

**SOCIOLOGY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (SOC361)**  
**St. Louis University in Madrid**  
**Spring 2011 Course Syllabus**

**Time:** Monday/Wednesday 2:30-3:45 pm    **Place:** Padre Rubio Hall 11  
**Professor:** Dr. Mary Prendergast (email: mprende1@slu.edu)  
**Office hours:** Mon/Wed 1:30-2:30 pm or by appointment (contact by email for appointment)  
**Credits:** 3  
**Prerequisites:** None

**Course description:**

Social scientists, using widely varying methods, seek to understand the nature of human behavior, particularly with respect to the subcultures, cultures or societies that human groups create. This course aims first, to explain and understand cultural diversity and the methods used to study culture; and second, to apply those understandings to issues of cultural diversity, conflict and inequality around the world. Drawing on the broad range of the social sciences – including cultural anthropology, sociology and, to a lesser extent, ancient and modern history – the course will explore some of the fundamental questions of our age from a uniquely human-behavioral point of view: Why, in an era of abundance and globalization, is there still so much inequality in the world? Why do ethnic and religious identities seem to be at the root of some of the world's most violent conflicts? Why are women subject to various forms of discrimination, from the most liberal societies to the most conservative, and are women at the heart of social change? Why do states and empires fail, and what should happen when the dust falls in terms of reconciliation? And finally, how are the ruins of those who ruled before used as modern-day political weapons?

**Course objectives:**

This course offers an introduction to the social sciences specifically targeted to students majoring in international relations or similar fields. Knowledge of and sensitivity to other cultures is essential to living and working in an increasingly globalized world, and particularly so for students whose careers will deal with relations between groups of people, both across and within national boundaries. Readings and class material will come mainly from the fields of sociology and anthropology, two of the broadest disciplines studying human behavior. The main objective is to deepen students' understanding of human diversity and heighten cultural sensitivity in ways that help explain the impact and import of contemporary foreign policy; however this is *not* a course dealing with foreign policy in detail.

**Requirements:**

The subjects covered in this course require careful thought and debate; although the readings will provide essential background to lectures and discussions, I do not teach exclusively from them and your attendance in class is both expected and necessary in order to do well, with participation being nearly a third of your final grade. There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Both will draw on readings, lectures and class discussions. Lecture slides/notes will be available online before the exams. Finally, you will work with fellow students to create a presentation in which you teach your classmates about a specific, contemporary conflict or issue of inequality, either within or between national territories, but *from a distinctly human-behavioral point of view*. In other words, you will analyze the issue not from the typically top-down view of a politician, economist or historian, but rather from the bottom-up view of a social scientist, who looks at behavior at the individual-group level.

**Grading:**

Active participation in class/online and attendance: 30%

Midterm exam: 25%

Group presentation: 15%

Final exam: 30%

The grading scale is as follows:

93 and above = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-80 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

60-69 = D

0-59 = F

**Attendance Policy:**

Entrance to class is allowed until 15 minutes after start time, at which point a late student will be refused entry. Repeated unjustified (undocumented) absences or tardiness will affect your class participation grade. The participation component of your grade will be decreased by one full letter for every three unjustified absences or incidences of extreme tardiness. An example of a "justified absence" is a sick day documented with a written note from your doctor. Simply emailing the professor does not qualify as adequate documentation.

**Late Policy:**

The exams and in-class presentation may only be missed in the event of a medical or family emergency, adequately documented; otherwise, a failing grade will be given.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

St Louis University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the Academic Dean. Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty. Please review and abide by the complete academic dishonesty policy at: [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic\\_advising/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf)

**Students with Disabilities:**

Any student who qualifies for special accommodations, due to presence of a disability, and feels it necessary to utilize them in order to meet the requirements of this course as outlined in the syllabus, should contact Counseling-Disability Services. Please phone the office at 91 554-5858 (Ext. 230), or send an email to [vandrew1@slu.edu](mailto:vandrew1@slu.edu). Students may also stop by the Counseling-Disabilities Services office in the Manresa building. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

**Readings:**

There is no textbook. Readings will be posted online on Blackboard. *Please familiarize yourself with Blackboard* as I will also use it to post important handouts and lecture slides.

