

## Senior Seminar: Advanced Topics in International Ethics

INTA 4400  
Spring 2009  
Thursdays 3:05-5:55

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### Course Description and Objectives:

Senior seminars are of two kinds generally speaking: either they provide a culminating experience through reviewing and expanding upon the *content* provided across the required courses of the degree program, or they focus upon *skills* deemed integral to the degree program and work to build upon and expand those through the exploration of a more narrowly defined subject. Our senior seminar will take the latter approach.

The subtitle of our seminar, “International Strategy and Policy”, is something of a misnomer. In recent years, faculty have taught the seminar as a pro-seminar on a topic of their own research expertise, providing the student with an opportunity for “deep” learning on a particular topic. I will be continuing in this vein teaching this seminar as “Advanced Topics in International Ethics”.

Traditionally, states are considered to be the central actors in world politics. Advanced studies in international ethics ask broad questions like: 1) “should states be invested with the moral authority and legitimacy that they have presently”; 2) “does global governance exist, and if so, what form does it take and by what standards should it operate”; and 3) how should forces of globalization be regulated, if at all”. Issues discussed this semester will fall under the broad rubric of these three ethical questions.

The goals of the course in relation to content are three: 1) to re-familiarize you with the normative frameworks for evaluating advanced topics in international ethics; 2) to gain an understanding of the complexity of the issues we will be discussing; and 3) to gain experience in applying those frameworks to difficult international problems; that is, learning how theory and practice meet in the real world. The goals of the course as a senior seminar which works to consolidate analytical skills that you have been practicing as a Nunn School major include, improving your: 1) written communication; 2) oral communication; 3) research skills; 4) international problem-solving skills; and 5) teamwork skills. However, it is the aim of this seminar to facilitate an extension of these skills in two areas in particular - critical thinking and style of presentation – through the practice of parliamentary debate skills each week and in a culminating Oxford Union-Style Debate at the end of the semester.

## Course Evaluation and How We Will Proceed

Seminar Presentation or Seminar Discussant Role (30%)

Choice of Writing Assignment (40%)

Weekly Debate Preparation Summaries (15%)

Oxford Union- Style Debate Performance (15%)

**For all IP students**, there is an additional assignment, a short paper, which is required for the IP capstone course. I will email all of you to arrange for an outside meeting time to discuss this work in the second week of classes.

Attendance will be monitored since the acquisition of the above mentioned skills and consolidation of course content requires regular participation. Two or more unexcused (any reasons for excused absences must be submitted in advance of class and approved by me) absences will result in two points being deducted from your final grade. One such unexcused absence will result in one point being deducted from your final grade.

All electronic devices, laptops included, are to be in the “off” mode during seminar. However, laptops may be used for teamwork conducted during seminar break-out sessions.

In the schedule of readings you will find a “point of debate” that frames our work for a particular week. Typically it will be offered as a declarative statement, like: “This seminar believes X”. The seminar will be divided into two teams that will eventually compete in the Oxford Union-Style Debate at the end of the semester. However, for each seminar we will also use these teams and gain practice for the penultimate debate by assigning each team a position on the “point of debate” and preparing and discussing the topic of that week within those teams. (See below where each week has an A or B next to the topic heading denoting which team is to take the “pro” position. You are welcome to sign-up as a presenter or a discussant independently of how your team is assigned).

Each week (except for 1/15) a presenter will be assigned to defend the position (pro) and a discussant will be assigned the role of critiquing the position (con) of the presenter. Each presenter and discussant will have ten minutes and will be kept to that time.

All students will be assigned reading in common (the required reading). However, my expectation will be that each student seeks additional reading material and provides a one page typed, single spaced sheet each week that provides references for those additional sources and at least 3 points of information/argument that can be made to support the position you have been assigned as a team member. These are to be submitted in the “drop box” on our T-Square page by noon every Thursday before class.

Please note that a student does not have to turn in a summary for two weeks in which he or she is turning in a short paper.

