

Introduction to International Studies: Border-crossing in the Age of Globalization
INTL 113-01, Fall 2021, 4 credits

Instructor: Nadya Nedelsky

Time: T/Th 9:40-11:10

Place: CARN 404

Office: CARN 413

Office hours: Usually Mondays 1:00-2:45, Thursdays 11:30-12:30, and by appointment (please use office hours link below my email signature to sign up, especially as sometimes the times will need to change)

“Exploration is a state of mind.”

- Josh Gates

This course introduces International Studies as the exploration of political, cultural, economic, and ecological border-crossing in our age of globalization. The resulting encounters, often unsettling, raise such fundamental questions as: where do these borders come from? Why do people identify with certain communities and not others? Who are “we,” and who are “they”? If we belong to more than one community, to which do we owe our highest loyalty? What are our obligations to non-members? How should a community deal with diversity? And what do our answers to these questions mean for the future of cross-border relations and the potential for human conflict? We take up these concerns with two key goals. First, we seek to become familiar with a variety of concepts and theories that try to explain these issues and then to practice applying them to different cases. And second, because these perspectives often disagree with one another, and because International Studies requires its students to not only learn about but also travel across borders, we seek to develop the critical thinking skills necessary for evaluating the strength of an argument, such that we can communicate a good one to, and appreciate a good one from, someone who sees things differently.

Texts:

- Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Further readings will be available on Moodle

Assignments:

1. Two 2-page applying-the-theory-to-real-cases papers: 12.5% each, **25%** total
2. Participation: **15%**
3. Global quiz: **10%**
4. Group research project: 15% for group work, 15% for individual work: **30%** total
5. Final reflective essay: **20%**

In this course we will:

1. **Read a variety of texts** by influential authors on the nature and legitimacy of distinctions and boundaries between human communities. These perspectives, and the debates between them, help us understand why people support certain policies and institutions and oppose others. They also offer a launchpoint for examining our own reasoning about the nature of identity and how to relate across borders. The concepts and theoretical frameworks our authors provide are useful not only for International Studies, but in many fields, and in daily life.
2. **Evaluate concepts and theories and apply them to real-world cases.** We seek to not only understand different perspectives on borders and border-crossing, but also learn how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their central arguments. We develop these skills by unpacking and assessing the elements of an argument and by applying them to real world situations to explore how they play out. These critical thinking skills are useful for any aspect of life where people make contending arguments. Over the course of the semester, you will write two short (2 single-spaced-page) papers applying theory to cases (see Assignment 1 above, and separate prompt for further details).
3. **Research and present a group project via panel discussion.** This semester-long project allows students to contribute to course content by choosing an issue within a number of broader areas of concern to International Studies (migration, the environment, human rights, international criminal justice, global health, development, international law, and global media); to closely collaborate and get to know one another; to gain academic research and presentation skills; and to articulate different perspectives by role-playing a panel discussion (see separate prompt for further details).
4. **Learn the globe and take a quiz:** Some factual background is important for framing and contextualizing global issues. This will be provided via Steger's *Globalization: A Very*

Short Introduction and a small information packet. You are responsible for reading and studying these outside of class. A quiz on these materials will be given Tuesday, October 19. Minimum passing grade is a B. You can retake as many times as necessary, but highest grade credited for a retake will be a B. (10%)

5. **Writing a final 6-page reflective essay** to reflect on the progress of your thinking over the course of the semester and relate this to some of our core theories/authors. A separate prompt will be provided.

SCHEDULE (subject to revision if necessary):

Thurs, Sept 2: An intro to Intro

THEME 1: THINKING ABOUT THINKING, AND HOW AND WHY WE DISAGREE

We start by considering how we come to certain conclusions, what principles we prioritize, some reasons for disagreements, and why we often fail to convince others who disagree with us or give them a fair hearing. We do this all with a view to learning how to communicate effectively across boundaries.

