

**POLI22211 Contemporary World Politics  
Unit Guide  
2011-12 Teaching Block 1, weeks 1-12**

**Unit Owner: Dr Columba Peoples**

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**Level: I/5**  
**Credit points: 20**  
**Prerequisites: None**

**Lectures:** Monday 3pm, 1F5 - 8 Woodland Road

**Curriculum area:** World Politics

### **Unit description**

This unit provides students with a critical understanding of contemporary world politics. Drawing on a variety of approaches to the study of world politics, it introduces students to key concepts – including War, Peace, Security, Globalization and Sovereignty – and related issues and debates. In doing so the unit will equip students with the conceptual tools with which to understand and interrogate the nature of contemporary world politics. It also assesses how different approaches to world politics address shared issues such as the causes of conflict, the nature of the contemporary world order, the impact of globalization on world politics and the prospects for international cooperation. The lectures and seminars give students the opportunity to assess the relationship between theories and practices of world politics, to engage the central themes of power and representation, and the question of ‘who gets what, when and how’ in world politics.

### **Teaching arrangements**

1 lecture and 1 seminar per week for 10 weeks (Weeks 1-10)  
Exam revision session (week 23, May 2011, prior to the unit exam)

### **Requirements for credit points**

Seminar attendance  
Presentation (summative)  
Essay (summative)  
Exam (summative)

### **Summative assessment**

Presentation – 10%  
1,500-2,000 word essay – 30%  
2 hour exam – 60%

### **Core reading**

John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An Introduction to International Relations*

*Theory: Perspectives and Themes*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: Pearson, 2010)

## **Objectives**

- To provide students with an advanced understanding of key concepts in the study of world politics.
- To provide a critical understanding of contemporary issues in world politics.
- To provide a critical understanding of the relationships between theories of world politics and contemporary practices of world politics.
- To explore major theoretical and empirical debates in contemporary world politics around the central themes of power and representation.

## **Learning outcomes**

- Critical understanding of key concepts in the study of world politics.
- Comprehension of selected contemporary issues in world politics.
- Ability to synthesise and critically analyse contemporary theories of world politics
- Ability to apply and evaluate theories and concepts in relation to contemporary issues in world politics
- Comprehension of major debates regarding power and representation in contemporary world politics.

## **Transferable skills**

- Ability to make articulate, concise, persuasive and well-paced presentations in small groups
- Abilities to interact constructively and work with others students during seminar sessions
- Ability to write articulately, concisely and persuasively in both essay and exam formats.
- Use of electronic resources

## **Development and feedback**

- The seminar presentation will develop student's knowledge of specific topics, as well as developing their presentation skills. Students will receive written feedback on their presentation, which will include comments on development of generic skills (such as structuring an argument) that will also be relevant to the other summative assessment components (essay and exam). Students will also have the option of receiving further oral feedback during office hours.
- Students will also receive written feedback on their essay submission, with the option of receiving further oral feedback during office hours.

## **Details of coursework and deadlines**

Presentation (summative) - in seminars (Weeks 1-10), with topics assigned in Week 1  
1,500-2,000 word essay (summative) – due 11am, Friday January 27<sup>th</sup> 2012 (end of Week 12)  
2 hour unseen exam (summative) - Main exam period (May/June 2012, date tbc)

## **TEACHING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Lectures**

There is one lecture per week (Weeks 1-10)

### **Seminars**

There are ten seminars in the unit (Weeks 1-10). These have attendance requirements (see below).

Each student will be required to make a meaningful contribution to the seminars, and students are expected to read the essential reading and as much of the supplementary reading as possible in advance of the seminars.

Since the seminars will have a heavy emphasis of student discussion and participation it is imperative that all students do the weekly reading in advance of attending the seminars regardless of whether or not they are scheduled to present. All students will also be expected, drawing on their prior reading and research, to contribute to central debate question outlined in the seminar details below. Students are encouraged to raise further related questions and issues in the seminar, and the seminar tutor may also add additional points for debate. Students may also be asked specific questions on the required readings that will be provided by the unit convenor/tutor in advance.