After the presentation and the discussant's comments are finished, and class discussion of their points has concluded, class time will be provided for the teams to share their work as individuals and to come up with the best content, strategy, and style for presenting its position. This should involve a constructive critique of how the presenter and discussant performed. In the first part of the semester, this will be done informally and I will conclude the seminar by asking each group to summarize their findings and take my questions in response. However, as we get closer to the actual debate, I will ask groups to nominate individuals to take 5 minutes to actually perform the team-arrived at, improved presentation of both the pro and con positions.

The aim is that over the course of the semester we will hone and further develop important skills for this degree program, and for most professions for that matter; that is, the abilities to scrutinize arguments in relation to a problem, provide arguments that stand up to scrutiny themselves, and do so in ways that creatively engage and persuade others to listen.

### Options for Written Assignment

#### Short Papers

Two papers of 5-7 pages typed and double-spaced. One paper will be on the topic you present or serve as discussant and due on the day you do so. One will be on a topic from the schedule of classes of your choosing and due on the day it is discussed in class. If you presented or served as discussant in the week 1/15, you can choose any "point of debate" topic for your paper or agree a topic on the school of thought you discussed with me and hand it in by February 13.

Through the frame of the "point of debate" for that week in your syllabus, I expect you to conduct independent research into the problem you are investigating, to present why the issue is in fact a problem of international ethics (the extent of its reach, i.e. who is affected), what the politics of the issue are (the controversies and interests at stake), and to provide an argument as to what a workable resolution to the problem might be from your assigned position. An average grade will be taken across the three papers for this written evaluation component.

OR

#### Research Paper

One paper of 20 pages, typed and double-spaced on either a topic of your choosing (and approved by me), or a topic covered in one of the weeks of this course. This is offered as an alternative, because it too is an important skill particularly for anyone

thinking about law school, graduate school or work for a non-governmental or governmental organization or consulting firm in some research capacity. More details will be provided at a later point, but be sure to note that there will be a preliminary assignment that counts as 5 % of this written evaluation component, a literature review, due on March 12th in class. The final paper is due in class on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Readings

BONUS!!! No texts need to be bought for this course; readings will be posted on T-Square.

### Recommended Reading

NEWSPAPERS! Preferably those with solid international coverage: NYT, LA Times, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, etc.

Journals that may be helpful to you in this course include: Alternatives, American Journal of International Law, American Political Science Review, Ethics and International Affairs; Global Society, International Organization, Journal of Politics, Journal of Conflict and Peace Resolution, Millennium, Review of International Politics, and World Politics

Books and Websites related to parliamentary or Oxford Union style debating:

Recommended on the Oxford Union Website is:

'The Oxford Union Guide to Successful Public Speaking', Dominic Hughes & Benedict Phillips, (2000)

"Whilst written about public speaking rather than debating per se it does have a whole host of useful information and tips on how to make a debating speech more stylish (and thus more likely to persuade a judge and audience). Everything from eye contact to modulation to structuring a speech are covered."

'Bad Thoughts: A Guide to Clear Thinking', Jamie Whyte (2003)

"Although not specifically designed for debaters, this highly readable and entertaining book discusses the use and misuse of logic: much of it is relevant when considering debating technique."

[www.britishdebate.com](http://www.britishdebate.com)

Here you will find good guides to the rules and strategy of parliamentary debate.

[www.idebate.org](http://www.idebate.org)

This is an excellent resource for points of information on a range of topics, many concerning issues of international ethics, which will give you a clearer sense of the

content and level of argumentation that will be expected of you.

[http://webcast.oii.ox.ac.uk/?view=Webcast&ID=20070518\\_189](http://webcast.oii.ox.ac.uk/?view=Webcast&ID=20070518_189)

This is a webcast that provides footage of a full length Oxford Union debate that took place in May 2008 on the topic of the internet and democratization, arguing 'This House believes that the Internet is the greatest force for democratization in the World'

## Course Outline and Schedule

\*Please note that changes may be made to the schedule below if necessary, but you will have at least two weeks notice. In particular, I will be adding a reading or videoclip here and there to assist you in learning the techniques of good argumentation and debating style.

