Foundations of the Contemporary International System, 1815 – 1920

Mate Nikola Tokić (tokicm@ceu.edu)  
Office Hours: TU 10.45 – 11.45  
Vigyázó Ferenc u. 2, Room 203  

Winter Term, 2018  
TU/TH 9.00 – 10.40  
Room TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It would be, perhaps, an overstatement to claim that the discipline of International Relations is having an “historical moment.” But there can be little question that I.R scholars in recent years have increasingly turned to both existing and developing debates in the fields of history and historiography to gain new perspectives on the field and to engage the discipline in new and innovative ways. This course will do just that, examining the historical foundations of the contemporary international system to provide a new vantage point from which to evaluate present-day international relations. Specifically, the course will examine the roots of contemporary international politics in the “Global Transformation” of the nineteenth-century – to use the term of Buzan and Lawson –that witnessed nothing less than a fundamental shift in the nature of international politics and the international order. IR scholarship has long used certain dates to mark foundational moments in the development of international politics, be it 1492, 1648, 1919, 1945 or 1989. This class makes the argument that as important as the events tied to any of those dates may be for contemporary international relations, far more formative are global processes and transformation that developed globally over the course of the hundred years from roughly the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the end of World War I. The case could be made that the underlying structures, constructs, configurations, dynamics and discourses of the present day global order owe more to the transformations of the so-called “long” nineteenth-century than any other period in history. With this in mind, this course will examine the fundamental changes in politics, society, economics and culture that occurred in the century preceding the outbreak of World War I and examine their impact on the development of contemporary global politics and the international system.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

• to develop a nuanced understanding of how historical and historiographical debates can and do shape our understanding of International Relations both as field of study and as a discipline.

• to be able to identify the processes that have led—and indeed still lead—to certain ways of thinking about power and politics.

• to gain new perspectives on many of the basic assumptions prevalent in the discipline of International Relations

• to apply this knowledge to the development of academic research projects.
COURSE EVALUATION

Ten percent of your grade is based on class participation in class. For this reason, attendance is absolutely necessary: if you are not in class, you are not participating. If you are to miss a session, please contact me before class time. Of course, attendance is not the same as participation. Students are expected to contribute to class discussion in a constructive manner. Not only will this be beneficial to both your own and your colleagues’ understanding of the material, it will also allow me to gauge how well you are comprehending and synthesizing the course material. To do this, it is imperative that you complete the assigned readings for each week before we meet.

During the course of the semester, each student will be required to lead class discussion once. This assignment should be seen primarily as an exercise to help you organize your thoughts about the readings. These presentations are not meant to serve as a summary of material, but rather as a platform for exploring that given week’s material more deeply.

Additionally, students will be asked to submit two (2) 500 word critical response papers. One will deal with one or more readings from weeks 1-6. The other will deal with one or more readings from weeks 8-12. You will be required to submit your response paper BEFORE that reading is dealt with in class. You also cannot submit a paper for the session you lead class discussion. The procedure response papers will be discussed in class. Additionally, please refer to the online resource for what is expected from the response papers.

The final assignment will consist of two parts, a project proposal and annotated bibliography—each consisting 1,000 words—and a final research paper. The student will be expected to develop a project related to the topic of the course, namely the historical foundations of the contemporary international system. The paper should explore some element of present day international politics, relations or society, and explore the historical development of that issue from the nineteenth-century to the present day. The proposed research plan will include sections on the subject, aims, materials and methods of the project. In conjunction with the proposal, the student will submit an annotated bibliography supporting the research plan. The assignment should be seen as an exercise in strengthening the student’s understanding of how an academic project is undertaken. Students will be expected to present their research topics to the class the week of February 20/22. The final paper will be due on Friday, April 6. Again, please refer to the online resource for what is expected from the project proposal and annotated bibliography.

For those interested, students may submit a podcast in lieu of the final paper. The podcast will be produced in conjunction with the School of Public Policy’s Center for Media, Data and Society (CMDS)’s project “Academic Podcasting: Digital Scholarship, Communities of Knowledge Production and the Elusive Search for the Public.” Further information, such as deadlines and requirements, will be provided in class and on Moodle.
Breakdown of assessment:

- Attendance and Participation 10%
- Presentations 10%
- Response Paper 1 (500 words) 15%
  To be submitted at the latest before class on Feb. 10.
- Response Paper 2 (500 words) 15%
  To be submitted at the latest before class on Mar. 27.
- Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography 20%
  (2x 1,000 words, Due Monday, February 26 @ 23.59)
- Final Paper 30%
  (5,000 words, Due Friday, April 6 @ 23.59)

CLASS POLICIES

- Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will result, at a minimum, in the student failing the class. The case will then be referred to the Committee on Academic Dishonesty. It is the responsibility of the student to understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty. For reference, please consult the following university documents: Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism, the CEU Policy Document and the MA Handbook.

- All assignments must be submitted electronically using MS Word to Moodle. The papers should be saved with the format “Last Name First Name – Assignment Name.” For example, if I were to submit response paper one, it would be “Tokic Mate – RP 1.” The due date of all assignments is indicated in the syllabus, and can be submitted until 23.59. For each 24 hour period past the deadline, the assignment will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade. Papers will not be accepted more than seven days after the due date. Please note, the Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography should be submitted as one document.

- If you have an issue with a grade you’ve received, I am more than willing to take your concerns into consideration. I will not, however, hear any verbal requests for a grade change. Instead, I ask that you write me a short (250 word) explanation as to why you feel the grade I gave you was unsatisfactory. I will then return to the work with fresh eyes. Please note: this means the possibility exists that the grade can go down as well as up. Also, I will not consider a change of grade request more than ten (10) days after grades have been returned to you. This allows us both to address whatever issues you might have fresh.

- All content for the class will be made available on online. It goes without saying that you are responsible for all information contained in this syllabus, imparted in class and provided electronically.

- Finally, the classroom is an electronics free room. Use of mobile telephones, computers, tablets or other electronic instruments is prohibited. Please come to class with writing utensils to take notes: it has been demonstrated that one learns much more taking handwritten notes than by way of typing or recording!
**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1: Introductions – History and International Relations**

**Tuesday, January 9:** No Assigned Readings

**Thursday, January 11:**

**Week 2: Framing the Problem – Global Change and the Nineteenth-Century**

**Tuesday, January 16:**

**Thursday, January 18:**

**Week 3: Periodization and the Discipline**

**Tuesday, January 23:**
Thursday, January 25:


**WEEK 4: GLOBAL ALTERNATIVES TO THE EUROCENTRIC MODEL**

**Tuesday, January 30:**


**Thursday, February 1:**


**WEEK 5: CONTENDING WITH MODERNITY**

**Tuesday, February 6:**


**Thursday, February 8:**


WEEK 6: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Tuesday, February 13:


Thursday, February 15:


WEEK 7: RESEARCH PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, February 20: No Assigned Readings

- Presentation of Topics

Thursday, February 22: No Assigned Readings

- Presentation of Topics

WEEK 8: EUROPEAN UNIVERSALISM AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Tuesday, February 27:


Thursday, March 1:

WEEK 9: HUMANITARIANISM, PEACE AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Tuesday, March 6:


Thursday, March 8:


WEEK 10: INTERNATIONALISM IN AND OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Tuesday, March 13:


Thursday, March 15:


**WEEK 11: INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AS A SYSTEM OF INSTITUTIONS**

**Tuesday, March 20:**


**Thursday, March 22:**


**WEEK 12: CONCLUSIONS**

**Tuesday, March 27:**

- Readings **TBD**

**Thursday, March 29:** No Assigned Readings