**Important registrar dates** (see SLU academic calendar for further information):

Jan. 25: Last Day to Drop a Class Without a Grade of W and/or to Add a Class

March 11: Last Day to Drop a Class and Receive a Grade of W

April 11: Registration begins for Summer Sessions & Fall Semester

**Important course dates:**

Feb 23: Midterm exam

April 6, 11 & 13: Group presentations

May 9: Final exam

**Course Outline** (as of October 2010; may be subject to change):

*\*Readings will also include, in addition to those listed below, a current-events article posted to the Facebook group "SOC361" at least 2 days in advance of each class meeting.*

Date	Topic	Reading*
<b>UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING CULTURE</b>		
Wed Jan 12	Introduction to the course	-
Mon Jan 17	Culture: values, norms, roles	Kluckhohn, "Queer Customs" <i>Join FB group "SOC361"</i>
Wed Jan 19	Explaining cultural diversity	Harris, "India's sacred cow"
Mon Jan 24	Ethnocentrism, relativism and foreign policy	Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" Stewart, "Friction in US Foreign Policy", p. 1-10, 14-17 ONLY (skip "Dealing with Radical..." section, and stop at "Implications for...")
Wed Jan 26	Relativism, politics, and academic activism	Abu-Lughod "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?"
Mon Jan 31	Research methods & ethics	Sterk, "Tricking and Tripping"
Wed Feb 2	Human Terrain System debate	See HTS debate handout and readings folder on Blackboard
<b>UNIT 2: GLOBAL CULTURAL VARIATION</b>		
Mon Feb 7	Gender relations	Friedl, "Society and sex roles"
Wed Feb 9	Gender and social change	Kristof & WuDunn, "The women's crusade"
Mon Feb 14	Kinship systems	Complete online kinship exercise "Iraqi Family Ties Complicate..."
Wed Feb 16	Economies & exchange	Whiteley, "The ties that bind: Hopi gift culture and its first encounter with the United States"

Mon Feb 21	NO CLASS – HOLIDAY	-
Wed Feb 23	<b>MIDTERM</b>	-
<b>UNIT 3: GLOBAL INEQUALITIES AND CONFLICT</b>		
Mon Feb 28	Conflict, leadership & the power of conformity	Meyer, “If Hitler asked you to electrocute a stranger, would you?”
Wed Mar 2	North-south inequalities and culture clash	Diamond, <i>Guns Germs &amp; Steel</i> pages TBD
Mon Mar 7	North-south inequalities and culture class	Diamond, <i>Guns Germs &amp; Steel</i> pages TBD
Wed Mar 9	Ethnicity, religion & conflict I	Griswold, “God’s Country”
Mon Mar 14	Ethnicity, religion & conflict II	Eller, “Rwanda and Burundi: When Two Tribes Go to War?”
Wed Mar 16	Ethnicity, religion & conflict III	Debate reading to be assigned
<b>UNIT 4: SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION</b>		
Mon Mar 21	Why do states fail?	Diamond, <i>Collapse</i> , pages TBD
Wed Mar 23	Conflict & reconciliation	Gibbs, “The Kpelle Moot”
Mon Mar 28	Politics of the past I	Meskill, “Negative Heritage and Past Mastering”
Wed Mar 30	Politics of the past II	MacFarquhar, “Hussein’s Babylon” Arnold, “Past as Propaganda”
Mon Apr 4	Globalization & culture I	Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations” Said, “The Clash of Ignorance”
Wed Apr 6	<b>Group presentations</b>	-
Mon Apr 11	<b>Group presentations</b>	-
Wed Apr 13	<b>Group presentations</b>	-
Mon Apr 18	NO CLASS - HOLIDAY	-
Wed Apr 20	NO CLASS - HOLIDAY	-
Mon Apr 25	Globalization & culture II	Barber, “Jihad vs. McWorld”
Wed Apr 27	Wrapping up	Review final exam review sheet, come prepared with questions
Mon May 2	NO CLASS – HOLIDAY	
Mon May 9	FINAL EXAM 3:30-6:30 PM	