

Welcome to the International Politics in Film

I hope you had an enjoyable summer, though looking at next week's forecast, summer clearly is not over for us in the tri-state area. For any of you who have had me for an in-person class, you know I learn everyone's name the first week and regularly ask what you've been up to and how things are going. In this vein, I would like to begin the course by having you answer some questions on the Introduction Discussion Board.

I expect that, if for no other reason than the pandemic, it's likely you've already taken an online course. If you haven't, the film class is a good first online experience, as the medium (due to the media) lends itself very well to a virtual format. But just because it's a film class and might be more fun than, say, inorganic chemistry, you need to take it seriously. Plan to dedicate a significant chunk of time preparing for discussions and papers. It is **imperative** that you keep up with the films, discussion board posts, and papers, or you will not succeed in this course.

I've been teaching this class for years during the summer sessions. I developed this course as a way to understand abstract International Relations concepts through movies. These concepts regularly appear in mainstream films, not just some high art film or indie flick that like 10 people watch (and even they don't *really* get it). As such, we can explore enemies and security, crime and law using popular films to relate to what's going on in the non-cinematic world in a different and interesting way.

The Details

This course is organized into two parts: The Enemy & The State and Transnational Issues & Security. Each part includes five films and readings, divided into two sections.

Be respectful to one another in your exchanges. You can challenge people's ideas without attacking one another.

All the information you need for the course is linked to your course schedule. You will need to use Canvas for discussion and to submit your assignments. Draw exclusively from the films and readings for your discussion fodder, so everyone knows exactly what you're referring to and is on the same page. There's more than enough information to work with for your Critical Thought Papers, so you do not need to do outside research for this class.

I broke down a bunch of information into separate parts that you should review in the order listed on the Course Schedule. It is super important that you read the Course Syllabus and Preparing for Viewing & Reading. When I post the assignment for Critical Thought Paper 1, I will also post Writing Papers.

To succeed in this course, I highly recommend you follow these steps and stick to the schedule I created for the course. After reading everything posted for Week 1, for each part of the course:

First, read the section introduction, noting the key concepts, as they will be the focus of the films, readings, and the first critical thought paper. Read the corresponding article (or, in one case, watch the video) for that film, taking notes on key points.

Second, check out the discussion board questions for the section

Third, watch each film, making sure you take notes. Refer to Preparing for Viewing & Reading for what to look for and how to take notes. Pay particular attention to the concepts covered in the introduction and readings. As you watch the films, consider how the characters and themes connect across the films.

Fourth, only after you have watched and read everything for the section and reviewed the Participation Guidelines in the course syllabus should you post on the discussion board. I **HIGHLY** encourage you to begin discussion **well before** the forum closes in order to have sufficient time to respond to others' comments. Remember that to potentially earn full points, you need to meaningfully respond to others' comments.

Fifth, when posted (as indicated on the course schedule), read through the paper assignment that I'll post on the Course Schedule, reread Writing Papers, be sure you've read the discussion board comments, and review the criteria in the course syllabus. After you write your paper, make sure you edit it before submitting it.

As always, if at any time you have questions, just email me.

Happy Semester!

Dr. Weir