



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
Semester in Washington, DC Program

**SDCP 350-01: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ACADEMIC SEMINAR (9 credits)  
FALL 2015 SYLLABUS  
September 2-December 22, 2015**

<i>Faculty information:</i> Amanda Slobe, ActioNet, U.S. Department of Energy
<i>Faculty contact information:</i> ams490@georgetown.edu   amanda.slobe@gmail.com
<i>Faculty office hours and location:</i> By appointment, also available after class
<i>Course meeting times and location:</i> Mondays, 6:30pm–9:00pm, (C217) and Fridays 5:20pm–7:50pm (C216), 640 Massachusetts Ave, NW

**COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Designed specifically for students in Georgetown's Semester in Washington Program, the International Relations Academic Seminar helps students craft a better understanding of complex global issues and the forces that drive foreign policy in the United States and abroad.

Meeting twice a week, students will learn from assigned readings, lectures, offsite trips, guest speakers, and overall discussion – all of which build on Georgetown's long-standing and multifaceted expertise in international relations.

The objective of this course is to critically examine contemporary international affairs, while considering past achievements and events in the International Relations (IR) realm. The semester includes guest speakers from a multitude of backgrounds and in various fields, which will enable students to think critically about current issues as well as engage with these professionals, all while thriving in the nation's capital.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Since discussion will be a main venue of learning, students are expected to actively participate in each class discussion. If we have guest speakers, students are expected to actively engage in any Q&A following the performance. Questions, comments, and criticisms are always welcomed.

**Reading Materials:**

- **Daily reading of periodicals; suggestions include (and are not limited to):** *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Foreign Policy*, or *Wall Street Journal*
- *Strength in What Remains* by Tracy Kidder
- *The Battle For the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-Revolution, and the Making of a New Ear* by Lin Noueihed and Alex Warren
- \*NOTE: Professor will also send additional readings via email.

Each student is required to read the required texts, in addition to the daily readings, and come to class prepared with any questions, comments or criticisms.

**Classroom Etiquette:**

**Cell phones or other communication** devices are prohibited during class time.

**Laptop use** is for class-related purposes only.

**Recording:** *Audio and/or video recording in class is strictly prohibited.*

**Class discussion** should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions.

We will be taking **one ten-minute break** during the class, so if there is a dire need to use your phone or check your email, this will be your opportunity.

**GRADING**

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get lecture notes, handouts, etc., from a classmate. Students may have two **excused absences** and **a student who misses multiple class sessions may be withdrawn involuntarily from the course or may receive a failing grade, at the instructor's sole discretion.**

**Grading Scale:**

Students will be given numerical grades for their various assignments. These numerical grades, when added up to form their final grades, will be converted into letter grades according to the following Georgetown grade scale:

93-100	A
90-92	A-
88-89	B+
83-87	B
80-82	B-
78-79	C+
73-77	C
70-72	C-
68-69	D+
63-67	D
60-62	D-
under 60	F

**Evaluation:**

***Attendance, Reaction Papers, and Class Participation (35%)***

**Participation (15%)** Students are expected to do all the readings before class and come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. Students will be graded on their efforts to: take initiative in class discussion, ask questions to guest speakers, support or challenge positions, raise questions and add comments from the readings, and display a positive attitude.

**Reaction Papers/Blog Post (10%)** For any guest speakers we have, typically a (short) reaction paper will be assigned or a blog prompt will be posted, requiring a response. I'll be sure to specify what I'm looking for in each paper/post. It is nothing to stress over, but completion, thoroughness, and incorporating class readings in the paper, all benefit the overall grade. It will always be due any time before the following class time. Any papers received after class begins, or not in the format I request, will be marked as incomplete.

As reference, the link to the blog is: <http://blogs.commonsgorgetown.edu/sdcp-350-01/>.

**Attendance (10%)** Show up to class on time.

**Midterm: (25% Total)**

Presentation (5%) on October 26

Paper (20%) DUE November 6

Students will write a paper for their mid-term grade. The paper should be 7 - 10 pages, 1.5 spaced, Times New Roman, and 12 font. I would like you to select a topic listed at the end of this description (or get approval from me for an outside topic), and summarize and discuss the criticisms given against the "West." The U.S. and Europe are given a lot of criticisms for their involvement in these issues. In your discussion, you may *evaluate or respond or support or refute* any of it, but you must provide the necessary background information and criticisms made, as well as support for your perspective from current or historical issues and events. **Topics include (but are not limited to): Foreign Aid in Africa, America and Israel Relations, Border Relations Between USA and Mexico, Genocide (Country-specific), Human Rights and International Law, Freedom of Speech (Including Cartoons, Movies), Rights of the Disabled, Gender Rights, Sexual Rights, Environmental Issues, Nuclear Proliferation, Millennium Development Goals, Arab-Israeli Conflict, Use of Torture (Ticking Time Bomb Scenario), Warehousing (Refugees), Child Soldiers, China's One-Child Policy, and Female Genital Mutilation**

Students' papers will be presented in class on October 26 at which point classmates (and Professor) will provide comments, feedback, and suggestions to the presenter. A final draft, incorporating the feedback received during the presentation, will be due electronically on November 6.

