Course Description and Goals

Full course for one semester. This course investigates the politics of global risks—challenges, some created by humans and others by nature—that have the potential to drastically alter human civilization, the planet, or life itself. Such “apocalyptic” risks include extreme climate change, ecological catastrophes, global pandemics, nuclear war, artificial intelligence, and asteroid impacts. The course will analyze these nascent Armageddons using a variety of theoretical perspectives including the precautionary principle, the social construction of risk, normal accidents theory, and concepts of high-reliability operations. Prerequisites: junior standing and Political Science 240, or consent of the instructor. Conference.

Requirements

Class Participation
Students are required to actively participate in the class; they will have the opportunity to do so both during and outside of classroom hours. Beginning the third week of class, each student will be assigned to three days during the semester in which they will author a short reaction memo (300-400 words) expressing an opinion about that day’s readings. These are NOT summaries; rather, they should attempt to agree or disagree with or compare and contrast the readings. Both should be posted in the forums on the course website by 8 PM the day before the readings are to be discussed. Students are required to read the memos and be prepared to respond to them the next day in class. Students are encouraged to respond to the postings online as part of their participation. If you miss a day of class for any reason whatsoever, you may make it up by posting a summary of each of the readings to Moodle. In order to make up missed days from the first half of the semester, these must be posted before the first day of classes after the break; from the second half, by the end of reading period.

Readings
Readings for the course are primarily books and E-Readings, which can be downloaded directly from the links on Moodle. These are best used in conjunction with Endnote or Zotero, both of which are supported by the library. Students are expected to bring a copy of the readings to class every day for reference. Readings marked “Further” on the syllabus are other relevant articles or books; they are not required for class. Students who have a particular interest in the topics in question are encouraged to read these pieces and to incorporate them into their assignments.

Course Website
Discussion and collaboration is available to you through the website; supplemental and core readings will be made available there; and assignments will be turned in electronically using the site.

Assignments
There are two assignments for this course. The first is to turn in an initial proposal and outline for your final paper, due October 16 at 11:59 PM. The second is a lengthy (3750-5000 word) essay analyzing anything related to the course; it is due Monday, December 14 at 5 PM.

Citation and Plagiarism
A major goal of this course is to encourage good reading, research, and citation habits. Good research requires good documentation of sources and the ability to put one’s own analysis and thoughts into a paper rather than relying on others. When in doubt as to whether you should cite something, always do it. Citations are required for ideas as well as facts, and are imperative even if you are not directly quoting authors. Make sure that you provide as specific a citation as possible; if an author discusses an idea in one section or one page, cite the specific section or page instead of the full article or book. I usually recommend that students use in-text author-date citation with full Chicago Manual of Style citations; see their Citation Quick Guide: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html>.

However, style is less important than the cites being present. If you use an idea or a fact without attribution, you are plagiarizing someone else’s work. Plagiarism and cheating are violations of academic integrity and thus violations of Reed’s Honor Principle. As specified by Reed’s academic conduct policy, such violations will result in disciplinary actions, including suspension or permanent dismissal from the College. Plagiarism is submitting a piece of work which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. For examples of plagiarism and how to avoid it, see
Plagiarism often comes as the result of a student being up against a deadline without being able to meet it. If you are having trouble meeting a deadline for whatever reason, please contact me. Because every assignment is a paper that will be handed out well in advance, I have no problem giving extensions. It is always better to ask for more time than to plagiarize. When you ask for an extension, you should explain what events are causing you to miss the deadline and request an amount of time proportional to the interfering events. You may ask for an extension up to, but not exceeding, the amount of time remaining for the assignment, except for cases of emergencies.

Accommodations
If you’d like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Support Services. If you have a letter from Student Services, please let me know so we can discuss those accommodations.

1-Sep: 01.1. Theories of International Politics and Zombies (166 Pages)
- Dennis Pamlin and Stuart Armstrong (2015) Global Challenges: 12 Risks that Threaten Human Civilisation – the Case for a New Category of Risks. February Global Challenges Foundation. Read Executive Summary only

8-Sep: 02.1. Normal Accidents (411 Pages)

15-Sep: 03.1. Mission Improbable (171 Pages)

15-Sep: 03.2. Worst Cases (185 Pages)
  <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/721907469>, 185, ISBN 9780226108599

9/16/15: 03.2.1. 7–8:30 PM, Vollum Lecture Hall: Rebecca Hersman, “Chemical Weapons Attacks in Syria: How Did We Get Here and Where Do We Go?”

22-Sep: 04.1. Trapped in the Net (218 Pages)

22-Sep: 04.2. High-Reliability Operations (171 Pages)
  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/014920639502100403>
Further


29-Sep: 05.1. Autonomous Weapons (138 Pages)


29-Sep: 05.2. Cyber War (139 Pages)

• Heather M. Roff (2015) *Deterrence in Cyberspace and the OPM Hack*. June 24 Duck of Minerva


Further


  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.816122>, ISSN 0963–6412


6-Oct: 06.1. Nuclear Weapons (363 Pages)


13-Oct: 07.1. Biological Weapons (326 Pages)


Further

13-Oct: 07.2. and Zombies (63 Pages)
- Commander, United States Strategic Command (2011) *Counter-Zombie Dominance*. United States Strategic Command Headquarters CONPLAN 8888-11, 31 pages
  <https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/social_research/v081/81.4.drezner.html> – visited on 2015-02-13, ISSN 1944–768X

20-Oct: 08.1. Fall break: No Class


3-Nov: 10.1. Plan B 4.0 (268 Pages)


10-Nov: 11.1. Next Catastrophe (325 Pages)

17-Nov: 12.1. Deus Ex Machina (552 Pages)
- Jeffrey G. Lewis (2013) *Armageddon 2*. *Foreign Policy*. September 24, 13

24-Nov: 13.1. Contagion (60 Pages)

1-Dec: 14.1. States of Exception (96 Pages)

12/6/2015, 12–3:00 PM: 15.1. War, Aliens, and Society (286 Pages)