### **Presentation Guidance**

Seminars will begin with a presentation (of no more than 10 minutes) addressing the question outlined in the seminar details below. Students will be asked to sign up for presentations during Seminar 1. The presentation topic for each week is listed with the seminar details below.

- Presentations should be no more than *10 minutes* long
- Presenters should supply a *1-page handout*, to accompany the presentation, for the seminar group members. Handouts should be no longer than two sides of A4, inclusive of the presentation bibliography.
- Presenters should use a *power-point presentation* to accompany the presentation. This should be no more than a *maximum of 5 slides* (including the title slide). Each slide should contain no more than *5 bullet points per slide*. Please feel free to use images and other audio-visual resources to enhance the presentation.
- Presenters should be familiar with the Essential and Supplementary Reading for the week's seminar and refer to these where relevant, but simply reproducing or regurgitating material from the essential reading in presentations will not be sufficient to attain credit. It is expected that all seminar members will have done the essential reading, and presentations will also need to demonstrate evidence of independent research that goes beyond this. Simply reproducing or regurgitating material from the lectures in presentations will not be sufficient to attain credit. Presentations will need to demonstrate independent research.
- There are very useful tips and further general guidance on making presentations in the SPAIS 'Study Guide 2011-2012', pages 11-14. All students are recommended to consult this in their presentation preparation. The Study Guide is available online here: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/spais/current/currentug/resources/>

Details of the marking criteria for undergraduate presentations are available at the same link, on pages 30-31 of the SPAIS Undergraduate Handbook. These are used as the basis for the assessment of, and feedback on, the formative presentation.

### **REQUIRED READING**

Required readings for seminars will be taken either from the core course text (see below), are reproduced in the unit course-pack, or will be linked electronically via the unit **Blackboard** site in advance of the seminar. Students must familiarise themselves with these readings in order to participate fully in seminars.

'Discussion Documents': In advance of each seminar I will post a 'Discussion Document' on the unit Blackboard site. These will be short pieces for discussion that will be used in conjunction with the Essential Readings (see below). The Discussion Document could be a newspaper article, speech, policy document or media/film clip that links the seminar topic to a 'real world' political issue. Further details will be outlined in Week 1 of the unit.

Essential Readings - Please be aware that to participate in seminars you must have a basic understanding of the key issues, and the essential readings are designed to enhance and deepen

your knowledge of particular issues, debates and theories in conjunction with the 'Discussion Documents' outlined above. The essential readings are either (a) drawn from the two recommended textbooks for purchase (b) in the unit course-pack (readings marked with §) or (c) available via electronic links on blackboard. These readings are by no means 'canonical' - please see the supplementary reading list for a wider list of titles. Students should also endeavour to read *at least* one of the supplementary readings listed here. In the event that you cannot get hold of the supplementary readings, please do not give up! There are further readings listed later in the handbook that are available from the library, so please feel free to choose from among these as well (these are also particularly useful for preparing presentations).

Additional reading lists will be provided in the handouts used in each lecture.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS FOR PURCHASE**

Copies of essential readings are in the course-pack for unit. These are designated with the symbol '§' on the reading lists below.

Students are also required to own a copy of the following core texts, copies of which have been ordered for Blackwells bookshop. Both of the textbooks listed below are also widely available via [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk) and similar sites.

- John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), hereafter Baylis, Smith and Owens [Useful and accessible introduction to both theories and issues in World Politics; those who own a copy already from last academic year should invest in one of the other texts listed below]
- Jill Steans, Lloyd Pettiford, Thomas Diez and Imad El-Anis, *An Introduction to International Relations Theory: Perspectives and Themes*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: Pearson, 2010), Hereafter Steans *et al* [The most accessible introduction to IR theory out there! As well as trying to illustrate theories via the use of contemporary examples, this textbook also usefully includes a 'Common Misunderstandings' section in relation to each of the theories it discusses]

In addition, the following texts are also useful and available online for purchase:

Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) [Strong on 'mainstream' approaches to the study of world politics]

Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) [A well-written account that combines a narrative account of the evolution of the discipline of International Relations with discussion of key theories and events]

Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Norton, 2010) [Another useful textbook overview, with more of a focus on key actors in world politics]

Jenny Edkins and Maja Zehfuss (eds.) *Global Politics: A New Introduction* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009) [Offers an innovative question-based approach to the subject that is less beholden to theoretical categorizations than some of the other textbooks listed here]

Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) [A more advanced introduction to the key theoretical approaches to the study of world politics]

Scott Burchill et al (eds.), *Theories of International Relations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Basinstoke: Palgrave, 2005) [Provides an advanced overview of different theoretical approaches to the study of world politics, with particularly good chapters on Feminism, Critical Theory and Postmodernism]

Martin Griffiths, Terry O' Callaghan and Steven C. Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*,

2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Routledge, 2007) [A good complement to the module in its focus on key concepts]

Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 2009) [An innovative approach to introducing key theories and concepts in International Relations via analogies drawn from popular culture, in particular by reference to films such as *Independence Day* and *East is East*]

## Lecture schedule

### **Week 1: Introduction: Coming to terms with Contemporary World Politics**

In this lecture students will be given a general overview of the structure of the unit, its methods, objectives and learning outcomes. The lecture will also introduce students briefly to the key concepts and theories that will be covered in the unit and their relation to 'real world' issues.

*Learning Outcome:* Awareness of the layout, rationale and central themes of the unit

### **Week 2: Peace**

This lecture examines how the search for 'perpetual peace' has shaped the way we think about and study world politics today, as well as continuing debates about the nature and definition of peace.

*Learning Outcome:* Understanding of different definitions of 'peace' and proposals for its achievement

### **Week 3: War**

This lecture assesses the possible causes of conflict, and how war has evolved into its contemporary manifestations.

*Learning Outcome:* Awareness of different definitions of war and their respective strengths and weakness and of key debates on the nature of contemporary warfare within the study of World Politics

### **Week 4: Anarchy**

Why does the concept of 'Anarchy' occupy such a central place in the study of world politics? Investigates the concept of 'Anarchy', its implications for international cooperation, and the contention that 'Anarchy is what states make of it'.

*Lecture Outcome:* Understanding of the concept of anarchy and its implications

### **Week 5: Order**

How should we conceptualise the nature of contemporary world order? This lecture provides a comparison and evaluation of competing characterisations of the post-9/11 world order, including those associated with Realist, English School and Marxist perspectives.

*Learning Outcome:* Awareness of competing conceptions of world order

### **Week 6: Sovereignty**

What does it mean to be 'sovereign' in international relations? How has the concept of state sovereignty emerged and evolved, and do we need to rethink the nature of sovereignty in contemporary world politics given the proliferation of non-state actors and rise of regional organizations like the EU?

*Learning Outcome:* Ability to engage critically with key contemporary debates over the nature and meaning of sovereignty.

### **Week 7: Globalization**

This lecture provides an overview of the competing definitions of Globalization and debates over its effects from competing theoretical perspectives, linking back to previous discussions of world order and sovereignty covered in the unit.

*Learning Outcome:* Develop a critical understanding of 'Globalization' and the key debates surrounding its impact on contemporary world politics

### **Week 8: Security**

The recent study of world politics has witnessed numerous attempts to 'broaden' the concept of security from national security to 'human security'. The lecture explores the arguments for and against this move, and attendant arguments for and against the inclusion of economic, environmental and societal threats when thinking about security.

*Learning Outcome:* Critical understanding of debates on the definition of security

### **Week 9: Gender**

Feminist critiques of International Relations and gender issues in world politics fundamentally challenge more traditional ways of approaching the study of world politics. This lecture looks at how gender might be seen as a key feature of contemporary world politics in a way that in turn makes questions of identity central to the subject.

*Learning Outcome:* Awareness of gender as a 'variable' in contemporary world politics and feminist approaches to international relations, and an understanding of the more substantive implications of a focus on gender in world politics.