Tues, Sept 7: Please read/watch/do the following before class

- Haidt's *The Righteous Mind* Ted Talk (watch on Moodle)
- Haidt's "The Conservative Advantage"
- Short excerpt from Jacobs' *How to Think*
- Take Haidt's short quiz

THEME 2: THEORIES OF IDENTITY

We now look at different perspectives on the nature of human identity. These are fundamental to understanding the nature of the borders human beings draw around and between themselves, as they define communities and outsiders. We also explore how to unpack an argument.

Thurs, Sept 9: The primordialist approach

- Clifford Geertz, “Primordial and Civic Ties”
- Walker Connor, “Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond”
- Nadya Nedelsky, “The Primordialist Approach” (very brief)

Tues, Sept 14: The constructivist approach

- Eric Hobsbawm, “Ethnic Nationalism in the Late Twentieth Century”
- Ernest Gellner, “Nationalism and High Cultures”

Thurs, Sept 16: The ethno-symbolist approach, and mapping things out

- John Hutchinson, “Nations and Culture”
- N. Nedelsky, “The Ethnosymbolist Approach”

Tues, Sept 21: Citizenship and its relationship to ethnicity and nationhood

- Sheila Croucher, “Reconfiguring Citizenship”
- Background sheet on Estonia

THEME 3: THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL ETHICS AND RELATIONS

These theories take up the question of what moral frameworks, if any, we should use to guide when cultural and/or political communities have competing claims--in essence, how to balance concerns about “us,” about “them,” and about “everyone.”

Thurs, Sept 23: Cosmopolitanism

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, “The Case for Contamination”

Tues, Sept 28: Group project meetings, including research librarians

Thurs, Sept 30: Communitarianism

- Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (excerpt); “The Argument about Humanitarian Intervention,” and “The Case Against our Attack on Libya” (very brief)

Tues, Oct 5: Realism

- John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions”
- OPTIONAL: Hans Morgenthau: “Six Principles of Political Realism”

THEME 4: MODELS AND CRITICISMS OF MULTICULTURALISM

These theories take up the question of how to negotiate difference/diversity *within* the borders of a political community, focused particularly on approaches that fall under the heading of multiculturalism.

Thurs, Oct 7: Questioning multiculturalism, 1

- Amartya Sen, “The Uses and Abuses of Multiculturalism: Chili and Liberty”

Tues, Oct 12: A feminist critique, and a liberal critique of that critique

- Susan Moller Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” and Martha Nussbaum, “A Plea for Difficulty”

Thurs, Oct 14: Quiz bowl (prep for quiz)

Tues, Oct 19: QUIZ 😊

Thurs, Oct 21: ENJOY FALL BREAK!

THEME 5: THEORIES OF WHERE THE WORLD IS HEADED

How you answer the questions we explored in the first four themes -- the nature of identity, how we define our sphere of moral concern, how we prioritize different values, how we understand the core human motivations, and how we view diversity -- strongly shapes how we see where the world is headed and the likely sources of conflict. Here we survey some influential perspectives

Tues, Oct 26: Civilizations

- Samuel Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations?”

Thurs, Oct 28: Push-back: instrumentalism and materialism

- John Bowen, “The Myth of Global Ethnic Conflict” and Fouad Ajami, “The Summoning”

Tues, Nov 2: “endism,” “illiberalism,” and “civilizational states”

- Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?”

Theme 6: Border-crossing case studies, from different perspectives

Finally, we deepen and consolidate our exploration of our themes through student-led case studies. **All readings in the section** are chosen by students to accompany these case studies.

Thurs, Nov 4: Finalizing group projects

Tues, Nov 9: Group 1

Thurs, Nov 11: Group 2

Tues, Nov 16: Group 3

Thurs, Nov 18: Group 4

Tues, Nov 23: Group 5

Thurs, Nov 25: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Theme 7: Wrap-up and reflections

Tues, Nov 30: Writing workshops

Thurs, Dec 2: Peer review of final papers

Tues, Dec 7: Share reflections

Thurs, Dec 9: LAST DAY OF CLASS!

Fri, Dec 10: Final paper due on Moodle and in person at the I.S. office by 4 pm