International Studies 401:  
Senior Seminar in International Studies

This seminar is the capstone course for the International Studies major. We will examine several critical developments and debates in our world today, including issues surrounding globalization and transnationalism, the rise of religiously motivated violence, tensions between economic development and other human goals, and the role of state (especially the United States) and non-state actors in world affairs. In studying these phenomena, we will seek, first, to clarify their causes, consequences, and implications, and secondly, to understand how and why these seemingly different phenomena may be related. Our analysis will be deliberately eclectic in character, drawing on readings from a variety of disciplines, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. I want to encourage students to use theoretical and conceptual perspectives developed in earlier courses and to bring their experiences studying abroad to bear on themes of contemporary importance.

Requirements:

Because this is a seminar, regular and active participation in class is essential. I expect you to take an active part in all discussions. Consequently, you will need to keep up with the reading. Please be sure to bring all readings to class, as we will want to refer to them during discussions.

Participation will make up 40 percent of your final grade in this course. Participation will include preparing three short reaction papers on assigned readings. These must be between 750 to 1000 words long and double-spaced with relevant citations. Papers are due at 2:00 pm on the afternoon that the topic you have chosen is listed on the syllabus. Each student will submit a total of three reaction papers, and I will insure that the chosen topics are evenly distributed across the semester. Each week we will initiate discussion by having at least one student present the main points in his or her paper and lead the discussion for approximately 20 minutes of class. This component of the discussion grade will be worth 30 percent of your final mark—20 percent for the response papers, 10 percent for the performance when you lead the class. The other 10 percent will come from your participation in classes when you are not responsible for leading the group.

In addition, each student will write one critical review essay and will help to prepare and present a team report on a current policy issue. These assignments are explained below. The critical review will comprise 25 percent of your final grade and the team report will count 35 percent.
Critical Review Assignment. Your critical review should be of about six-eight pages (around 1,500 words) in length on books on topics covered in the course or on which you plan to write your senior exercise. You should choose two (or more) books on similar topics to review. These may not be books assigned for this or another course. One book should address your theme in the region or country on which you specialize; the other should explore that theme in another geographical context or comparatively. In a review you should provide brief summaries of the works under review, but more importantly, you should make clear to your readers the significance of the issues under consideration by the books and the key issues on which the authors agree and disagree. In addition, you should render your assessment of the contributions of the works to our understanding of the issues they explore. You are not reviewing these books for stylistic devices, but for the substantive contributions they make to our knowledge and understanding of key issues. Perhaps the best way to learn what a critical review should do is to read some examples. Critical reviews differ depending on the audience for which they are intended. Some critical reviews are written to the intellectual community broadly conceived. Examples of these can be found in journals of criticism such as The New York Review of Books and The New Republic. Others are written to a more specialized scholarly audience. You might look at reviews of this type in the Latin American Research Review or other scholarly journals (especially those with the word “review” in their titles). The examples we are suggesting will typically review more works (as many as a dozen in a single essay) than you have been asked to consider, but the manner of organizing those essays will be similar. I will also provide you with examples of two-book reviews of the length I have assigned that I have published in scholarly journals. I strongly suggest that you use this exercise as an opportunity to prepare for your senior exercise. It has been our experience that the students who perform best on their comps are those who have begun to think about them early. This assignment can help you to develop the theoretical perspective that you will need to demonstrate in your senior exercise. It will be due on October 24.

Team Reports. The seminar will divide into teams of three or four students each. Each team will choose from among the policy issues as described in the outline below (or another that is acceptable to the instructor), conduct research on its issue, and then draw up and present to the seminar a policy paper of about 30-40 pages. Each paper will identify the issue, describe and evaluate past policy toward it, and then recommend a new policy or defend the adequacy of the existing one. The policy papers will be graded on the basis of their thoroughness, thoughtfulness, balance, and feasibility. Extensive library research will be necessary. I expect professional presentations of your team report to the seminar using Powerpoint, and I can offer examples of especially good team reports done in recent years. In preparation for writing that report, your team must submit a proposal that clearly identifies the major issues that it will address, states the method by which those issues will be investigated, and includes an annotated bibliography of the sources you will consult. Proposals will be due to me by October 14. Final drafts will be due on December 19 at 4:30 pm. I do not plan to issue extensions on this or any other of the course requirements—this is the last date on which an assignment can be made due this semester.
Course Rules:

I reserve the right to expel students from this course for excessive absences. Unexcused absences will count against your course grade.

Readings for this course will be on reserve at Olin Library. Most of the article or chapter length readings will be available on the Moodle site for the course. The books are on regular course reserve.

Students should be reminded of Kenyon’s expectations regarding academic honesty. You are responsible for reading and understanding those pages of the Course of Study that define plagiarism and discuss academic honesty.

If you have a disability and therefore may have need for some type of accommodation(s) in order to participate fully in this class, please feel free to discuss your concerns in private with me and also self identify yourself to Erin Salva, Coordinator of Disability Services, at PBX 5453 or via e-mail at salvae@kenyon.edu.
Topics and Readings

September 2  
**Introduction**

Off-Campus Studies – The Experience of Being an Outside Observer

September 9  
**Religiously Inspired Violence: Some Examples**


September 16  
**Religiously Inspired Violence: What are the Explanations?**


September 23  
**Dealing with the World’s Atrocities**

Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), chs. 1-7 and 10. Those interested in Iraq should read ch. 8; those interested in the Balkans should read chs. 9 and 11-12.

**Video:** *Ghosts of Rwanda*, written, produced and directed by Greg Barker (Frontline, 2004).

September 30  
**Darfur: Unanswered Genocide?**


**Video:** *On Our Watch*, written, produced & directed by Neil Docherty (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation production for WGBH/Frontline, 2007).

October 7  
**Explaining the U.S. Intervention in Iraq**

October 14  
**America and the Radicalization of the Middle East**

Packer, *The Assassins’ Gate*, second half.

October 21  
**Contending Approaches to Development**


October 28  
**Development and Foreign Aid**


November 4  
**Transnational Activist Networks, Indigenous Peoples, and Democratization in Latin America**


November 11  Transnational Activist Networks versus the Development Imperative


**Video:** *Drowned Out*, produced and directed by Franny Armstrong (Cinema Libre Studio, 2006).

November 18  Migration and Transnational Citizenship


**Video:** *The Sixth Section*, produced and directed by Alex Rivera (Second Generation Media, 2003).

December 4 & 11  Student presentations