### **Week 10: Culture**

Continuing on the theme of 'identity' in contemporary world politics, this lecture assesses the argument that 'culture' has replaced ideology as the primary source of conflict in the contemporary era, and introduces alternative ways of conceiving of cultural difference through the lens of popular culture.

*Learning Outcome:* Critical understanding of multiple ways of conceptualising the role of 'culture' in world politics

### **Week 23: Revision Session**

This session (in May 2011) will be used for revision purposes in advance of the unit exam (date, time and venue of session to be confirmed in due course).

## **Seminar schedule**

### **Week 1: Theory and the 'real world' politics**

General introduction/administration by tutor, sign up for presentations.

Debate topics: What are the 'real world' issues in world politics that matter *most* today? What is the purpose/value (if any) of International Theory in relation to these issues? What is the relationship between theory and practice in world politics? Do we need theories to understand the nature of contemporary world politics? Would it not be better to study each issue on a case by case basis?

*Learning Outcome:* Interrogation of the relationship between theory practice and the purpose and value of 'all these theories' in the study of world politics

### **Essential Reading:**

- Jack Snyder, 'One World, Rival Theories', *Foreign Policy* (Nov./Dec. 2004) pp. 53-62 §

- Steve Smith, 'Singing Our World into Existence: International Relations Theory and September 11', *International Studies Quarterly* 48:3 (2004) pp.499-515 §

**Supplementary Reading:**

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, 'Introduction'
- Steans *et al*, 'Introduction'

**Week 2: The Prospects for Peace in World Politics**

Presentation: Critically assess the key claims of the 'democratic peace thesis' in reference to a contemporary case world politics.

Debate topics: Can peace be defined simply as the absence of war? Does the spread of democracy necessarily encourage pacific relations between states? Are democracies naturally more inclined towards peace? Are there other possible factors that might account for pacific relations between democracies?

*Learning Outcome:* Critical understanding of the democratic peace thesis

**Essential Reading:**

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 6 ('Liberalism')
- Michael W. Doyle, 'Liberalism and World Politics', *The American Political Science Review*, 80:4 (1986) pp.1151-1169§

**Supplementary Reading:**

- Steans *et al*, Chapter 1 ('Liberalism')
- James Lee Ray, 'Does Democracy Cause Peace?', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1 (1998) pp. 27-46 §

**Week 3: The Causes of War**

Presentation: Using a contemporary case study to illustrate your answer, critically assess the applicability of Waltz's 'Three Images' framework for understanding the cases of war.

Debate topics: Is war inevitable? Is the 21<sup>st</sup> century likely to be 'Another Century of Conflict' (Hirst)? If so, what are the factors that are likely to produce conflict? How useful/applicable is Waltz's thinking on the causes of war in the contemporary context?

*Learning Outcome:* Understanding of the causes and nature of contemporary conflict

**Essential Reading:**

- Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 'Introduction' pages 5-15 §
- Hidemi Suganami, 'Explaining War: Some Critical Observations', *International Relations*, 16:2 (2002) pp.307-326 §

**Supplementary Reading:**

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 13 ('The Changing Character of War')
- Jack S. Levy, 'The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace', *American Political Science Review*, 1 (1998) pp.139-168 [available via Blackboard]
- Paul Hirst, 'Another Century of Conflict? War and the International System in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *International Relations*, 16:3 (2002) pp. 327-41 [available via Blackboard]

**Week 4: The 'Anarchy Problematique': Conflict and Cooperation in World Politics**

Presentation: Can co-operation between states be facilitated under a condition of anarchy? Answer in relation to the case study of global environmental regimes.

Debate topics: Does the 'condition' of anarchy account for the apparent weaknesses of international organizations such as the UN? What is the significance of the claim that 'Anarchy is what states make of it'? In what ways does a constructivist approach to the concept of anarchy differ from that suggested by Neorealist/Neoliberal Institutionalist understandings of anarchy?

