

Political Science 333

Seminar: Ethics and International Relations

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Office Hours: Wed. 10am-noon, Thurs. 1-3pm, and by appointment.

Spring 2007

This seminar will address various issues relating to the normative dimensions of international relations. Among the topics addressed will be ethical constraints on the use of force, the tension between human rights and state sovereignty, the ethical implications of the global economy and multinational corporations, and the difficulties involved in applying traditional standards of moral judgment to the international sphere. This will be a demanding course, in terms of the work load required, the quality of work expected from you, and, at times, the complexity of the subject matter. It is imperative not only that you attend each class meeting, but that you do all the readings and come prepared to contribute constructively to discussion.

Grading for the course will be determined on the following basis:

- term paper (see below) 50%
- analytical papers (see below) 10% each (x2)
- class participation 30%

(Class participation means *active, thoughtful, and informed participation*; regular attendance is a minimum requirement.)

Each student will be required, over the course of the semester, to write **two short analytical papers** (4-5 pages, double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font and 1.25" margins) focusing on Discussion Questions relating to the readings for each unit (or, if approved in advance by me, on other issues raised by the readings that may be of particular interest to the student). These papers should reflect not only a clear grasp of the subject matter for the topic, but *original analytical and/or critical thought*. They should *not* be merely summaries of the material. Papers for a given unit will be due no later than the beginning of the class period designated for that unit. (For example, if you were writing a paper for unit 2, the paper would be due at the beginning of class on Jan. 30.) Students writing analytical papers for any given unit will be expected *to help lead discussion for that class*. This means that you should think in terms of how your analysis might serve as a point of departure for general discussion. (You might even wish to come up with a question or two of your own, related to your analysis, to help frame discussion.)

The other written assignment will be a **term paper of approximately 20 pages** in length (again, with 12-point Times New Roman font and 1.25" margins), due in my office by **noon on Monday, May 7**. (Note that this is during exams – you are welcome to hand it in earlier to avoid conflicts!) The term paper is to be a research paper on a topic of the student's choosing, subject to my approval. You should start thinking about possible paper topics as early as possible. To encourage you to do so, **you will be required to submit a 2 (two) page proposal to me no later than Tues., March 20**, setting forth your topic in as much detail as possible. The proposal must include: a one or two paragraph abstract stating the central question to be addressed and how you plan to go about answering it, a preliminary outline, and a tentative bibliography or list of research sources. *The purpose of this proposal is to help you in choosing an interesting and manageable topic and in thinking through some important issues early on. It will be graded on a pass/fail basis, and must be handed in.* You may be asked to revise and resubmit your proposal. You are welcome to consult with me as often as necessary before and after the approval of a topic.

Late papers (analytical papers and term papers) will be penalized five (5) points per day, including weekend days. Any extenuating circumstances that threaten to cause problems meeting a deadline should be brought to my attention as far in advance as possible. Computer problems are not a valid excuse for missing a deadline - back up your documents frequently. Also, you are required to keep a hard copy of each paper you submit, as well as saving it on a diskette, zip drive, or CD-Rom.

For all written assignments, the quality of the writing *does* matter. Essays should be logically structured, tightly reasoned, clearly written, and carefully proofread. Remember (in this class, other classes, and in general) that poor writing is not merely a stylistic problem, but a barrier to getting your ideas across. A poorly written paper is a poor paper, however brilliant conceptually. Before beginning any written assignments, you must read the document “Common Errors in Student Papers,” which I have posted on ERes. These are errors that no Holy Cross student should make. ***Any paper that contains three or more instances of errors on the list will be returned for correction, and a five-point penalty will be applied.*** The corrected paper must be identical to the paper originally submitted except for the corrected errors.

Also, as an ethical matter, students are not permitted to turn in a paper that they have written for any other course. Although I prefer that you do not, you *may* write on a topic that you have covered in another course and/or that you have researched for another course. In this case you must tell me what you plan to do, and provide me with a copy of the earlier paper, a bibliography, and the syllabus for the other course.

If you have any questions concerning any assignment for this class, you should talk to me as early as possible.

The **following books are required** and are available for purchase at the bookstore:

E.H. Carr, The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939 (New York: Harper and Row, 1964)


Ward Thomas, The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations
(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001)


Lynn Truss, Eats, Shoots, and Leaves: A Zero-Tolerance Approach to Punctuation (New York: Gotham Books, 2004)


Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, Fourth Edition (New York: Basic Books, 2006)

In addition, students are required to read the international section of a good daily newspaper – The New York Times is recommended.

 = books to be purchased at the bookstore

 = case studies to be purchased at the bookstore.

 = readings available in the reserve room at Dinand Library.

 = readings available online on Electronic Reserves (ERes).

Instructions for accessing readings on ERes: First, go to the Library site on the Holy Cross web page. Then click on “Electronic Reserves (ERes).” Then click on “Electronic Reserves and Course Materials,” then, using either the Political Science listings or my name, find the page for this course. You will be asked to enter a password. The password for this course is **fisk27**. Once you have accessed the course page, you should be able to access any document by clicking on its title. If there are any problems with accessing documents through ERes, please let me know by email as soon as possible.

1. Introduction (Jan. 23)

☞ Charles Beitz, “Bounded Morality: Justice and the State in World Politics”, International Organization 33:3 (Summer 1979), pp. 405-410 only

2. A Contradiction in Terms? (Jan. 30)

☞ George F. Kennan, “Morality and Foreign Policy,” Foreign Affairs (Winter 1985/86)

☞ Reinhold Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, Introduction and ch. 4

☞ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” (pp. 114-125) in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology

☞ Frances V. Harbour, “Basic Values: A Shared Core,” Ethics and International Affairs 9 (1995), pp. 155-170

☞ E.H. Carr, The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939, chs. 3-5

Discussion questions:

1. Where do human rights come from? How do you think Kennan and Harbour would differ in their answers to this question?
2. What does Weber mean by an “ethic of responsibility?” What are the advantages and disadvantages of basing one’s political actions solely upon an ethic of responsibility?
3. Is it appropriate to judge the actions of states in the international system on ethical grounds? Why or why not?
4. Briefly outline Carr’s critique of the “harmony of interests,” and explain how it relates to Realist thought on international morality.

3. What does it mean to “act ethically” in international politics? (Feb. 6)

☞ Hans Morgenthau, In Defense of the National Interest, pp. 33-39 (“The Moral Dignity of the National Interest”)

☞ Thucydides, “The Melian Dialogue” (from History of the Peloponnesian War)

☞ Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, ch. 1

☞ Robert W. McElroy, Morality and American Foreign Policy, chs. 2 & 5

☞ Thomas, The Ethics of Destruction, chs. 1 & 2

☞ Dorothy Jones, “The Declaratory Tradition in Modern International Law,” in Nardin and Mapel, eds, Traditions of International Ethics

Discussion questions:

1. Briefly explain the main points of Walzer’s critique of Realism in chapter 1 of Just and Unjust Wars. Do you find it persuasive? Why or why not?
2. How would Morgenthau assess the decision (described in chapter 5 of McElroy) to sign the Panama Canal Treaty? Why? Would you agree with his assessment?
3. Is it possible for states in the international system behave altruistically? Is altruism a necessary condition for ethical action?

4. Pacifism and Nonviolence (Feb. 13)

☞ Daniel A. Dombrowski, Christian Pacifism, ch. 1

☞ Dorothy Day, “The Use of Force”

☞ Dorothy Day, “Our Country Passes from Undeclared to Declared War”

☞ Gordon C. Zahn, “Violence and Pacifism,” in War, Conscience and Dissent

☞ Reinhold Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics, chs. 1 & 2 (“Why the Christian Church is Not Pacifist” and “The War and American Churches”)

☞ Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, “Afterword: Nonviolence and the Theory of War”

Discussion questions:

1. Is being a Christian reconcilable with taking part in war?
2. What is Reinhold Niebuhr's problem with pacifism? How might you defend pacifism from Niebuhr's critique?
3. Why is Walzer skeptical about the likely effectiveness of nonviolent resistance? Do you agree or disagree with his critique?

