

**ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE & ECONOMICS**

POE 414 – CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND EVENTS

Fall Section 02 - 2020

Professor: Dr JPF Lépine
Office: G411
Local: 6645
Pierre.lepine@rmc.ca

Day and Time: XXXXXX
Location: XXXXX

Course description:

This course provides students with tools to generate explanations of actor behaviours in major international events and issues. It will explore the relationships amongst levels of analysis, actors, actions, objectives and interests. Students will be required to justify and defend the application of a variety of international relations theories and to interpret data to explain actor behaviour.

Learning Outcomes:

1. **Assess** the relevance of specific international relations theories to explain the actions and objectives of various actors.
2. **Critique** the existing reference literature applicable to the issue and supporting international relations theory.
3. **Evaluate** the qualitative and quantitative data applicable to the issue.
4. **Relate** actor interests to objectives and actions taken to achieve those objectives.

Objectives:

Success in this course is contingent on students having a base knowledge of current international affairs, geography and international relations in general. It is recommended that students regularly read international newspapers or magazines such as *The Economist*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, or the *International Herald Tribune* to name a few.

This course offers a systematic review of events, geopolitical issues and international conflicts. It will use contemporary cases from various regions around

the globe to illustrate concepts and dynamics discussed in the first weeks of the course during student-led seminars.

This is a senior political science course; the lectures and assignment reflect the expectations of a 400 level course. Critical thinking is encouraged throughout the term and students are encouraged to bring their ideas and opinions forward in discussions.

Academic integrity:

The following is an excerpt from the Academic Regulations:

23. Academic Integrity

23.1 Integrity –When you do the right thing even though no one is watching. Integrity is essential to the academic enterprise and its foundations in the open, independent, and free exchange of ideas. The core values of integrity, both academic and otherwise include: honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trust. Academic Integrity demands that all members of RMC act in accordance with these values in the conduct of their academic work, and that they shall follow the rules and regulations concerning the legitimate and accepted conduct, practices and procedures of academic research and writing. Academic Integrity violations are defined as Cheating, Plagiarism or other violations of academic ethics. (It is important to note that, while the list below is comprehensive, it should not be considered exhaustive.)

Cheating includes:

- a. An act or attempt to give, receive, share, or utilize unauthorized information or unauthorized assistance at any time for assignments, tests or examinations. Students are permitted to mentor or assist other students with assignments and laboratory reports, but, students will not permit other students to copy their work, nor will students copy other students' work, and they must acknowledge when they have received assistance from others;
- b. Failure to follow rules on assignments, presentations, exercises, tests, or examinations as detailed by the respective professor or test/exam invigilator;
- c. Unauthorized co-operation or collaboration;
- d. Tampering with official documents, including electronic records;
- e. Falsifying research, experimental data, or citations;
- f. The inclusion of sources that were not used in the writing of the paper or report; and
- g. The impersonation of a candidate at presentations, exercises, tests or an examination. This includes logging onto any electronic course management tool or program (e.g. Moodle, Black Board, etc.) using someone else's login and password.

Plagiarism includes:

- a. Using the work of others and attempting to present it as original thought, prose or work. This includes failure to appropriately acknowledge a source, misrepresentation of cited work, and misuse of quotation marks or attribution;
- b. Failure to acknowledge adequately collaboration or outside assistance and;
- c. Copying.

Other violations of academic ethics include:

- a. Not following ethical norms or guidelines in research;
- b. Failure to acknowledge that work or any part thereof has been submitted for credit elsewhere;
- c. Misleading or false statements regarding work completed; and
- d. Knowingly aiding or abetting anyone in committing any form of an Academic Integrity violation. <Excerpt ends>

Bear in mind that the whole point of academic integrity is that an author demonstrates confidence in their work by disclosing the sources openly. By citing, they are telling the reader subtly that if the reader does not agree with the author's research, they are free to go look it up themselves.

Pedagogy:

This is a seminar course. Students will engage in research, writing and presenting analyses on specific cases. Each student will examine three cases by writing a Briefing Note (not to exceed two pages, less Annexes) seeking to answer questions pertinent to the case and presenting their findings during the seminar. The Briefing Note is to be submitted one week ahead of the presentation and both the Briefing Note and Presentation are intended to form a complete package. One of these is a practice and the second and third are marked. The final seminar will be submitted as a paper exploring the case using the theoretical paradigm that was not used during the practice or evaluated seminar.

Mark Breakdown:

40 % Presentation (x 2) (Presentation 1 – 15% / Presentation 2 – 25%)
40 % Briefing Note, including Actor Selection, Actor Profile, and Literature Review annexes (x 2) (1st Set – 15%, 2nd Set – 25%)
10% Theory Review
10 % Participation (excludes theory review)

Participation is not predicated on mere attendance of class; it is a measure of active participation and provision of incisive comments.

Structure:

The seminars will be structured as follows:

- **One week in advance** : Briefing Note and Presentation (Slide Deck, with script; or Video; or Slide Deck with soundtrack) distributed to all students and the professor
- **Two days in advance**: every student poses three questions via the Forum. NB: there is a strong positive relationship between the quality of the questions you pose and your participation mark.
- **Seminar day**: The presenter uses no less than five questions to drive a 15 to 20 minute synchronous discussion on BBB.

Late Policy:

Zero unless there is an extenuating circumstance.

Policy on language:

The quality of your writing and oral presentation matters to your mark. I reserve the right to reduce marks by up to 20% should its quality not be worthy of a 400 level course.

Periodicals:

These tend to be your strongest sources of information as they are written by experts in their field, and tend to be subjected to the rigours of peer review. The effect of both is that the reader of the article can have great confidence in its quality. A number of these are regionally oriented:

Africa:

- Journal of Modern African Studies
- Review of African Political Economy
- African Affairs
- Africa Today
- African Studies Review
- African and Asian Studies

Latin America:

- Latin American Research Review
- Journal of Latin American Politics and Society
- Journal of Latin American Studies
- Latin America
- Hemisphere
- Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs

Middle East:

- Middle East Policy
- Middle East Report (MERIP)
- Middle East Journal
- Middle East Affairs Journal
- International Journal of Middle East Studies
- Muslim World
- American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences
- Journal of South Asian and Middle East Studies

Asia:

- China Quarterly
- Asian Survey
- Journal of Contemporary China
- Issues and Studies
- Modern China

Europe:

- West European Politics
- Parliamentary Affairs
- Problems of Post-Communism
- Government and Opposition
- European Journal of International Relations

BRIEFING NOTE

THE TITLE GOES HERE, IN CAPITALS AND WITHOUT UNDERLINING

AIM

1. The aim paragraph identifies the research question and provides the main point of the note.

BACKGROUND

2. This section explains why the briefing has been written and provides a brief overview of the issue. Resist the temptation to provide more than one or two paragraphs or a full history.

DISCUSSION

3. The discussion ought to provide the reader the important elements of information. Its margins are Left 3.81 cm (1.5 in), Right 2.54 cm (1 in) and Bottom 2.54 cm (1 in). Briefing notes are to be single spaced on 21.59 cm x 27.94 cm (8.5 x 11 in) using 12 point Times New Roman. They should not exceed two pages. What you can do, if you need more space for tables, maps, more detailed information, etc., you can create an annex and leave a pointer in the Briefing Note text, i.e. (See Annex A for details). Annexes should appear in the same sequence as they appear in the text of the Briefing Note.

4. A 1.27 cm (0.5 in) tab is used after each paragraph number and paragraph numbers appear sequentially. Pages are to be numbered in the lower left corner. Page numbering should be [page number/number of pages, i.e. 1/2]. A similar pattern is played out for Annexes, with the the Annex letter used with a hyphen as a prefix, i.e. A-1/1.

5. For the sake of clarity, one should avoid acronyms and abbreviations. If it is necessary to use them, you must either identify the acronym with the first use or provide an Annex that identifies the acronyms and abbreviations. Be careful with these as consistency is prized.

6. In this course, the Briefing Note is not a decisional document and needs not provide a recommendation or options for a solution.

CONCLUSION

7. This is a succinct summary of the contents and/or state your hypothesis. It should remain objective. Never leave a signature block as an orphan on a new page; should you get stuck, force one or two lines onto the new page.

Prepared by: Name, Rank, Title, phone number

Prepared on: the date the note was prepared

Annexes:

Annex A	Name	[NB: at least 2 annexes: Actor Profile and a Literature Review]
Annex B	Name	
Annex C	Name	

Class Schedule

Week 1 – 8-11 Sep 20

A – Course outline

B – Competition versus Conflict [Asynchronous Lecture]

C – Connecting Theories, Levels of Analysis and Actors [Synchronous Discussion on BBB]

Week 2 – 14-18 Sep 20

A – Analytical Model (Logic) [Asynchronous Lecture]

B – Analytical Model (Literature Reviews) [Asynchronous Lecture]

C – Analytical Model (Products) [Asynchronous Lecture]

Week 3 – 21-25 Sep 20

A – Theory Review: Realist paradigm [Synchronous Discussion on BBB]

B – Theory Review: Liberal paradigm [Synchronous Discussion on BBB]

C – Theory Review: Critical Theories and Constructivism [Synchronous Discussion on BBB]

Week 4 – 28 Sep - 2 Oct 20 - Seminars: ‘The Wall’

Week 5 – 5 - 9 Oct 20 - Seminars: Dominican Republic

Week 6 – 13-16 Oct 20 - Seminars: Brexit ‘Second Order Effects’

Week 7 – 19-23 Oct 20 - Seminars: Frozen Conflicts in the Near Abroad

Week 8 – 26-30 Oct 20 - Seminars: Iraq and the Kurds

Week 9 – 2-6 Nov 20 - Seminars: Iran and the UAE

Week 10 – 9-13 Nov 20 - Seminars: India - future superpower or not?

Week 11 – 16-20 Nov 20 - Seminars: The Two Koreas

Week 12 – 23-27 Nov 20 - Seminars: COVID-19

Week 13 – 30 Nov - 4 Dec 20 - RESERVE

Seminar and Briefing Note Evaluation – POE 414

Student:

Briefing Note	/8
Articulation of a Research Question	/1
Declaration of a Hypothesis	/1
Format, spelling, use of language, clarity	/2
Selection of pertinent concepts and strategic influences	/2
Research	/2
Mandatory Annexes	/12
Literature review	/4
Identifies important works in the field (max 2 marks)	
Identifies debates and themes in the field (max 1 mark)	
Identifies how their work fits (max 1 mark)	
Actor Selection	/4
Identification of ALL implicated actors (max 1 mark)	
Declares the actor selection criteria (max 1 mark)	
Justifies selection of two or more actors (max 2 marks)	
Actor Profile prepared	/4
PMESII Analysis of actor (max 2 marks)	
Summary of actor interests (max 1 mark)	
Interests reflected in presentation (max 1 mark)	
Presentation	/20
Identification, explanation, and justification at a single level of analysis	/4
Identification, explanation, and justification of the case employing a theory from the assigned theoretical paradigm	/5
Logic of the presentation	/5
Data to sustain the conclusion(s)	/5
Use of assigned time	/1