*Learning Outcome:* Develop an understanding of the concept of anarchy and its implication for international cooperation

**Essential Reading:**

- John Mearsheimer, 'Anarchy and the Struggle for Power' in Karen A. Mingst and Jack L. Snyder, *Essential Readings in World Politics* (London: Norton, 2010) §
- Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics', *International Organization*, 46:2 (1992) pp.391-425§

**Supplementary Reading:**

- Steans *et al*, Chapter 2 ('Realism'), Chapter 17 ('International Regimes')
- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 5 ('Realism') and Chapter 7 ('Contemporary Mainstream Approaches: Neo-Realism and Neoliberalism')

**Week 5: A Society of States? Making sense of world order**

Presentation: Do states have an obligation to intervene where and when human rights are not upheld? Illustrate your answer in relation to a contemporary case study.

Debate topics: Does it make sense to speak of an international society, or is the 'international' best thought of a system of competitive states? To what extent are states bound by international agreements and obligations? Is there really such a thing as an 'international society' in practice, or is the international order a product of Western hegemony and values?

*Learning Outcome:* Understanding of the concept of international society

**Essential Reading:**

- Hedley Bull, 'Does Order Exist in World Politics?' from *The Anarchical Society* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 1977) §
- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 2 ('The evolution of International Society') and Chapter 29 ('Human Rights')

**Supplementary Reading:**

- Martin Shaw, 'Global Society and Global Responsibility: The Theoretical, Historical and Political Limits of "International Society"', *Millennium*, 21: 3 (1992) §
- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 16 ('International Law')

**Week 6: The 'S' Word: Sovereignty and World Politics**

Presentation: Using a contemporary case to illustrate your answer, critically assess the notion of 'shared sovereignty'.

Debate topics: Is sovereignty still the key organizing principle in world politics, or are we living in a 'post-Westphalian' world? Is sovereignty indivisible? Is sovereignty still inherently connected to territory?

*Learning Outcome:* Critical understanding of key debates on the nature of and definition of sovereignty in contemporary world politics

**Essential Reading**

- Stephen D. Krasner, 'Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States', *International Security*, 29:2 (2004) pp.85-120 §
- Stuart Elden, 'Contingent Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and the Sanctity of Borders',

### Supplementary Reading

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 2 ('The evolution of international society') and Chapter 33 ('Globalization and the post-cold war order')
- Naeem Inayatullah and David L. Blaney, 'Realizing Sovereignty', *Review of International Studies*, 21 (1995) pp.3-20

### Week 7: Globalization and its Discontents

Presentation: To what extent does economic globalization undermine or enhance the power of the state as an actor in world politics? Illustrate your answer in relation to a contemporary case study or issue.

Debate: What are the principal characteristics of contemporary 'globalization'? Has the onset of globalization significantly altered the nature of world politics? Is globalization a positive or negative development? Does globalization make conflict more likely or less likely? Are traditional approaches to the study of world politics – such as realism/neorealism – less relevant in an era of globalization? Have the effects of globalization been overstated?

*Learning Outcome:* Critical understanding of the nature and impact of globalization

### Essential Reading:

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 1 ('Globalization and Global Politics')
- Colin Hay, 'International Relations Theory and Globalization' in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) §
- Paul Hirst, Grahame Thompson and Simon Bromley, 'Globalization, Governance and the Nation-State' from *Globalization in Question*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London: Polity, 2009) §

### Supplementary Reading:

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 27 ('Global Trade and Finance'), Chapter 32 ('Globalization and the Transformation of Political Community'), Chapter 33 ('Globalization and the Post-Cold War Order')
- Jens Bartelson, 'Three concepts of globalization', *International Sociology*, 15:2 (2000) 180-196 [available via Blackboard]

### Week 8: What is (World) Security?

Presentation: To what extent are the concepts of national security and human security compatible or contradictory? Illustrate your answer in relation to a contemporary case study.

