

Poli 563A (3)

Current Issues in Global Politics and International Law

Professor Michael Byers

Synopsis:

This graduate seminar will examine breaking developments in global politics and international law. These developments could include military actions overseas, major trade disputes, international criminal prosecutions or prominent diplomatic initiatives. Current and controversial subjects will be explored and debated in a fully interdisciplinary manner. Prior knowledge of international law is recommended but not required. Students will contribute directly to the choice of topics and selection of readings. They will also take what they learn and implement it through policy-directed action.

Health warning:

This is neither an easy course nor one for the shy or fainthearted. In addition to writing papers and making presentations in class, students are expected to engage actively with the outside world. In previous years, students have engaged in investigative journalism, political lobbying, and even attempted to prompt a war crimes prosecution.

Also, the unofficial title for this course is the “change the world seminar”. If you don’t want to change the world, don’t take this course. That said, a breadth of political views is welcomed and encouraged!

Meetings:

Tuesdays, 2:00-4:30 PM, 3rd Floor Boardroom, Liu Institute for Global Issues.
Attendance is compulsory and will be taken.

List-serve:

Students will be required to provide an e-mail address at the first meeting of the class. This address will be used to send out class-related notices as well as some electronic reading materials. Please try *not* to provide a Hotmail or Yahoo address as these sometimes do not accommodate large attachments.

Readings:

The readings for each week will be selected by the students making the presentations and distributed electronically through the class list-serve. Please keep the readings relatively short (approximately 20 pages per presentation) and ensure they are available electronically, either on-line or as PDF files.

Evaluation:

Three factors will be weighed equally for evaluation purposes:

1. A written paper (approx. 1500 words, plus 20 pages electronic readings) distributed in advance and presented orally (approx. 10 minutes) to the entire class as an introduction to one element of a current issue;
2. Participation in class discussion (both quality and regularity count here);
3. Effort (and ideally success) in implementing learning through policy-directed action.

Schedule:

Sept. 6:	Introduction, administrative matters, and selection of Topic One
Sept. 13:	Topic One presentations
Sept. 20:	Topic One follow-up, and selection of Topic Two
Sept. 27:	Topic Two presentations
Oct. 4:	Topic Two follow-up, and selection of Topic Three
Oct. 11:	Topic Three presentations
Oct. 18:	Topic Three follow-up, and selection of Topic Four
Oct. 25:	Topic Four presentations (note: this meeting may require rescheduling)
Nov. 1:	Topic Four follow-up, and selection of Topic Five
Nov. 8:	Topic Five presentations
Nov. 15:	Topic Five follow-up, and selection of Topic Six
Nov. 22:	Topic Six presentations (note: this meeting may require rescheduling)
Nov. 29:	Topic Six follow-up and closing discussion