



CIEE Global Institute – Sydney

Course name:	Contemporary Controversies in International Relations
Course number:	(GI) INRE 4007 SYAU
Programs offering course:	Open Campus
Open Campus Track:	International Relations and Political Science
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

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 the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Synthesize a range of current positions and debates in international relations to develop a nuanced analysis.
- Acquire practice in addressing pointed and critical questions to politicians and members of government bureaucracies.
- Further develop critical thinking and communications 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.



- Test new approaches and theories in contemporary controversies in International Relations.

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

Cumulative Reflections	15%
Individual Presentation	15%
Group Project	15%
Individual Digital Project	30%
Participation	20%
TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Cumulative Reflections

There are THREE written reflections that are provided that build on students' knowledge, experience and readings as a cumulative model approach. Students will be required to submit these during the course. Each reflection is to be 750-word exactly and reflective of the 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. Student will be graded according to their ability in reflecting on the issue at hand and justify their reasons using the content from class and their course readings.



Individual Presentation

Students will be required to select a real-life event which 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 that is 3000-words exactly. 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.

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 which connects to the general theme of the course. Students will be required to formulate a research question to guide their research, and using course literature, 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 'defence' 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 valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules



for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<i>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</i>	<i>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</i>	<i>Minimum Penalty</i>
Up to 10%	1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes	Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning
More than 20%	3 content classes, or 5 language classes	Automatic course failure , and possible expulsion

Weekly Schedule

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

Week 1

Orientation

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 post Global Financial Crisis, changes in Australian foreign relations and international positions with changing trading policies in America and China.

Reading:

Bova, R. (2016). *How the World Works: A Brief Survey of International Relations*, 3rd Ed., Pearson: Australia.

Week 2

Class 2.1

International Actors and the Politics of Cooperation

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.

Reading:

Slaughter, S. (2013). Debating the International Legitimacy of the G20: Global Policymaking and Contemporary International Society, *Global Policy*, 4 (1), pp 43-52.

Class 2.2

International Humanitarian Work in Australia

In this class students will have a guest speaker from the UNICEF and UNHCR in Australia, Sydney, and discuss the challenges of non-for-profit organizations to providing changing humanitarian support, inefficiencies and lack of coordination and cooperation of organizations.

Due Date for Submission of Cumulative Reflection One.

Reading:

<https://www.unaa.org.au/the-un-in-australia/>

Bellamy, A. J. (2010). The Responsibility to Protect - Five Years On. *Ethics and International Affairs* 24(2), pp143-169.



Week 3

Class 3.1

Environmental Degradation and International Conflict

This class examines the correlation between environmental challenges and the rise of conflict throughout the world. This issue is then discussed in terms of the controversial displacement of refugees to Manus Island.

Readings:

Raleigh, C., and Henrik U. (2007). Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Armed Conflict. *Political Geography*, 26(6), 674-694.

Tafere, M. (2018). Forced Displacements and the Environment: Its Place in National and International Climate Agenda, *Journal of Environmental Management*, (244), pp 191-201.

Class 3.2

Live Animal Exports Controversy

The very public attention to the cruelty of the live export trade is discussed. The appeals are debated against the limited inducement for the industry to insist on their trading partners raising their animal welfare standards. Case studies and controversies are discussed and the pressure of maintaining international trade and political connections is also explored.

Readings:

Munro, L. (2015). The Live Animal Export Controversy in Australia: A moral Crusade Made for the Mass Media, *Social Movement*, 14 (2), pp 214-219.

Merkenich, M. (2018). Is Banning Live Exports Enough? *Green Left Weekly* (1176), April 17, 2018.

Due Date for Submission of Cumulative Reflection Two

Week 4

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.

Reading:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/australian-killed-in-london-terror-attack-gets-bravery-award>

Submission due date for Cumulative Reflection Three.

Class 4.2

Individual presentations

Submission due date for Individual Presentation Assessment

Week 5

Class 5.1

Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect

Guest Speaker from Kinship Carers Australia or similar. Facilitator will need to contact Australian Human Rights Commission to confirm speaker at:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/media-contacts>

Reading:

Australian Human Rights Commission (2017). *Asylum seekers, Refugees and Human Rights*, Australian Human Rights Commission: Australia

Class 5.2

Crises in the Middle East

This class evaluates the multiple security and economic challenges in the context of the current national crises and conflict in a post-cold war period. Guest speaker: Emeritus Professor Ivan Shearer: University of Sydney.

Reading:

Betts, Richard (ed.) (2012). *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of Waand Peace*. (4th ed.). Routledge

Due Date for Submission of the Group Project Assessment

Week 6

Class 6.1

The Future of International Conflict and its Management

In this class, students review the course thus far, and examine the capacity and accuracy of forecasting international disputes. Case Studies are examined.

Reading:



Gleditsch, Kristian S., and Michael D. Ward. (2013) Forecasting Is Difficult, especially about the Future: Using Contentious Issues to Forecast Interstate Disputes. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(1), pp17-31.

Class 6.2 How International Conflicts Are Reported on the Local Front

Students will explore the influence and role of multimedia in ‘telling the truth’ during international conflicts. Students will discuss how a contemporary crisis is reported in Australia and compare current global events with how is being reported in their home country. Influence of media in influencing social cohesion and understanding of global events is also debated. Guest Speaker: Journalist

Reading:

Foreign Policy (2016). *10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016*.

See <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/03/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2016/>

Due Date for Submission of the Digital Project Assessment

Course Materials

Readings

Australian Human Rights Commission (2017). *Asylum seekers, Refugees and Human Rights*, Australian Human Rights Commission: Australia.

Bellamy, A. J. (2010). The Responsibility to Protect - Five Years On. *Ethics and International Affairs* 24(2), pp143-169.

Betts, Richard (ed.) (2012). *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*. (4th ed.). Routledge

Bova, R. (2016). *How the World Works: A Brief Survey of International Relations*, 3rd Ed., Pearson: Australia.

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Merkenich, M. (2018). Is Banning Live Exports Enough? *Green Left Weekly*, 1176, April 17, 2 018.

Munro, L. (2015). The Live Animal Export Controversy in Australia: A moral Crusade Made for the Mass Media, *Social Movement*, 14 (2), pp 214-219.

Raleigh, C., & Henrik, U. (2007). Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Armed Conflict. *Political Geography*, 26(6), 674-694.



Slaughter, S. (2013). Debating the International Legitimacy of the G20: Global Policymaking and Contemporary International Society, *Global Policy*, 4 (1), pp 43-52.

Tafere, M. (2018). Forced Displacements and the Environment: Its Place in National and International Climate Agenda, *Journal of Environmental Management*, (244), pp 191-201.

Online Resources

<https://www.unaa.org.au/the-un-in-australia/>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/australian-killed-in-london-terror-attack-gets-bravery-award>

Foreign Policy (2016). *10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016*.

See <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/03/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2016/>

UN Office on Genocide Prevention. "Responsibility to Protect". See:

<http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html>