Debate: What is the greatest threat to security in contemporary world politics? Is the concept of security best restricted to military matters? What are the arguments for and against 'broadening' the concept of security in the post-Cold War era? I

*Learning Outcome:* Develop an awareness of the multiple ways of understanding 'security'

### Essential Reading:

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 14 ('International and Global Security')
- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 29 ('Human Security')
- David Baldwin, 'The Concept of Security', *Review of International Studies*, 23:1 (1997) pp.5-26 §

### Supplementary Reading:

- Stephen Walt, 'The Renaissance of Security Studies', *International Studies Quarterly*, 35:2 (1991) pp.211-239 [available via Blackboard];

- Simon Dalby, 'Geopolitical Change and Contemporary Security Studies: Contextualising the Human Security Agenda', UBC Working Paper (2000) §

### **Week 9: Gender Matters**

Presentation: Critically assess the significance of defining gender as a social construction in relation to a contemporary case study or issue in world politics.

Debate topics: Is gender simply one more variable to be considered in contemporary world politics, or does it 'make the world go round'? To what extent is the study of world politics underpinned by gendered concepts? Women's participation at the highest levels of international national policy-making has been extremely limited – do you think this is important for understanding global politics?

*Learning Outcome:* Awareness of gender issues in world politics

#### **Essential Reading:**

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 15 ('Gender in World Politics')
- Charlotte Hooper, 'Masculinities, IR and the "gender variable": a cost-benefit analysis for (sympathetic) gender sceptics', *Review of International Studies*, 25 (1999) pp.475-491 §

#### **Supplementary Reading:**

- Steans *et al*, 'Feminist Perspectives' (Chapter 6)
- Gillian Youngs, 'Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms? Or: why women and gender are essential to understanding the world 'we' live in', *International Affairs*, 80:1 (2004) pp. 75-87 §

### **Week 10: Clashing Civilizations? Culture and Identity in World Politics**

Presentation: Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Huntington's (1993) 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis. Illustrate your answer in relation to a contemporary case study or issue

Debate: Is a 'Clash of Civilizations' inevitable? Does the 'War on Terror' represent a Clash of Civilizations? What are the main potential criticisms of the Clash of Civilizations argument? Are there alternative ways of understanding culture (and identity) in relation to world politics?

*Learning Outcome:* Critical understanding of debates on 'culture' and 'civilization' in world politics

#### **Essential Reading:**

- Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72/3 (Summer 1993) [available via Blackboard]
- Cynthia Weber, 'Modernization and development theory: Is there a clash of civilizations?' from *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 2005) §
- Annick T.R. Wibben, 'Who do we think we are?' in Jenny Edkins and Maja Zehfuss (eds.) *Global Politics: A New Introduction* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009) §

#### **Supplementary Reading:**

- Baylis, Smith and Owens, Chapter 25 ('Culture in World Affairs')
- Dieter Senghaas, 'A clash of civilizations: An Idee Fixe?', *Journal of Peace Research*, 35:1 (1998) pp.127-132 [available via BlackBoard]

## APPENDIX

### General School Regulations

#### Attendance at classes

The School considers seminars to be a vital part of your learning experience. Not only do they provide you with an opportunity to explore the weekly topic in more depth, they provide contact with other students on your degree programme. It is recognised that students will occasionally miss classes due to ill health or unforeseen circumstances. In this case, you must inform your seminar tutor in advance and forward a self-certification and/or medical evidence to [spais-absence@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:spais-absence@bristol.ac.uk), so your absence can be recorded on the register. It is important that all absences are explained and recorded for progress monitoring purposes. However, even where medical evidence is provided to explain absences, you may not be considered to have completed the unit without satisfactory attendance.

The following process will be followed in SPAIS for two or more missed seminars:

- If you miss any two seminars, you will be contacted by the Progress Tutor.
- If you miss any four seminars, you will be contacted by the Undergraduate Director.

You will be asked to explain your non-attendance and you will be expected to produce evidence. If you have missed these seminars without sufficient reason, you may be required to produce supplementary written work for credit purposes. This means you may be jeopardising your progression to the next year of study if you miss seminars without good reason.

- If you miss any five seminars, this will automatically be discussed at the School Progress Committee and normally a recommendation will be made to Faculty Progress to withhold credit points for the unit.

