

# POSC 2350: Contemporary Global Issues

Fall 2014

MWF 8:00-8:55am (1); 9:00-9:55am (2)

Cooke 202

Professor: Dr. Joel Olufowote

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## 1) Course Description:

What are some of the most pressing civil, social, and economic issues affecting the world today and what consequences do they have on our understanding of politics? What is globalization, how is it realized, and what are its implications on politics in general? This course takes an interdisciplinary, thematic approach in answering the above questions. Although we will be analyzing specific civil, economic, and social issues that are currently of discussion in most mainstream media outlets, *our primary goal will be the understanding of these issues and applying our learned knowledge into analysis of their effect on politics.*

As the title of the class suggests, the entirety of our time will be spent discussing current world events. It is important each and every one of you become familiar with browsing the 'world' or 'politics' sections of your favorite newspaper, online news source, magazine, etc. This content will serve as discussion and lecture points for the majority of our class this semester.

In addition to the course content outlined above, this class will also focus on how to identify interesting research questions in political science and introduce technical aspects of research methods such as variables, hypotheses, and concepts. Through response papers, we will work on writing mechanics with emphasis on thesis and argument formation.

This course fulfills the General Education requirement under Global, Societal, and Personal Perspectives, World section, for undergraduate degrees obtained at McMurry University.

## 2) Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course you will be able to:

1. understand the major global issues facing the world today and why they are important
2. apply your understanding of these issues into the consequences they have on politics.
3. analyze how politics can be shaped through these issues in different political systems. i.e., good or bad.
4. identify how to ask and attempt to answer interesting research questions.
5. write thoughtful response papers with a clear thesis and purposeful argumentative stance.

## 3) Course Requirements

- **Class Preparation & Attendance:** Your success in this class depends heavily upon your attendance and participation. You are expected to come to class having read the material assigned for the day.

- **Quizzes:** There will be 4 (5 short answer) quizzes given through the semester. There are no make-up quizzes. Missed quizzes will be given a zero.
- **Response Papers:** There will be 4 response assignments you are responsible for handing in at the end of each topical section we conclude. You will provide me with a two page, double-spaced paper **explaining a newspaper article, and how it relates to class material on the topic/country studied.** You will hand in a total of 6 short papers. In particular, I am looking for how does what you've learned help you better understand what the journalist is describing? You must print out a copy of the article and staple it to your paper. Papers are due in class at the next meeting following the conclusion of our discussion of the country in question. No late papers will be accepted. The following newspapers are acceptable examples of sources to use for your country/topical focused papers. You may use these or other similar newspapers. They are:

Chicago Tribune  
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/>

New York Times  
<http://nytimes.com/>

Los Angeles Times  
<http://www.latimes.com/>

The Guardian (London)  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

BBC News  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

NPR News

Reuters

- **Exams:** The midterm exam will be held in class on Friday, October 17. The final exam is currently scheduled for Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30AM to 12:30PM, in our classroom; it will focus on material from the second half of the course. One review session will be held before each exam.

- **Grading:**

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Attendance | 20% |
| Quiz #1    | 5%  |
| Quiz #2    | 5%  |
| Quiz #3    | 5%  |
| Quiz #4    | 5%  |
| Paper#1    | 5%  |
| Paper#2    | 5%  |
| Paper#3    | 5%  |
| Paper#4    | 5%  |
| Midterm    | 20% |
| Final      | 20% |

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|       |      |
|-------|------|
| Total | 100% |
|-------|------|

Students should be aware that university policy allows for a plus/minus grading system. This system will be applied in this course. Political Science majors in particular should be aware of this policy, as a minimum grade of “C” must be earned in order to have this course count towards their major. Thus, C- does NOT obtain proper course credit for majors. Non-majors and minors can obtain General Education credit for this course with a D- or higher. Plus/minus grades in this course will be reflected in the following numerical order:

|        |    |       |    |
|--------|----|-------|----|
| 100-93 | A  | 76-73 | C  |
| 92-90  | A- | 72-70 | C- |
| 89-87  | B+ | 69-67 | D+ |
| 86-83  | B  | 66-63 | D  |
| 82-80  | B- | 62-60 | D- |
| 79-77  | C+ | 59-   | F  |

#### 4) Course Policies

- **Absences:** Success in this course is contingent on attendance and participation; therefore, multiple absences will result in a reduction of your overall letter grade, while excess absences may result in failure of the course. Students are expected to stay current on the readings and lectures, which is possible only by attending class. The university policy is for 2 unexcused absences to be allowed during the semester with no penalties incurred. Any additional absences will result in a significant penalty attached to final grades. For **every** additional class missed without a valid excuse, students’ final grade will be lowered 1 numerical point. For example, if a student’s final numerical grade is 93 (A), then one additional unexcused absence (after the first one has been used) will result in the student’s grade being lowered to 92 (A-).

Excused absences are not penalized, but students must provide documentation for an absence to be considered excused. An example of an excused absence is a university sanctioned field trip. An example of an **unexcused** absence is leaving a message on my voice mail indicating a student isn’t feeling very well. If you are ill, you will need to see the university nurse for documentation. I also reserve the right to administratively drop without prior notification students who develop a pattern of absences.

**Please be aware that being dropped from the course may result in certain financial aid, and/or athletic competition eligibility repercussions, and thus students are strongly advised to keep track of their attendance and progress. If a student wishes to drop this class during the semester, it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that this class is dropped from his or her schedule.**

- **Cheating & Academic Dishonesty:** Any student found to be in violation of the University’s policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty will receive an F in this course and be reported to the appropriate authorities. If in doubt, please consult the university handbook.

