

International Relations 4703F
Fall Semester 2022
Contemporary Challenges in the Global Community I
Mondays: 1030-1230, SSC4255

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: IR4703F is one of the capstone seminars for students in the international relations program. In this course, you will examine how the history of the international system and community, as well as the history of Canada in the world, contribute to public discussion and public policy about urgent contemporary challenges. The format of the course is to produce a report or document of some kind that contributes to some aspect of international affairs today. You will work as a group and in multiple small groups to produce your final project. The theme of the course changes every year and is linked to current developments in world affairs and Canadian foreign policy. In previous years, we have examined the next generation of Canadian peacekeeping, studied global climate change, devised blueprints to end the conflict in Afghanistan, laid out a map for state-building in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and designed a campaign to get Canada elected to the United Nations Security Council. In the fall of 2022, we will focus on the efforts of the United Nations to make real progress on vital issues that affect the well-being of individuals and the world. Recently, Secretary General Guterres has called for a Global New Deal. In 2021, the UN produced “Our Common Agenda”, a document that identifies how the international community must move forward over the next twenty five years. Your challenge will be to develop historically-informed plans and recommendations to achieve some of these goals. At the end of the semester, experts in the field will visit the class to discuss your ideas.

Prerequisite: Enrollment in year 4 of the Honours Specialization in International Relations Module, or permission of the departments.

Antirequisite: The former International Relations 4701E, the former International Relations 4702E.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Deepen your understanding of the history (including foreign relations, government policies, non-state actors) of Canadian involvement in the world and of the main priorities and challenges confronting Canada today

Develop and refine your understanding of the establishment, norms, drivers, dynamics, purpose and characteristics of the global order, with particular emphasis on the current order

Develop your understanding of the relevance of history to policy makers

Refine your skills of deep and diverse research.

Refine your academic writing style and develop skills of communicating to non-academic audiences.

Develop your ability to work collaboratively, identifying the specific roles that your skills and personality are well-suited to.

COURSE MATERIALS:

You will be assigned readings for the first few weeks of the semester. I will upload the readings to our class Owlsite. After that, you will be doing self-directed deep research and you will be generating your own reading list and bibliography.

If you want to get started ahead of time, please read: United Nation's Secretary-General's Report "Our Common Agenda", <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

1. Critical review of "Our Common Agenda": What is the motivation behind this document? What does it reveal about the UN's conception of the global order and the shortcomings and priorities of the international community? Is this proposal feasible? At the end of your paper, rank what you believe are the top 3-5 issue areas or priorities. This paper should be 3 pages, double-spaced – maximum. You do not need to do additional research, but I hope that what you have learned over the last three years will inform your analysis. It is due on 16 September. It is worth 15% of your final mark.
2. Pitches: You can work alone or in small groups to make a case for the inclusion of a case study. Your pitch can either be a video (maximum 3 minutes) or take a written form – it could be a poster, a short paper (no more than 2 pages double spaced), etc. Your goal is to convince your classmates that your case study is essential to the group project. You should also think about the format of the report. Most years, students prepare written reports, but there are many formats you might consider. Above all, your pitch must be compelling. Upload your pitch to the class Owlsite by 23 September. Everyone is expected to review the pitches before class on Monday, 26 September. There is a rubric in the Forms folder which you might find useful in assessing the pitches. The pitch is worth 10% of your final mark.
3. Recommendations and Proposals: You should expect to work on two issue areas, as a principal member in one and as a supporting member in another. Having students work in two groups helps to circulate ideas and contributes to the final coherence of the project. Each case study will receive its own grade. Your individual grade for each group will average the final marks for both case studies, 2/3rds for the case study in which you were a principal member and 1/3rd for the case study in which you were a supporting member. Upload your case studies to the Assignments folder by 9 November. The case studies are worth 60% of your final mark.

4. Preparation and Participation: The success of the group project depends on everyone's consistent commitment and contributions. This project cannot be pulled off in a few frantic weeks. Much of the work for the group project takes place outside of class time and in small groups. For your P & P mark, I will look at your weekly preparation and participation as well your contributions as a peer reviewer. You will also submit logs that describe your week to week engagement in the class and the evolution of your ideas, as well as a self-evaluation. You should download the log and self-evaluation at the start of the class and start working on them right away. You will submit the log and self-reflections after the meeting with experts, on 5 December 2022, by 11:59 pm. Preparation and Participation is worth 15% of your final mark.

Late policy: 5% a day.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

In the first few weeks, we will use our class time for structured discussion and to organize the group project. We will meet every week in our scheduled class time to reflect on what work has been done, to discuss higher order questions about the project, and to figure out the nuts and bolts to bring all the component pieces together. The last class will be dedicated to a discussion with experts, and we miss one class for Thanksgiving. So, you have nine weeks to complete a polished project that can be shared with the experts. Communication and time management are crucial to the success of the project. You should expect to meet with the people you are working with outside of class time. I do not expect that this class will take more time and energy than any other class. In general, you should be prepared to work productive for five hours every week. If everyone does their share, the project will be well done and completed on time.

This is a student-led class. That presents opportunities and challenges. My role is to lay out a road map and help you to stick to it. I will respond to your substantive ideas and I will help with organizational matters too. I am both a manager and a teacher. You will check in with me regularly and ultimately I will be evaluating your work. But you are really accountable to yourselves and you should see this as an opportunity to show what you are capable of. I want you to think independently, boldly and creatively. Based on past projects and classes, I know that you can achieve great things.

Below is a preliminary schedule that gives you an idea of the timeline. You can see that you have to work efficiently and productively from the start of the semester.

12 September: First class: introductions and discussion of the topic

19 September: Brainstorming about the project. You will want to get started but we need to take time to think, discuss, and plan. Trust me!

26 September: Brainstorming and organizing groups.

3 October: Deep research. Developing proposals and articulating priorities.

10 October: No class for Thanksgiving

17 October: Research and begin laying out your section.

24 October: Discuss proposals and ideas. How well do your ideas hold up? Write, write, write!

31 October – 6 November: Fall Reading Week

7 November: Discussion of drafts.

14 November: Peer review. What will final project look like? What other parts do we need to prepare (such as an executive summary, conclusion, bibliography, and graphics)?

21 November: Every section must be finished so that a final editing team can put the project together.

28 November: Project must be finalized so it can be sent to the experts.

5 December: Meet with the experts.

Additional Statements:

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document, <https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>, for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness