POSC 4350-6350
“Controversies in Political Economy”
Winter 2009
Time Slot 20
Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:45
Room: Science Bldg. 2033

Instructor:
Dr. Russell Alan Williams (Assistant Professor, Political Science)
Office: SN2047 Office hours: Wednesday 12:00 to 3:00pm (Or by appointment)
Phone: 737-4402

Description:
This course focuses on contemporary controversies in international political economy (IPE) ranging from current global financial problems, major trade disputes to debates about the impact of globalization and economic liberalization on environmental and social protection.

Learning Objectives:
While each student will gain a better understanding of all of the topics covered in the course, the main result will be a major, applied research paper on the topic/controversy that each student has chosen to focus on. The final version of this paper should be formatted and written in a fashion resembling a serious scholarly publication.

Course Organization:
There will be two regularly scheduled 1.25 hour seminars each week. Each student will be required to participate in the regular seminar discussions and also make an analytical presentation based on one of the assigned readings. Students will also be required to present an article (of their choosing) to the class as a whole illustrating the research problem of their selected topic area for the major research paper. Latter in the semester each student will present a draft of their resulting research paper for class discussion.

Required Texts:
• All other required readings available from the instructor (as PDF’s).

Grade Distribution:
Assignment one: Research Problem Presentation 10%
Assignment two: Analytical Presentation 10%
Assignment three: Research Paper Presentation 10%
Assignment four: Research Paper Discussion 10%
Assignment five: Research Paper: 40%
Class participation: 20%
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

ASSIGNMENT ONE: “Research Problem” Presentation (10%)
Students are to select a research paper topic of interest to them (see the list of topics included in each course unit for suggestions). By Wednesday, January 14, each student must email me an article, chapter, magazine story, or on-line reading, that they would like to present to the rest of the class.

Each student will do a FIVE minute presentation introducing the topic and reading they selected for their analytical presentation. Essentially, you will “teach” the class that week about the nature of the controversy you are interested in. In this presentation you are required to:

• Explain why you have selected the topic
• Explain the relevance of the reading you selected for the class
• Explain what you think the relevant “research questions” are emerging from the article. Such as: How might we test the authors’ arguments? How might we resolve the debate between different points of view?

These presentations serve two purposes:

• First, everyone will have read the article/reading you selected. The presentation will provide a starting point for class discussion of the topic. You should be prepared for questions about the reading and the topic you have selected. Please keep in mind that the point of your presentation is to enlighten the rest of us regarding the topic. One useful strategy for accomplishing this is to end your presentation with a series of questions that emerge from the reading that we might want to think about in more detail.

• Second, the reading and your presentation are intended to identify a “research problem” - A question that will be the starting point for your major research paper for the course. You will want to think about selecting a reading that help pose a question about the topic you are interested in.

Students are required to submit their proposed reading for Assignment 1, by email, by January 14.

ASSIGNMENT TWO: Analytical Presentation (10%)
You are required to do one seminar presentation on an assigned analytical discussion article. You will be given the opportunity to choose one of the assigned readings on a “first come, first served” basis in class, on the week of January 13 & 15.

• These presentations should take approximately FIVE minutes.

A good presentation will promote class discussion of the issues raised by the piece. To prepare for presentations, you should have a clear understanding of the issue covered by the reading. You may wish to draw on additional materials from outside of the required reading materials. Students are encouraged to examine their article in advance.
Please remember that a presentation is similar to an essay. It should have an introduction, an overview of the article, and should develop a clear set of analytical concerns. Simply describing the article is not sufficient.

Analyzing an article can take a number of forms depending on the material itself, or your reaction to that material. Some of the assigned readings will be more provocative and thought-provoking than others.

**Tip: You should try to do one of the following:**

- Engage with the article itself. You might discuss the shortcomings of its argument or analysis. You may look for “internal” problems or faults of the article – what is wrong with it.
- Discuss the broader implications of the article. You might discuss how the article relates, supports or contradicts other course materials. You might simply speculate on the political issues raised by the article.

Regardless, please keep in mind that the point of our presentation is to enlighten the rest of us regarding the topics we are discussing that week. Your presentation is intended to promote discussion. Good presentations will give the class something to talk about.

**ASSIGNMENT THREE: Research Paper Presentation (10%):**

Each student will be given the opportunity in the final weeks of class to present a draft of their research paper to the class.

*Each student is required to email a draft version of their paper to the entire class one week in advance of the presentation.*

In class you will give a brief presentation (10 minutes) outlining your paper. This presentation should focus on summarizing what you have argued and outline how your paper contributes to improving our understanding of the controversy surrounding the topic you are studying. This is intended as an opportunity to improve your oral communication of your work, but more importantly provides an opportunity to get feedback and advice on your topic from your colleagues before submitting it for grading. It is assumed that everyone in the class will have read your draft paper before your presentation.

**Tip: It is sometimes useful to think of your research presentation as answering three questions:**

- Why have you done an essay on this topic? Why are you interested in it or why do you think it is a controversial topic?
- How did you go about studying the topic in your paper?
- What did you learn? Or, what lessons can be drawn from your paper?

One student in the class will be selected in advance to act as a discussant of your paper. They will follow your presentation with a five minute discussion of the strengths and weakness of the draft version of the paper.

*Your final research paper is due one week after this presentation.*
ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Research Paper Discussion (10%):
Following the presentation of draft research papers (March 17-April 7), each student will be asked to serve as a **discussant** of at least one of the student papers being presented. This is a form of **peer review** intended to help each member of the class improve their paper prior to the final submission.

The responsibility of the discussants is to read the paper carefully and to provide a polite and respectful **five minute** critique that will help guide the paper’s author in making improvements before the final submission.

This process should be taken seriously. It is a normal aspect of scholarly activity. It is expected that the discussant’s comments will help the author identify shortcomings with their draft. Failure to carefully read the paper and provide useful feedback will result in a poor grade on the assignment.

ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Research Paper (40%):
Students are to write a major research paper exploring the controversy they have selected to study in the course. Although the length of the final essay can vary considerably - students should plan to write a paper of approximately 5,000 words.

Papers should be formatted in a style consistent with current articles published in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (I will provide a good example during the term). This means papers will be formatted in a scholarly fashion and include an abstract.

*Due, in class, one week after Research Paper Presentation*

- **Note:** Five percent (5%) will be deducted per day for late papers.

PARTICPATION (20%):
You are required to attend scheduled classes. In each class, readings, or student papers, will have been assigned specifically for the seminar. This reading is intended to prompt class discussion of themes raised by that week’s course material. It is expected that you will have read this material and come to class prepared to discuss it and the broader issues it raises. Your participation grade will be based on the degree to which you consistently (over the whole term) demonstrate that you have come to class prepared. Simply attending each class will not result in a good grade; rather, you must attend and discuss that week’s topics.

Please keep in mind that “discussing” the readings does not require that you be an expert on the topic. Often, the best class discussions are prompted by students asking questions about what they don’t understand about the topic or assigned readings.
COURSE OUTLINE:

January 13 & 15: Introduction and Organization

- Students required to submit their proposed reading for Assignment 1, by January 14

January 20 & 22: Politics of International Trade - The Future of the WTO?

Background Reading:
- Oatley Chapter 2.

Analytical Discussion Articles:
- The collapse of the Doha Round:

Research Problem Presentations:

Possible Research Paper Topics:
- The collapse of the WTO Doha Round
- China and the WTO
- Power and hegemony in the WTO
- The WTO Dispute Settlement System - law versus power
  - E.g. The “Softwood Lumber Dispute”
  - “Bananas Dispute”
- Agricultural trade and the future of the WTO

January 27 & 29: Politics of International Trade - The WTO and People

Background Reading:
- Oatley Chapter 2 and Oatley, Chapter 16, pp. 373-380.

Analytical Discussion Articles:
- The WTO and the environment:


• Trade, HIV and drugs:


Research Problem Presentations:

Possible Research Paper Topics:

• The Shrimp-Turtles Case
• The WTO and Intellectual Property Rights
  -E.g. Patent protection and drugs
  -E.g. Patent protection and agricultural production in developing countries
• The WTO and Health and Safety Standards
  -E.g. The “Beef-Hormones” Dispute

February 3 & 5: Development Strategies. What Options Are There for Less Developed Countries?

Background Reading:

• Oatley, Chapters 6 and 7.

Analytical Discussion Articles:

• Liberalisation and development?

• Alternatives to liberal development strategies?
  • Robert Hunter Wade, “What strategies are viable for developing countries today? The World Trade Organization and the shrinking of ‘development space.” Review of International Political Economy, 10:4, November 2003, p621, 23p. (Available though e-journals or from the instructor)

• The natural “resource curse”:

Research Problem Presentations:

Possible Research Paper Topics:

• The success or failure of ISI
• The impact of the WTO on development
• The notion of a “resource curse”
• Interpreting the success of the East Asian NIC’s
• Has the “Washington Consensus” failed?

February 10 & 12: Multinational Corporations - A “Race to the Bottom” in Social, Labour and Environmental Standards?

Background Reading:
• Oatley, Chapters 8 and 9.

Analytical Discussion Articles:
• The Market and the “RTB”:

• The End of Sovereignty?

Research Problem Presentations:
Possible Research Paper Topics:
• The outsourcing debate - is Wal-Mart good for America?
• Locational incentives - luring MNC investment
• The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)
• NAFTA Chapter 11 Disputes
  -MMT
  -Newfoundland oil research and development requirements
  -Newfoundland and the AbitibiBowater expropriation
• Canada, MNC’s and the Kyoto Accord

February 17 & 19: Globalization and Inequality

Background Reading:
• Oatley, Chapter 16, pp. 357-73 and 380-382.

Analytical Discussion Articles:
• Sweatshops:

• Child Labour:

• Globalization and Inequality:

Research Problem Presentations:
Possible Research Paper Topics:
• The problem of child labour
• Has the “Washington Consensus”/globalization increased or decreased global inequality
• The trade regime and the development of core labour standards
• Global “brands” and their labour practices (E.g. Nike or the GAP)

February 26: Class Cancelled for Winter Break

March 3 & 5: Modern Finance - From Crisis to Crisis . . .

Background Reading:
• Oatley, Chapters 10 and 11

Analytical Discussion Articles:
• Responses to the challenges of floating exchange rates and liberalized finance :
  • Yang, Yin and He, “The Chinese Currency: Background and the Current Debate,” Intl Journal of Public Administration, 30, 2007, p117, 18p. (Available though e-journals or from the instructor)

• Financial crises and liberalized finance:

Research Problem Presentations:
Possible Research Paper Topics:
• The China-US Dollar Debate - Is the Yuan Artificially Undervalued?
• The Advent of the Euro and the Future of US-EU Monetary Relations
• Is the US dollar in trouble?
• Controlling financial instability and speculation - Tobin Taxes
• North American monetary union - should Canada join the US dollar?
• The U.S. subprime mortgage Crisis and the global “credit crunch”
• The East Asian Financial Crisis

March 10 & 12: The “Debt Crisis” - When Will it Ever End?

Background Reading:
• Oatley, Chapters 14 and 15

Analytical Discussion Articles:
• Highly indebted poor countries:
• Reforming the IFI’s:

Research Problem Presentations:

Possible Research Paper Topics:
• The debt crisis & the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative
• The IFI’s and the Asian financial crisis
• IMF/WB Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP’s)
• Reform of the International Financial Institutions (IFI’s)

March 17 - April 7: Research Paper Presentations
Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism means offering the words or ideas of another person as one's own. The material copied or paraphrased may consist of a few phrases or sentences, or an entire passage or paper. Whatever its form and extent, plagiarism constitutes two kinds of failure: 1) Failure to perform the basic tasks expected in any paper -- original mental effort and expression; 2) Potentially, the moral failure of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism may be deliberate (as in the submission of a paper written in whole or part by another student, purchased from an essay bank, or cut and pasted from web sites) or the result of carelessness through failure to provide proper documentation.

All directly copied or quoted material must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source must be clearly identified in a footnote. The source of any paraphrased material or ideas must also be properly documented. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

The procedure for handling cases of suspected plagiarism at Memorial University is set out in the University Calendar. All cases of suspected plagiarism must be reported to the Department Head in accordance with Section 4.11 of the University Calendar General Regulations. Depending on the circumstances and the degree of plagiarism involved, the Department of Political Science normally handles first offenders in accordance with the Procedures for Informal Resolution (Section 4.11.5). The penalty in such cases is normally a grade of 0 for the work concerned. The Department maintains a list of students who have been found guilty of plagiarism, and in the case of a second offence or in particularly serious cases of plagiarism, the Procedures for Formal Resolution (Section 4.11.6) will be followed. The penalty in these cases may be probation, suspension or expulsion in addition to the grade of 0 for the work concerned.

If in any doubt about what plagiarism consists of, consult with your instructor or refer to any standard work on writing essays and research papers. The Faculty of Arts Writing Centre (SN2053) can also provide relevant information. The notes on proper documentation below may be of assistance.