#### 5) General Etiquette.

- **Cell phone use:** Students are expected to turn off their cell phones in class. Students receiving calls in class will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively

dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violation 102) for appropriate punishment.

- **Computer use in the classroom:** Students are expected to use computers in the classroom appropriately. Surfing the net randomly, checking e-mail, playing games, etc, are considered a violation of appropriate tablet use and will be treated seriously. Students violating appropriate computer use or caught using other electronic devices for purposes unrelated to the course will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. This stipulation includes Facebook, MySpace, blogging, etc.... Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violations 102 and 117) for appropriate punishment.
  
- **Food and other items:** Students may bring food and/or sodas or coffee into the classroom, as long as the food or beverage is consumed quietly. Tobacco, however, will not be tolerated. Any student caught with tobacco products will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violation 102) for appropriate punishment.
  
- **Addressing fellow classmates:** In this course, students will be asked to debate ideas and opinions. At times, I will play devil’s advocate on a broad range of controversial topics. However, the tone of discussion must always remain appropriate. Any name-calling or derogatory comments made concerning an individual’s opinion will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in inappropriate speech will be asked to leave the room, and will be counted as absent (unexcused) for that day. Students asked to leave the room a second time during the semester will be considered a discipline problem and will be administratively dropped from the course with a “WF” and referred to the Dean of Students as a disciplinary problem (code violation 102) for appropriate punishment.

## 6) Textbooks & Class Materials

- There is no required Textbook for this course.
- All other relevant course material will be available through Moodle or the Library Reserves.

## 7) Class Schedule:

### Week 1: What is Politics? What the heck is Political Science?

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Monday, August 25 <sup>th</sup> :    | Course Overview and Syllabus                  |
| Wednesday, August 27 <sup>th</sup> : | Politics & Political Science                  |
| Friday, August 29 <sup>th</sup> :    | What we do: Subfields and Substance (Quiz #1) |

### Week 2: Some Basics of Political Methodology-

|                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Monday, September 1 <sup>st</sup> : | Normative & Descriptive Approaches |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Wednesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>: Quantitative and Qualitative Methodology  
Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>: (Quiz #2)

**Week 3: Terrorism**

Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>: Terrorism Defined  
Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>: Overview of different Terrorist Organizations  
Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>: **NO CLASS**

**Week 4: ISIS**

Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>: ISIS case study in action  
Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>: ISIS and politics  
Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup>: Impact on Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon

**Week 5: Boko Haram**

Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>: Boko Haram case study in action  
Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>: Boko Haram and politics  
Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>: Impact on Nigeria (Paper #1 Due)

**Week 6: Global Governance**

Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>: World Hegemon(s)?  
Wednesday, September 31<sup>st</sup>: U.S., China, Russia, EU and role in global politics  
Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>: (Quiz #3)

**Week 7: Democracy**

Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>: What is democracy?  
Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>: Democratic Peace Theory  
Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>: Democracy for (peace in the) Middle East? (Paper #2 Due)

**Week 8: Midterm Review**

Monday, October 13<sup>rd</sup>: Review  
Wednesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>: Review  
Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup>: **MIDTERM**

**Week 9: Inequality**

Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup>: Types of inequality defined  
Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>: Ferguson, Missouri and inequality.  
Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>: Impact on United States politics.

**Week 10: Affirmative Action**

Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup>: Affirmative action defined  
Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>: University of Texas-Austin admissions and affirmative action  
Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>: Affirmative action and political impact (Quiz #4)

### **Week 11: Political inequality and Economic Inequality**

Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>: Chicken and Egg problem?  
Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>: Voting behavior in the United States  
Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>: (Paper #3 Due)

### **Week 12: Sport and Politics**

Monday, November 10<sup>th</sup>: What's the link???  
Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>: The Olympics and World Games  
Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>: Sport impact on National pride (or lack thereof)

### **Week 13: Case Studies in Sport Politics**

Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup>: San Antonio Spurs, Becky Hammon, and politics  
Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>: St. Louis Rams, Michael Sam, and politics  
Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>: The National Hockey League and politics

### **Week 14: Course Evaluations and Social**

Monday, November 24<sup>th</sup>: (Paper #4 Due)  
Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>: **NO CLASS**  
Friday, November 28<sup>th</sup>: **NO CLASS**

### **Week 15: Final Review**

Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>: Review  
Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>: Review  
Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>: Review

### **Week 16: Final Examination Period**

Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>:  
Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>:  
Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>:



**Dr. Olufowote**  
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 Fall [2014]

| TIME     | MONDAY                                | TUESDAY                            | WEDNESDAY                             | THURSDAY                           | FRIDAY                                |
|----------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 8:00 AM  | <b>Contemporary Global Issues (1)</b> | <b>Comparative Politics</b>        | <b>Contemporary Global Issues (1)</b> | <b>Comparative Politics</b>        | <b>Contemporary Global Issues (1)</b> |
| 8:30 AM  |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 9:00 AM  | <b>Contemporary Global Issues (2)</b> | Office Hours                       | <b>Contemporary Global Issues (2)</b> | Office Hours                       | <b>Contemporary Global Issues (2)</b> |
| 9:30 AM  |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 10:00 AM | Office Hours                          | Office Hours                       | Office Hours                          | Office Hours                       | Office Hours                          |
| 11:00 AM |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 12:00 PM |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 1:00 PM  |                                       | <b>Modern Political Philosophy</b> |                                       | <b>Modern Political Philosophy</b> |                                       |
| 1:30 PM  |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 2:00 PM  |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 2:30 PM  |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |
| 3:00PM   |                                       |                                    |                                       |                                    |                                       |

■ In Class (Contemporary Global Issues 1)  
■ In Class (Contemporary Global Issues 2)

■ In Class (Comparative Politics)  
■ In Class (Modern Political Philosophy)