

POLITICAL SCIENCE 4501/5501 – INTERNATIONAL LAW

University of West Georgia, Fall 2009

Instructor: Gregory C. Dixon Office: Pafford 225
Email: gdixon@westga.edu Office Hours: T/Th 12:30 – 2pm, 3:30 – 6pm, W 1 – 3pm
Course Web Page: <http://www.westga.edu/~gdixon> and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an upper division reading seminar on international law. This course is designed as a survey of the role and purpose of international law in the larger context of the study of international relations. This course is designed to provide a conceptual foundation, not as a detailed study of particular cases. The focus of the course will be on the basic structure of contemporary international law and its application in the current international system. Topics covered in the course include, but are not limited to: human rights law, the laws of war, state sovereignty, environmental law, and international trade law. As a seminar course, this course requires student participation in weekly discussions of these issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Shaw, Malcom N. *International Law*, Sixth Edition (ISBN: 978-0521728140)
- Armstrong, David et al. *International Law and International Relations* (ISBN: 978-0521605182)
- Ku, Charlotte and Paul Diehl *International Law: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (ISBN: 978-1588266279)
- Additional readings shall be placed on CourseDen

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Discuss the basic structure and function of the international legal system
- Identify the central differences between international and domestic law
- Analyze the application of the principles of international law to a range of issue areas (human rights, trade, war, etc.)
- Evaluate the role of international law in the context of international relations

GRADING:

<u>Assignments:</u>		<u>Letter Grade Totals:</u>	
Commentary Papers (6)	10% each	90 and up%	A
Research Paper		80 - 89%	B
• Research proposal:	2%	70 - 79%	C
• Literature review:	3%	60 - 69%	D
• Final draft:	25%	59 and under	F
Seminar Participation	10%		

NATURE OF THE COMMENTARY PAPERS:

4501: The assignments for the course consist of fourteen “commentary papers” based on a set of discussion questions provided for the topics to be covered in the class meetings. Students must complete six of the fourteen assignments. Students may complete up to eight of the papers with the option of keeping only the six highest scores. The discussion questions for the course are posted on the course web site. Each commentary paper answers two of the discussion questions for the relevant section of the course. The answer to each question should be two to three single spaced pages long. The discussion question due dates are listed on the course web site. A more complete set of instructions for the commentary papers is provided on the course web site.

5501: The parameters are the same as for 4501 with the following exceptions: Each commentary paper must answer three of the listed questions.

NATURE OF PAPER:

Students are required to complete a research paper for this course. Students are required to select a topic of interest that is relevant to international law. This topic will be framed in the form of a research question that the student will seek to answer with their research. The assignment has three parts: 1) The Research Proposal 2) A Literature Review 3) The Final Paper

Details of the paper assignment will be provided separately on Dr. Dixon’s web page. 4501 students should expect the paper to be twelve to fifteen pages in length. 5501 students should expect the paper to be twenty to twenty five pages in length.

MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

The assignments are in a take-home format and ample time is given for their completion. Students are expected to complete their assignments on time. Late exams will be penalized one letter grade (10 points on a 100 point scale) for each business day late. Exceptions will be made for University business in accordance with University policies. Extensions will be given only in case of dire emergency or “acts of the gods”. All such extensions may or may not be granted solely at the discretion of the professor.

ASSUMPTION OF ADULTHOOD:

This is a college course. All students are assumed to be adults and will be held to adult standards of accountability and decorum. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the requirements of the course. You are expected to meet the requirements of the course without having to be reminded of such clearly posted things as exam dates. It is expected that you will do the required reading for the course prior to attending class. It is expected that you will complete all required assignments on time. If you have questions, you are expected to ask the professor to seek clarification.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

This is a seminar course. Class participation is required and is a significant portion of your grade in the class. Class participation shall be graded on the quality of the participation not simply the quantity. Students are expected to complete the required readings BEFORE the class meets each day. Students are expected to come to each class prepared to actively engage the material. Discussion questions are provided for the various topics covered in the course. The Tuesday of each week will consist of a lecture by the professor on the topic to be discussed during the week. Thursday class shall consist of a discussion of the course material based on the discussion questions provided for that week's topics. Grades for participation will be assigned based on the quality of the participation, including a demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings and the ability to apply these readings to the course as a whole.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL ACADEMIC NEEDS:

Students with special needs as identified by the University will be accommodated in accordance with University policy. Please inform the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE of any special needs that will require accommodation.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance will not be taken and is not required as part of the course grade. However, this course will move very quickly and covers a large amount of material. Further, this is a seminar course and your participation in the seminar is a significant factor in your overall grade in the course. *Attendance is vital to success in this course.* While the professor does not deduct points for missed classes, students are forewarned that missing lectures may significantly reduce their chances of success in the course. You cannot effectively participate if you are not here. If it is necessary to miss a class, it is the responsibility of the student to get the notes from that day of class from another student in the class.

ACTS OF THE GODS, AND OTHER VERY BAD THINGS:

On very rare occasions truly terrible things happen to students that severely interfere with the ability to function in the class. If such an event happens to you, don't wait until the last day of the semester to bring it to the professor's attention. While the professor is strict, he's not inhuman and accommodations for students who experience truly exceptional life events may be made if the circumstances warrant.

PRIVACY RIGHTS AND EMAIL CONTACT

Federal law (FERPA) protects the privacy rights of students. This law was written before the age of email and the interpretation of student privacy over email remains unclear. As a result, the professor is very limited as to what can be discussed over email and also very limited in which email accounts he can correspond with regarding the course. Nothing related to grades, exams, or any other course information specific to a student will be discussed via email. Exam grades, course grades, or any other grade related information will only be discussed in person during office hours or after class. General questions about the course material, lectures, etc. may be asked via email, but only through the student's official university accounts or through the WebCT interface. Gmail, hotmail, Yahoo, etc. accounts cannot be used for the purposes of this class.

EXTRA CREDIT:

There will be NO extra credit given in this course.

CLASSROOM DECORUM, CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, AND OTHER CURSES OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY:

Please arrive on time. Please turn off any device that makes noise. Cell phones should be turned off during class. Laptops should be muted if they are to be used during class. Please do not read the newspaper, sleep, send text messages (your phone should be off), or work on material for other courses during the class time.

At various times during the course we will be discussing highly controversial topics. Students may have strong feelings that conflict with the feelings of others on these issues. Mutual respect and politeness is required in the classroom at all times.

Violations of appropriate classroom decorum will result in penalties including, but not limited to reduction in the students grade in the course, administratively dropping the student from the course, and reporting the student's behavior to the University for further action under the Conduct Code.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All students should be aware of the University of West Georgia rules regarding academic honesty. Cheating, fabrication, and/or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Any student caught committing any violation of the Honor Code on any assignment will receive an F in the course (regardless of the relative value of the assignment in question) and will be reported to the University for further action as per University policy.

The professor reserves the right to seek the harshest possible penalty (expulsion from the university) for any and all violations of the University of West Georgia Honor Code regardless of the value of the individual assignment. If you are unsure as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult the University of West Georgia Student Handbook. Ignorance of the Code will not be accepted as an excuse for violations of it.

MODIFICATIONS TO THIS SYLLABUS:

The professor reserves the right to make changes to any and all elements of this syllabus as necessary for the success of the course as defined by the professor. Such changes will be announced verbally in class. Such changes may only be announced once. Such changes may include modifications to any and all aspects of this syllabus.