New York University

Normative Issues in International Affairs
(G53-1730)

Spring Term 2006
Mondays 4 - 6 p.m.

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Course Description

What values guide us as we make choices about the use of force, resolving conflict, promoting human rights and social justice, encouraging democracy and development, preserving the environment, and participating in international organizations?

This course is designed to provide analytical rigor to the perennial question: what role do ethical considerations play in the conduct of international affairs? Two basic questions provide its structure: Is ethical action possible given the realities of national interests and power politics? And how, in ethical terms, can international acts and institutions be evaluated? We begin with reconsiderations of the two dominant paradigms in international relations today, realism and globalization. We then address several thematic issues of immediate policy relevance.
**Course Requirements**

* Students will be required to hand in 1-2 page "response to reading" memos at each class. Memos should raise at least 2-3 points that the student would like to discuss in class. These memos, along with class participation, will count for 50% of the final grade.

* Students will also be required to lead off the discussion (along with one or two fellow students) in at least one class session.

* 1-2 page prospectus of research seminar paper.

  *DUE February 27*

* 7-8 page interim report reviewing topic and bibliography to be used in the final paper.

  *DUE April 3*

* 20-25 page final seminar paper containing three elements: (1) factual description and historical background of a particular issue/case study in the normative dimension of international affairs; (2) an explication of the moral issues involved; (3) analysis and conclusions. Or students may write a review essay of similar length on a particular normative analyst of international affairs. The instructor will provide a list of potential subjects. This paper will account for 50% of the final grade.

  *DUE May 1*
Required Texts


Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Knopf, 1999)

All texts have also been placed on reserve at the Bobst Library.
Course Outline

Week I   January 23  INTRODUCTION

Week II  January 30  ETHICS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:
                   AN OXYMORON?

                          Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics  Chapters 1, 2


Week III  February 6  MORAL ARGUMENT


                          Frances Harbour, “Basic Moral Values: A Shared Core” (in Rosenthal, Reader)


Week IV   February 13  REALISM RECONSIDERED Part I

                          Ann Marie Slaughter, A New World Order (2004) 1-35; 131-165

Week V    February 20  NO CLASS (PRESIDENTS DAY)

Week VI   February 27  REALISM RECONSIDERED Part 2

                          Robert Jackson, The Global Covenant, 1-96

Week VII  March 6     TODAY’S PARADIGM: GLOBALIZATION

                          Peter Singer, One World: The Ethics of Globalization
Course Outline

Week VIII March 13  NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Week IX March 20  COSMOPOLITANISM AND ITS LIMITS

Martha Nussbaum, For Love of Country

Michael Ignatieff, “Human Rights as Idolatry”

Michael Ignatieff, “Is Nothing Sacred ?: The Ethics of Television”

Week X March 27  JUSTICE AND THE WORLD ECONOMY (Part 1)

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom 1-111

Week XI April 3  JUSTICE AND THE WORLD ECONOMY (Part 2)


Iris Young, “From Guilt to Solidarity: Sweatshops and Politiical Responsibility,” Dissent (Spring 2003)

Week XII April 10  JUST WAR?

Walzer, Just & Unjust Wars

Week XIII April 17  THE POLITICS OF RECONCILIATION

Lyn S. Graybill, “South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Ethical and Theological Perspectives, ” Ethics & International Affairs (Vol. 12) 43-62

David Crocker, “Reckoning With Past Wrongs: A Normative Framework,” Ethics & International Affairs (Vol. 13) 43-64
Course Outline


Susan Dwyer, “Reconciliation for Realists,” *Ethics & International Affairs* (Vol. 13) 81-98

Week XIV  April 24  ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Daniel S. Smith, “Place-Based Environmentalism and Global Warming,” *Ethics & International Affairs* (Vol. 15.2) 117-134


Elizabeth R. DeSombre, “Global Warming: More Common Than Tragic,” *Ethics & International Affairs* (vol. 18.1) 41-46

Week XV  May 1  STUDENT REPORTS