

BDP101 Introduction to International Studies (unique #64170)

Fall 2009

Thursdays, 3:30-5:30 pm

MEZ B0.306

Professor	Eugene Gholz		
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Course Description

This course surveys a selection of issues in contemporary international affairs. Modern university education encourages understanding our global environment as a foundation for students' social, political, and economic engagement beyond the classroom.

During the semester, a series of guest speakers will each offer a different academic discipline's perspective on international affairs – specifically, perspectives from government, economics, sociology, engineering, history, journalism and law. These guests will help you learn that it takes a combination of approaches to reach a complete understanding of the complexity of our global environment. They also should give you a "taste" of different approaches that may attract your interest when you make course selections for future semesters at the University of Texas.

Course Requirements

The final grades for this course do not use pluses and minuses. Final grades will be based on the sum of the following three components:

1) Response papers: 30 points

Each student will write four short papers over the course of the semester.

Response papers are due at the beginning of class each week; late papers will lose one point per day. Every student needs to turn in a paper on September 10 so that we can give each of you baseline feedback on how to write good response papers.

These papers will be graded the same way that we will grade the later response papers, but your grade on the September 10 response paper will not count toward your final grade for the course. In subsequent weeks, you have the option of either turning in a paper or turning in one of the three "waivers" that each student will receive at the first class meeting. **You must turn in *something* every week** – either a response paper or a waiver. Each paper should be 1-2 pages long and should include one paragraph summarizing each assigned reading and a final paragraph with your own comments on the topic of the week. These papers have two goals: 1) to help you prepare for class discussion, and 2) to practice your writing skills. Each submitted paper is worth up to 10 points.

2) **Class Participation: 24 points**

Students are expected to attend and to participate in class discussions. Each week, you can earn up to 3 points for participation. Attending class earns 1 point.

Speaking in class earns 1 or 2 additional points. You can also earn 1 or 2 points each week by contributing to the discussion board on the Blackboard site.

Contributions to the discussion board should be original work, written specifically for the discussion board (and preferably interacting with other students on the discussion board). Posting a section of one of your response papers to the discussion board will *not* earn class participation points, although you can make similar points in your discussion board post as you make in a response paper, if the points are appropriate for the discussion, just as you can make points in class discussion that are similar to issues addressed in your response papers.

3) **Research Paper: 46 points**

This final paper, due in hard copy in Olivia Starr's office on October 29 (two weeks after the last class session), is worth 46 percent of the final grade. During the first two weeks of the semester, each student must meet with Professor Gholz to select a topic; each of you should pick a country, commodity, conflict, or non-governmental group that interests you before your meeting. At the meeting, you and Professor Gholz will agree on a question about that country or commodity that will be the topic for your paper. Proper preparation and attendance at the meeting with Professor Gholz during the scheduled time is worth 6 points. You will then do research on your own (with advice from Professor Gholz and from Olivia Starr, if you ask for it) and produce your paper. The assignment is to write a 5- or 6-page paper answering the research question that you and Professor Gholz choose at your meeting. The memo should clearly state your question, explain why the question is important and interesting, and then answer the question based on your research. Your paper should be double-spaced with normal margins and font size. Late papers will lose 3 points per day.

Professor Gholz will often announce extra-curricular presentations on international affairs sponsored by various departments and organizations around campus. You have the opportunity to earn one point of **extra credit** per week by attending one of these presentations and then sending Professor Gholz and Olivia Starr a one-paragraph e-mail describing what the speaker said and offering a short comment on the presentation.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

We will use e-mail as a means of communication with students in this course. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. The University of Texas recommends that you check e-mail daily, and requires you to check at least twice per week. Each student is responsible for keeping the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

Texts

Readings are available on the Blackboard web site, <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Blackboard is a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Blackboard will be used to distribute course materials, to communicate, to participate in the class discussion board, and to post grades.

About Blackboard

You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. Blackboard also includes information about your grade, which we will update every week. Please stay informed about your performance in the class.

As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions to the Blackboard site. Notification of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are not an excuse for late work. However, if there is an unscheduled downtime for a significant period of time, Professor Gholz will adjust your grade if the disruption interrupts your ability to submit an assignment on time.

The ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 provides technical support for Blackboard Monday through Friday, 8 am to 6 pm.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

You should only turn in your own work for this course. You should feel free to discuss course topics outside of class meetings, and those discussions should certainly influence the way you think about the issues in the class, but any written assignments should be your own writing. Short quotations, appropriately noted with quotation marks and footnotes, can be appropriate; "short" means about one or two sentences, at most. Copying someone else's work (whether a classmate's or a published author's, including work published on the Internet) is plagiarism and is an academic integrity violation. If you are caught plagiarizing, punishment will be severe – an F in the course at a minimum. Please consult the University of Texas plagiarism policy, if you are curious to learn more.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

Course Schedule

Aug 27 Introduction to the Course

Sept 3 Diseases across Borders (Adina Batnitzky, Geography)

Laurie Garrett "The Path of a Pandemic," *Newsweek*, May 18, 2009.

Jill Lepore, "It's Spreading," *The New Yorker*, June 1, 2009, pp. 46-50.

Sept 10 Global Media (Rusty Todd, Journalism, via videoconference)

Evan Osnos, "The Forbidden Zone: How Far Can a Provocative Editor Go?" *The New Yorker*, July 20, 2009, pp. 55-61.

Patrick W. Quirk, "Iran's Twitter Revolution," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, June 17, 2009.

Greg Bruno, "The Media Landscape in Iran," Council on Foreign Relations
Backgrounders, July 22, 2009, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/19889/>.

Sept 17 History and Policy (H. W. Brands, History)

H. W. Brands, "A Revisionist's Burden," *The National Interest*, July/Aug 2009, pp. 81-87.

Christian Caryl, "1979: The Great Backlash," *Foreign Policy*, July/Aug 2009, pp. 50-56.

Sept 24 Financial Crisis (Andres Almazan, Business)

Adam Davidson and Alex Blumberg, "The Global Pool of Money," *This American Life*, May 9, 2008, http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=355

William Easterly, "The Poor Man's Burden," *Foreign Policy*, Jan/Feb 2009, pp. 77-81.

Oct 1 Global Energy (Eric Bickel, Mechanical Engineering)

Elizabeth Kolbert, "The Island in the Wind," *The New Yorker*, July 7 & 14, 2008, pp. 68-77.

Michael T. Klare, "Tithing at the Crude Altar," *The National Interest*, July/Aug 2009, pp. 20-29.

Oct 8 Political and Economic Development in Africa (Ethan Kapstein, LBJ)

Philip Gourevitch, "The Life After," *The New Yorker*, May 4, 2009, pp. 36-49.

Ethan B. Kapstein, "Africa's Capitalist Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, July/Aug 2009, pp. 119-28.

Oct 15 Law against Terrorism (Robert Chesney, Law)

Jonathan Shaw, "The War and the Writ," *Harvard Magazine*, Jan-Feb 2009, pp. 24-31ff.

Jane Mayer, "The Secret History," *The New Yorker*, June 22, 2009, pp. 50-59.