#### Submission of coursework

Please note you will be required to submit coursework electronically using Blackboard, the University of Bristol's Online Learning Environment. Without an extension late work is subject to penalties. The penalty is calculated as follows:

Marks will be reduced by 10 for a delay of up to 24 hours, with a further 5-mark penalty for every subsequent delay of 24 hours (or part of). If the essay remains unsubmitted one week after the deadline, a mark of zero is recorded. **You will still need to complete the essay in order to gain credit points.**

The 24 hour period runs from the deadline for submission, and Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays are included in the calculation. Please note that if your essay is 1 minute late, it will be penalised. Computer problems are not a reason for late submission.

#### Extensions

Extensions will only be granted by the Progress Tutor and are not automatic. Requests should be made directly to Sadie Drummond **at least 3 days before the deadline** by completing the extension request form and submitting it to Sadie's pigeon hole or posting it to her, **email requests will not be accepted.** However, if for some unforeseen reason you cannot submit the request 3 days in advance, please contact the Progress Tutor to discuss. Extensions will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and they should be accompanied by supporting documentation, for example medical certificates. The self certification and medical certificate forms can be found at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/fssl/current-students/forms/index.html>.

#### Marks/Feedback

Classifactory marks (those that contribute to your final degree classification) are subject to final adjudication by the External Examiner.

In addition to an overall mark, students will receive feedback on their assessed work and may contact unit tutors for further comments.

### **Presentation of written work**

Coursework and assessed essays must be word-processed. As a guide, use a clear, easy-to-read font such as Arial or Times New Roman, in at least 11pt. You may double –space or single-space your essays as you prefer. Your tutor may also have a preference: if they do they will let you know. In the end, though the final choice is yours. Single-spacing will save a huge amount of paper each year.

### **Length**

Each piece of coursework must conform to the length requirements (word count) listed in the unit guide. Work that does not conform to length requirements will be subject to penalties. These will be applied to over-length essays in the following way:

Five marks will be deducted for every 100 words or part thereof over the word limit. Hence, an essay that is 1 word over the word limit will be penalised 5 marks.

### **Word Count**

The word count **includes** all text, numbers, Harvard referencing in the body of the text and direct quotes but **excludes**, the title, candidate number, footnotes/endnotes and bibliography, tables, maps, diagrams and appendices. Appendices are only for **reproducing documents**, not for additional text written by you. Footnotes and endnotes should contain **minimal amounts** of text. This means the citation and, at most, one line of additional explanation per page only. For essays containing more than this the footnotes will be included in the word count and may mean that your work is penalised for being overlength.

### **Referencing**

Where sources are used they must be cited and the referencing style employed by the School is the Harvard referencing system. Most types of essay must contain a bibliography and reference the material used. Inadequate referencing will result in marks being deducted. See the Study Skills Guide for where to get help with referencing and how bad academic practice and plagiarism is dealt with.

### **Fails and resits**

If you fail an essay or exam you will normally be required to resubmit or resit. Please note that for students registering in 2011, resubmissions/resits are capped at 40. For students registered before then, resubmissions/resits are marked on a pass/fail basis and are for credit purposes only – the original mark will stand.

### **Course packs**

Course packs are provided for all units in either paper or electronic form. Course packs are a collection of photocopies of articles or chapters of relevance to the unit which may be referred to in the unit guide as required reading for a seminar. They will be available for you to collect or download from the end of registration week. The paper copies of course packs are heavily subsidized by the School and only cost £5. Instructions on how to access electronic course packs will be explained in unit outlines where relevant. You may also access the reading by traditional means.

**For further information, students should consult the SPAIS UG Handbook (available on the SPAIS Undergraduate Administration site on Blackboard).**

### **Instructions for the Submission of Essays**

The School does not accept submission of essays in paper form. All coursework and assessed essay submissions must be done electronically via Blackboard. This is for three reasons. Firstly, it enables an efficient system of receipting, so both the student and the School have a record of exactly when an essay was submitted. Secondly, it enables the School to safeguard against plagiarism. Finally, it enables the School to systematically check the length of submitted essays.