### 1/15 **Normative Frameworks Overview:**

\*Please note: This week is an aberration from what follows

Reading: Donnelly, "The Ethics of Realism"; Richardson, "The Ethics of Liberalism"; Price, "The Ethics of Constructivism"; Cochran, "The Ethics of the English School"; Eckerly, "The Ethics of Normative Theory"

Discussion Question: what if anything, is compelling in each of these world views when thinking about ethical possibility (that is, whether ethical responsibilities hold between international actors) in world politics.

### 1/22 **The Ethics of Global Governance A**

Reading: Linklater, "Citizenship and Community in a post-Westphalian Order", and study closely this website: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Point of Debate: This seminar believes that meeting UN Millennium Development Goals requires stronger US leadership than at present.

### 1/29 **Nuclear Non-proliferation and Problems of Alternative Energy B**

Reading: Walzer, "A Liberal Perspective on Deterrence and Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction"; Scheinman, "Does the Non-Proliferation Treaty Matter: A Normative Inquiry"; also study closely the IAEA's webpage and <http://www.acronym.org.uk/npt/index.htm>, especially for Rebecca Johnson's Summaries of recent PrepCom meetings)

Point of debate: 'This seminar believes that future US counter-proliferation efforts should not be directed through the International Atomic Energy Association.'

### 2/5 **International Business and the Responsibilities of MNCs A**

Reading: S. Prakash Sethi, "Corporate Codes of Conduct and the Success of Globalization" T-Square; also study closely the following websites: UN Norms for Business -

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/links/norms-Aug2003.html> and the site for the Secretary General of the UN's Global Compact Initiative (look in particular through the tab "About the GC")

<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

Point of debate: This seminar believes that multinational drug companies should lower the price of antiviral AIDS drugs for developing countries.

2/12

### **Ethics and the Environment B**

Reading: Shue, "Global Environment and International Inequality"

Point of debate: 'This seminar group would support taxing aviation to fund development aid towards reducing carbon emissions in LDCs'.

2/19

### **Ethical Questions in relation to Sovereignty and Intervention A**

Reading: Hoffmann, "Sovereignty and the Ethics of Intervention"

Point of debate: This seminar believes that the US should back strong action against the Sudanese government's failure to halt genocide in Darfur

2/26

### **Ethics and International Law B**

Reading: Jason Ralph, "Understanding US Opposition to the ICC, and Council on Foreign Relations, "Towards an International Criminal Court"

Point of debate: 'This seminar believes that the US should not support the International Criminal Court.'

3/5

### **Ethics, Religion and Culture in International Politics A**

Reading: Esposito and Voll, "Islam and the West: Muslim Voices of Dialogue"; Philpott "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations"; Sections from *Jihad – Bin Laden in his own Words*

Point of debate: This seminar believes that a clash of civilizations between Islam's idea of international society and the expanded European one is not inevitable.

3/12

### **International Ethics and Counter-terrorism B**

Jane Mayer, The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals

Point of debate: 'This seminar believes that torture is not justifiable as a means of fighting global terrorism.'

3/19

### **No class. SPRING BREAK**

- 3/26      **Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Egalitarianism in International Relations A**  
Reading: Donnelly, "Human Rights a New Standard of Civilization" T-Square  
 Parekh, "Non- Ethnocentric Universalism" T-Square  
 Bush's Address to the American People on the 5th Anniversary of Sept 11  
<http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/09/11/bush.transcript/index.html>  
Point of debate: 'This seminar believes that democracy should be promoted world-wide'.
- 4/2      **The Ethics of Post-War Reconstruction B**  
Reading: Zaum, Ch. 5; Karl-Otto Apel "On the Relationship Between Ethics, International Law and Politico-Military Strategy in Our Time" and closely study the website Responsibility to Protect"  
<http://www.iciss.ca/menu-en.asp>  
Point of debate: This seminar believes that the guiding framework for the international administration of post-conflict territories should be the "responsibility to protect".
- 4/9      **Touch Economic Times and Tough Moral Choices**  
Reading: Barnett, NYT Op-ed, more TBA  
Point of Debate: 'This seminar believes that Britain traded Tibetan independence for access to Chinese capital'.
- 4/16      **Debate Preparation**
- 4/23      **Our Oxford Union Debate** – topic to be announced in class on 4/9. This session will be public. In particular, members of IASO and SIR will be invited to attend and to publicize the event.