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**PS 239**  
**Selected Topics in International Relations:**  
**Historical Change and International Politics**

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Syllabus v. 1.0  
Winter 2015  
Bunche 2121

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<https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/15W-POLSCI239-1>

This course is a tour of work focusing on the ways in which international politics has changed over the course of recorded millennia. Each week we will discuss, in depth, one book. We will talk about where the book fits in the field, where it attempts to take the field, we will assess the logic of the argument, the nature of the empirical work, its implications, etc. We will also discuss authorial choices, how the books are organized, how accessible they are, and what makes them good or bad books.

Most fields, including international relations, embody a contest between synchronic and diachronic approaches. Synchronic arguments are often reinforced by the presumption of constancy and universality. The assumption, for example, that anarchy has been a constant is used to argue that the balance of power is a universal law that has not changed with time. In contrast, diachronic analysis focuses on the role of change, and that will be our focus in this course. We will discuss how various perspectives deal with the issue of change and the arguments that have been proffered for how the world has changed and is changing.

Requirements: Course attendance, reading, in-class presentations, and a paper.

Meetings and Readings:

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| Jan. 5, 2015  | Introduction   |
| Jan. 12, 2015 | Holsti, K. J. 2004. <i>Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.                   |
| Jan. 19, 2015 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday  |
| Jan. 26, 2015 | Lebow, Richard Ned. 2008. <i>A Cultural Theory of International Relations</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.                                      |
| Feb. 2, 2015  | Phillips, Andrew. 2011. <i>War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.                |
| Feb. 9, 2015  | Gat, Azar. 2013. <i>Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.            |
| Feb. 16, 2015 | Presidents' Day  |
| Feb. 23, 2015 | Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. <i>Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press. |
| Mar. 2, 2015  | Neff, Stephen C. 2005. <i>War and the Law of Nations: A General History</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.  |
| Mar. 9, 2015  | Mazower, Mark. 2012. <i>Governing the World: The History of an Idea</i> . New York: Penguin Books.   |
| Mar. 16, 2015 | Exam week: Makeup Session<br>Frieden, Jeffrey A. 2006. <i>Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century</i> . New York: W.W. Norton.       |

**Publisher's description:**

- Holsti, K. J. 2004. *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Kalevi Holsti inquires as to how we identify "change" in international politics and distinguish between significant and unimportant changes. Do we really live in a new era or simply see more continuity than transformation in international politics? Combining theoretical and empirical arguments, Holsti investigates eight major international institutions, including sovereignty, international law and territoriality, and speculates on their consequences.
- Lebow, Richard Ned. 2008. *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press. In this volume, Richard Ned Lebow introduces his own constructivist theory of political order and international relations based on theories of motives and identity formation drawn from the ancient Greeks. His theory stresses the human need for self-esteem, and shows how it influences political behavior at every level of social aggregation. Lebow develops ideal-type worlds associated with four motives: appetite, spirit, reason and fear, and demonstrates how each generates a different logic concerning cooperation, conflict and risk-taking. Expanding and documenting the utility of his theory in a series of historical case studies, ranging from classical Greece to the war in Iraq, he presents a novel explanation for the rise of the state and the causes of war, and offers a reformulation of prospect theory. This is a novel theory of politics by one of the world's leading scholars of international relations.
- Phillips, Andrew. 2011. *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders*. New York: Cambridge University Press. What are international orders, how are they destroyed, and how can they be defended in the face of violent challenges? Advancing an innovative realist-constructivist account of international order, Andrew Phillips addresses each of these questions in *War, Religion and Empire*. Phillips argues that international orders rely equally on shared visions of the good and accepted practices of organized violence to cultivate cooperation and manage conflict between political communities. Considering medieval Christendom's collapse and the East Asian Sinosphere's destruction as primary cases, he further argues that international orders are destroyed as a result of legitimation crises punctuated by the disintegration of prevailing social imaginaries, the break-up of empires, and the rise of disruptive military innovations. He concludes by considering contemporary threats to world order, and the responses that must be taken in the coming decades if a broadly liberal international order is to survive.
- Gat, Azar. 2013. *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. What are the origins of nationalism and why is it capable of arousing such intense emotions? In this major study, Azar Gat counters the prevailing fashionable theories according to which nations and nationalism are modern and contrived or 'invented'. He sweeps across history and around the globe to reveal that ethnicity has always been highly political and that nations and national states have existed since the beginning of statehood millennia ago. He traces the deep roots of ethnicity and nationalism in human nature, showing how culture fits into human evolution from as early as our aboriginal condition and, in conjunction with kinship, defines ethnicity and ethnic allegiances. From the rise of states and empires to the present day, this book sheds new light on the explosive nature of ethnicity and nationalism, as well as on their more liberating and altruistic roles in forging identity and solidarity.

- Wimmer, Andreas. 2013. *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Why did the nation-state emerge and proliferate across the globe? How is this process related to the wars fought in the modern era? Analyzing datasets that cover the entire world over long stretches of time, Andreas Wimmer focuses on changing configurations of power and legitimacy to answer these questions. The nationalist ideal of self-rule gradually diffused over the world and delegitimized empire after empire. Nationalists created nation-states wherever the power configuration favored them, often at the end of prolonged wars of secession. The elites of many of these new states were institutionally too weak for nation-building and favored their own ethnic communities. Ethnic rebels challenged such exclusionary power structures in violation of the principles of self-rule, and neighboring governments sometimes intervened into these struggles over the state. 'Waves of War' demonstrates why nation-state formation and ethnic politics are crucial to understand the civil and international wars of the past 200 years.
- Neff, Stephen C. 2005. *War and the Law of Nations: A General History*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tracing war as a legal concept from Roman times through to the twentieth century, Stephen Neff reveals its various roles as a law-enforcement operation, duel between states and a "crime against the peace." He also considers the post World War II definition of war as an international law-enforcement mechanism under U.N. auspices. Although unsuccessful, this attempt did help transform war into a humanitarian, rather than a policy problem. This book interests historians, students of international relations and international lawyers.
- Mazower, Mark. 2012. *Governing the World: The History of an Idea*. Penguin Books.
- A majestic narrative reckoning with the forces that have shaped the nature and destiny of the worlds governing institutions  
The story of global cooperation is a tale of dreamers goading us to find common cause in remedying humanity's worst problems. But international institutions are also tools for the powers that be to advance their own interests. Mark Mazower's *Governing the World* tells the epic, two-hundred-year story of that inevitable tension—the unstable and often surprising alchemy between ideas and power. From the rubble of the Napoleonic empire in the nineteenth century through the birth of the League of Nations and the United Nations in the twentieth century to the dominance of global finance at the turn of the millennium, Mazower masterfully explores the current era of international life as Western dominance wanes and a new global balance of powers emerges.
- Frieden, Jeffrey A. 2006. *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- "Magisterial history...one of the most comprehensive histories of modern capitalism yet written." *New York Times Book Review*  
In 1900 international trade reached unprecedented levels and the world's economies were more open to one another than ever before. Then as now, many people considered globalization to be inevitable and irreversible. Yet the entire edifice collapsed in a few months in 1914. Globalization is a choice, not a fact. It is a result of policy decisions and the politics that shape them. Jeffrey A. Frieden's insightful history explores the golden age of globalization during the early years of the century, its swift collapse in the crises of 1914-45, the divisions of the Cold War world, and the turn again toward global integration at the end of the century. His history is full of character and event, as entertaining as it is enlightening.