**All work submitted to the School is routinely checked by plagiarism detection software and is subject to standard policies regarding essay length and late submission.**

The header of an essay submitted to the School should contain the information below:

**Candidate Number** e.g. 12345 - This is to ensure anonymity during the marking of your work, so **your name must not appear anywhere on your essay!**

**Unit** e.g. POLI11101

**Seminar Tutor** e.g. Dr D. Butt

**Word Count** .e.g. 1,958 words

Please ensure that the **Essay Title** is on the first page and all **pages are numbered**.

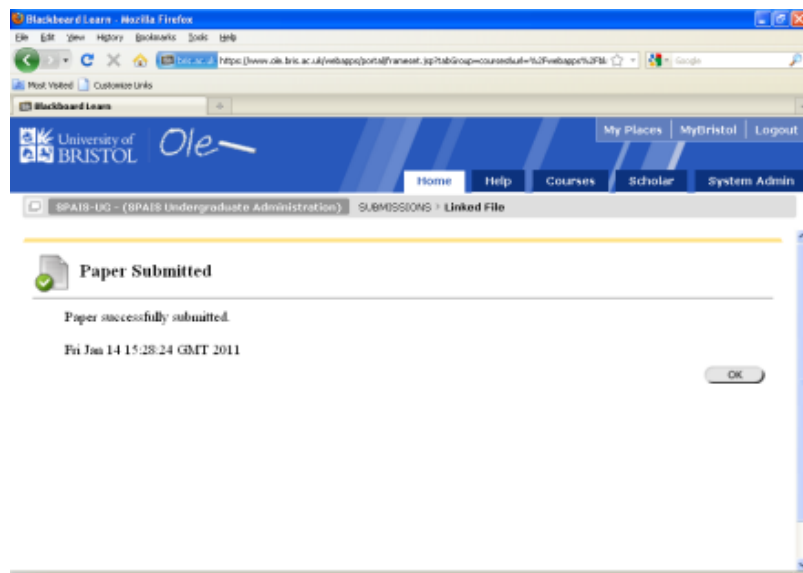
- You are only allowed to submit one file to Blackboard (single file upload), so ensure that all parts of your work – references, bibliography etc – are included in one single document.
- **Blackboard will accept a variety of file formats, but the School can only accept work submitted in .rtf (Rich Text Format) or .doc/.docx (Word Document) format. If you use another word processing package, please ensure you save in a compatible format.**
- By submitting your essay, you are confirming that you have read the regulations on plagiarism and confirm that the submission is not plagiarised. You also confirm that the word count stated on the essay is an accurate statement of essay length.

### Submission via Blackboard

All submission of essays occurs through the 'SPAIS Undergraduate Administration' site and not individual units. Follow the instructions below to submit your essay:

1. Log on to Blackboard and select the 'SPAIS Undergraduate Administration' unit.
2. Click on the "Essay Submissions" option on the left hand menu. You should now see a list of the Units that you are taking.
3. Select the correct unit, and a list of the required work for the unit is displayed.
4. Select 'view/complete' for the appropriate piece of work. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have selected both the correct unit and the correct piece of work.
5. The screen will display 'single file upload' and your name. Enter the unit code as a submission title, and then select the file that you wish to upload by clicking the 'browse' button. Click on the 'upload' button at the bottom.
6. You will then be shown the essay to be submitted. Check that you have selected the correct essay and click the 'Submit' button. **Warning: this step must be completed or the submission is not complete.**
7. You will be informed of a successful submission. **A digital receipt is displayed on screen and a copy sent to your email address for your records.**

*Confirmation of successful submission*



**If you experience problems submitting your essay through Blackboard, please email it to the relevant Undergraduate Student Administrator before the 11am deadline.**

*How do I know that my essay has been submitted?*

If you click on the assessment again (steps 1-4), then you will see the title and submission date of the essay you have submitted. If you click on submit, you will not be able to submit again. This table also displays the date of submission. If you click on the title of the essay, it will open in a new window and you can also see what time the essay was submitted.