5. Jus In Bello and Noncombatant Immunity (Feb. 20)

📖 Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, chs. 3, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 19

📁 Telford Taylor, "War Crimes," in Wakin, ed., War, Morality, and the Military Profession

Discussion questions:

1. Explain what Walzer means when he says there is a tension between "winning" and "fighting well." How does he feel that this tension should be resolved? Do you agree, or do you favor some other resolution?
2. Taylor writes, "if the laws of war are so erratically if not capriciously enforced, and subject to change under the pressure of military practice, are they worth having at all? Might it not be better to junk the whole concept of war crimes, and acknowledge that war is war and anything goes?" How does Taylor answer this question? How would *you* answer it?
3. In what way does the theory of nuclear deterrence represent a conflict between rule-oriented and consequence-oriented conceptions of ethics? In this context, which view is more compelling?

6. Norms in modern warfare (Feb. 27)

📖 Thomas, The Ethics of Destruction, chs. 4 & 5

📖 Henry Shue and David Wippman, "Limiting Attacks on Dual-Use Facilities Performing Indispensable Civilian Functions," Cornell International Law Journal 35:3 (Winter 2002), pp. 559-579

📖 Barry Buzan, "Who May We Bomb?" Prospect 69 (December 2001), pp. 38-41

📖 Thomas W. Smith, "Protecting Civilians ... or Soldiers? Humanitarian Law and the Economy of Risk in Iraq," (unpublished manuscript, 2006)

📖 Colin H. Kahl, "How We Fight," Foreign Affairs 85:6 (2006)

Discussion questions:

1. Assuming civilians are not targeted *directly*, is the destruction of civilian infrastructure in order to undermine the will of the enemy population a justifiable practice?
2. In conducting military operations, should soldiers be required to accept greater risks to their life in order to lower the risks to civilians?

7. Human Rights (March 13)

📁 Stanley Hoffman, Duties Beyond Borders, ch. 3

📖 Shashi Tharoor, "Are Human Rights Universal?" World Policy Journal 16:4 (1999)

📖 Neil A. Englehart, "Rights and Culture in the Asian Values Argument: The Rise and Fall of Confucian Ethics in Singapore," Human Rights Quarterly 22:2 (May 2000), pp. 548-568

Discussion questions:

1. Where do human rights come from? Does their content differ across cultural boundaries?
2. Do human rights abuses abroad have any bearing on the national interests of the United States? If so, in what way? If not, why not?
3. What is the proper way for the United States to deal with human rights practices in other states? Would you answer the question differently for China than you would for apartheid-era South Africa?

8. Humanitarian Intervention (March 20)

- 📁 J.L. Holzgrefe, "The Humanitarian Intervention Debate," in Holzgrefe and Keohane, eds., Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas
- 📖 Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, chs. 4 & 6
- 📁 Richard Caplan, "Humanitarian Intervention: Which Way Forward?" Ethics and International Affairs 14 (2000), pp. 23-38
- 🗣️ Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, "The Responsibility to Protect," Foreign Affairs 81:6 (2002)

Discussion questions:

1. In what way could it be said that the issue of humanitarian intervention represents the intersection of ethics and international relations theory?
2. Discuss some different possible reasons for having a rule prohibiting intervention in the internal affairs of other states. What do you think is the strongest reason?
3. What sort of things could be done to resolve - or at least alleviate - the tension between sovereignty and human rights?

9. Case study: Darfur (March 27)

- 🗣️ Scott Straus, "Darfur and the Genocide Debate" Foreign Affairs 84:1 (2005), pp. 123-33
- 🗣️ Gerard Prunier, "The Politics of Death in Darfur," Current History 105:691 (2006), pp. 195-202
- 🗣️ Christopher Caldwell, "It Is Best to Stay Out of Darfur," Financial Times, December 16, 2006
- 🗣️ Simon Jenkins, "The Inhumane Folly of Our Interventionist Machismo," The Guardian, September 20, 2006
- 🗣️ Timothy W. Crawford and Alan J. Kuperman, "Introduction: Debating the Hazards of Intervention," Ethnopolitics 4:2 (2005), pp. 143-47 **OR (TBA):**
- Timothy W. Crawford, "Moral Hazard, Intervention and Internal War: A Conceptual Analysis," Ethnopolitics 4:2 (2005), pp. 175-93
- 🗣️ Edward N. Luttwak, "Give War a Chance," Foreign Affairs 78:4 (1999)

