

*University of Georgia*  
*International Relations 1100, UGA à Paris 2008*  
**Introduction to Global Issues**

**Prof. Maurits van der Veen**

**Course description**

A global issue is any issue that crosses national borders. As anyone who regularly reads or watches the news will know, there is an almost inexhaustible collection of issues that meet this definition. Any attempt to survey them is bound to fail and, perhaps worse, is likely to do little more than skim the surface. This course, therefore, takes a somewhat different approach.

We will take advantage of our presence in Paris to focus on France in particular. Over the course of the 11 class sessions, we will read, in their entirety, three books on comparative and international politics. Each of these books engages questions of domestic politics as well as international politics. Each also is *political* in itself, in that it has an argument to make, rather than simply presenting a dry summation of the facts.

Taken together, the books will provide us with a thorough overview of:

- the politics of modern industrialized democracies
- relations among European countries and between Europe and the United States,
- relations between the United States and the rest of the world, and
- some of the most pressing issues facing the United States and Europe today

The goal of the course is to get you interested in *thinking about* global issues. We want to try to understand *why* political actors make the choices they do, what is at *stake* in these choices, and what the *implications* of their choices are, in the short, the medium, and the long term. This means not just thinking about what goes on today, but also about how we got to this point, and about where we are likely to (or should!) go next.

This course serves as the entry point for a major in the Department of International Affairs. However, it is set up so that even if you have no intention of choosing this major, you will still learn a lot about the world around us (including, not least, France) and, hopefully, also acquire an ongoing interest in (and ability to think critically about) how politics shapes that world.

## Course policies & requirements

The books for this course have been especially selected for the quality and accessibility of the writing. This means that the reading ought to be a pleasant task rather than a chore. Moreover, the course will run as a seminar, not a lecture course, which makes it particularly important for you to do the assigned reading before class, and to arrive prepared to contribute intelligently to the class discussion.

Part of your grade is based on class participation, which will be judged in terms of the quality, not just the quantity, of your contributions. In addition, to encourage you further to do the reading attentively, there will be a brief quiz the first 7 days of class.

Starting on Thursday in the second week, the second half of each class will be dedicated to a debate on a current affairs topic related to the reading material for that day. Each student will participate in 2 such debates, which will pit two sides of 2-3 students against each other. You will be able to sign up for the debates of your choice during the first week of class.

The final component of your grade is a written argument based on your position in one of the debates you participated in. This paper is to be 12-15 pages in length and will be due at the end of the summer (though you may of course submit it earlier). For the paper, you are encouraged to do some additional research to help strengthen your argument further.

## Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation: 19%	Debates: 20% each
Quizzes: 21% (3% each)	Paper: 20%

## Readings

The 3 books required for the course have been ordered through the UGA Bookstore, but you can also easily order them yourselves online, for example through Barnes and Noble or Amazon. The books are:

- Ash, Timoth Garton. 2004. *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West*. New York: Random House.
- Prestowitz, Clyde. 2003. *Rogue Nation*. New York: Basic Books.
- Smith, Timothy B. 2004. *France in Crisis*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## Calendar

### Week 1: France (Smith)

- Mon. June 9 *Welfare states*  
Chapters 1-2
- Tue. June 10 *Socialism & globalization*  
Chapters 3-4
- Wed. June 11 *Who is protected?*  
Chapters 5-6  
**Movie: Sicko**
- Thu. June 12 *Who is left out?*  
Chapters 7-8

### Weeks 2 & 3: Looking outwards

- Mon. June 16 *Britain, Europe*  
Chapters 0-2 in Ash
- Tue. June 17 *The United States*  
Chapter 3 in Ash, plus chapters 1-2 in Prestowitz
- Wed. June 18 *New threats: an overview*  
Chapter 4 in Ash
- Thu. June 19 *Trade, oil, environment*  
Chapters 3-5 in Prestowitz  
Debate: *The United States should sign & ratify the Kyoto protocol*
- Mon. June 23 *War & peace*  
Chapters 6-7 in Prestowitz  
Debate: *The European Union should develop its own army,  
to enable it to act independently from the United States & NATO*
- Tue. June 24 *Client states & allies*  
Chapters 8-9 in Prestowitz  
Debate: *Unilateralism and coalitions of the willing are preferable to  
multilateralism and alliances*
- Wed. June 25 *What can we do?*  
Part Two in Ash, chapter 10 in Prestowitz  
Debate: *All Western government leaders should boycott the Olympics in China*