section of the course will prepare students for writing the final research paper. We will delve into how to craft your argument, organize your evidence, adopt a strong writing style, and conduct research. There will be opportunity for feedback, and a presentation from the library.

(2/15) Week 6 Thurs – Individual meetings with professor to discuss topics (replaces class)
• Preliminary research question(s) due
• *Craft of Research*, Ch. 4 “From Questions to a Problem” (pp. 49-64)

(2/22) Week 7 Thurs – How to do research & find evidence
• Library information session
• *Craft of Research*, Ch. 5 “From Problems to Sources” (pp. 65-84)
• Discussion of what makes a good research question

(3/1) Week 8 Thurs – Debates on your topic
• Literature review due
• *Craft of Research*, Ch. 6 “Engaging Sources” (pp. 85-104)
• In-class group exercise – constructive feedback on research questions

(3/8) Week 9: No Class – Spring Break

(3/15) Week 10 Thurs – Your Argument
• List of sources for evidence due, with brief description after each source
• *Craft of Research*, Part III, “Making an Argument” (pp. 105-172)
• In-class exercise on what makes a good argument

(3/22) Week 11 Thurs – Putting the Components Together: the Introduction
• Preliminary argument due
• *Craft of Research*, Part IV, “Writing Your Argument” (pp. 173-268)
• In-class exercise – constructive feedback on arguments

**PART III: The Art of Presentation**
Students will sign up to present their research, which will be at different stages depending on the presentation date chosen. Please choose at which stage you would like to present your work for feedback. The earlier dates will be expected to be more preliminary, while the later dates will assume that the work is near completion. 4-5 students will give presentations each week. Two formal peer discussants will be assigned, and other students will be expected to read at least two papers to enable them to participate in Q&A.
(3/29) **Week 12 Thurs – Presentation of Research (detailed outlines)**
- Outline due
- Presentation of outlines
- Each outline will have two assigned discussants

(4/2) **Week 13 Monday – Presentation of Research (detailed outlines)**
- Presentation of outlines
- Each outline will have two assigned discussants

(4/5) **Week 13 Thurs – Presentation of Research (going from draft to finished product)**
- Paper draft due
- Presentation of paper drafts
- Each paper will have two assigned discussants

(4/9) **Week 14 Monday – Presentation of Research (refinement)**
- Presentation of paper drafts

(4/12) **Week 14 Thurs – Presentation of Research (finishing touches)**
- Presentation of paper drafts

*Final papers due (Friday, April 20th by 11:59 pm [23:59])*