Discussion questions:

1. Is the definition of genocide employed in the 1948 U.N. Genocide Convention a useful and accurate one? Why or why not?
2. What is a "moral hazard"? How does the term apply to the debate over humanitarian intervention? Is it a significant problem? From what you know, has it played a role in events in Darfur?
3. Should there be external intervention to address the situation in Darfur? If so, should the United States act unilaterally or with a "coalition of the willing" if the UN Security Council does not approve intervention?

10. Flex week (make-up/catch up, etc) (April 3)

- 📺 *The Battle of Algiers* (film screening; time & location TBA)
- 📖 Truss, Eats, Shoots, and Leaves (entire)

11. Terrorism (April 10)

- 📖 Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, ch. 12
 - 📁 Andrew Valls, "Can Terrorism Be Justified?" in Valls, ed., Ethics in International Affairs
- ADDITIONAL READINGS TBA

Discussion questions:

1. What is the basis of Valls' critique of Walzer's condemnation of terrorism, and how does it relate to the analysis of the concept of "supreme emergency"? Do you agree more with Valls or with Walzer? Why?
2. Under what circumstances, if any, can political violence by nonstate actors be morally justified? To what extent does your moral assessment of such violence depend upon the choice of targets?

12. Global inequality and distributive justice (April 17)

- ☞ Stanley Hoffman, Duties Beyond Borders, ch. 4
- ☞ Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality"
- ☞ Nancy Birdsall, "Why Inequality Matters: Some Economic Issues," Ethics and International Affairs 15:2 (2001)
- ☞ Jeffrey Sachs, "The Development Challenge," Foreign Affairs 84:2 (2005), pp. 79-90
- ☞ P.T. Bauer, "Western Guilt and Third World Poverty"

Discussion questions:

1. Is it in the interests of wealthy states such as the U.S. to redistribute wealth to poorer states? Why or why not?
2. If there is a *duty* to redistribute wealth globally, to whom is the duty owed - to states, or to individuals and smaller communities?
3. Is the prevailing international trade regime unjust? If so, what should (or can) be done about it?

13. Multinational corporations and "sweatshop" manufacturing (April 24)

- ☞ David Lamb, "Job Opportunity or Exploitation?" Los Angeles Times, April 18, 1999
 - ☞ Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Ground Up (Boston: South End Press, 1994), chapter 1, "The Race to the Bottom"
 - ☞ Ethan B. Kapstein, "The Corporate Ethics Crusade," Foreign Affairs 80:5 (September/October 2001), pp. 105-119
- MAYBE ADDITIONAL READINGS TBA

Discussion questions:

1. To whom do multinational corporations owe duties? What are the nature of those duties?
2. If "sweatshop" manufacturing is indeed a problem, who is responsible for doing something about it – home countries, host countries, corporations, laborers, consumers, or some combination of these?

14. Conclusions (May 1)

- ☞ E.H. Carr, The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939, chs. 6,14
- ☞ Arnold Wolfers, Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics, ch. 4
- ☞ Thomas, The Ethics of Destruction, ch. 6
- ☞ J. Ann Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation," Millennium 17:3 (1988), pp. 429-440
- ☞ Leslie H. Gelb and Justine A. Rosenthal, "The Rise of Ethics in Foreign Policy: Reaching a Values Consensus," Foreign Affairs 82:3 (May/June 2003)

Discussion questions:

1. On page 228 of The Twenty Years' Crisis, E.H. Carr poses two questions concerning the prospects for change in the international order. How did he answer those questions? How would you answer them today?
2. Is Tickner's critique of Morgenthau persuasive? Why or why not?
3. What, ultimately, is the relationship between ethics and power in international relations?