**Final Presentation: (25%)**

Students will be assigned to present on a country that was affected by the Arab Spring but did not make news headlines. The country will not be one discussed in the book assigned to this class, so outside research will need to be done. Grading of the presentation will be based on the rubric I provide in class.

**Article for Class Discussion: (15%)**

Each student will be assigned a day to provide an article from one of the aforementioned daily reading sources. Students are allowed to choose their own topic of discussion, which should relate to the broad arena of International Relations. To receive full credit, the student should provide questions and comments to engage the class, as well as include why the student chose that article.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

*Note: There may be changes to this schedule, to include any new world events that should be discussed, guest speaker availabilities, Georgetown University events, and students' interests.*

### **Wednesday, September 2**

- Welcome & Introductions
- Syllabus & course review

### **Friday, September 4**

- Roundtable Discussion on Democracy Building, with American Council of Young Political Leaders from Cairo, Egypt

### **Monday, September 7**

- **No Class – Labor Day**

### **Friday, September 11**

- Life in the Foreign Service
- Guest Speaker Suzanne McPartland, (Retired) Foreign Service Officer, U.S. Department of State

### **Monday September 14**

- Statehood and Sovereignty
- What is a State?

### **Friday, September 18**

- Human Rights – What are they? Who has them? How are they enforced?
- Introduction to International Human Rights Law

### **Monday, September 21**

- Terrorism – Whose Definition?

### **Friday, September 25**

- Stanford Experiment
- Abu Ghraib discussion

### **Monday, September 28**

- Guest Speakers: Former SWP Students
  - Gain insight and advice from former SWP students

### **Friday, October 2**

- Rules of War – Introduction to International Humanitarian Law
- Guest Speaker Kit Hope, Expert in International Humanitarian Law;
- Guest Speaker Federico Barillas Schwank, Legal Advisor, American Red Cross

### **Monday, October 5**

- Guest Speakers Kit Hope and Federico Barillas Schwank, continued
- International Humanitarian Law Case Studies

**Friday, October 9**

- Relationship between art (modern, cartoons, graffiti) and politics

**Monday, October 12**

- **No Class – Columbus Day**

**Friday, October 16**

- **Offsite Trip - Newseum**

**Monday, October 19**

- **No Class – Professor Out of Town (Make-up class TBD)**

**Friday, October 23**

- **No Class – Professor Out of Town (Make-up class TBD)**

**Monday, October 26**

- **Present Midterm (5% of course grade)**
- Introduction to International Criminal Law
- How effective are criminal tribunals?

**Friday, October 30**

- Nonviolent resistance, Case study: Liberia

**Monday, November 2**

- Asylum Seekers and Refugees: Product of War
- Introduction to International Refugee Law; discuss *Strength in What Remains*

**Friday, November 6**

- **Midterm due (20% of course grade)**
- Guest Speaker Mamadou Sy, Program Director for Refugee and Immigrant Services, Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area

**Monday, November 9**

- **Skype** with Danielle Beasley, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Resettlement Expert, RefugePoint

**Friday, November 13**

- Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and Violence
- Guest Speaker Maggie Konstanski, Program Officer, World Relief

**Monday, November 16**

- Countering terrorist propaganda and misinformation
- Guest Speaker Kirsten Fontenrose, Strategic Planner, Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, U.S. Department of State

**Friday, November 20**

- Discuss misconceptions about Islam
- Imam Yahya Hendi, Georgetown University

**Monday, November 23**

- Guest Speaker Scott Harris, Office of Anti-Crime Programs, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of State

**Friday, November 27**

- **No Class – Thanksgiving Break**

**Monday, November 30**

- *The Battle for the Arab Spring* discussion
- Pages: 1-162

**Friday, December 4**

- *The Battle for the Arab Spring* discussion cont'd
- Pages: 163-305

**Monday, December 7**

- Final Presentations

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONOR CODE**

***Academic Integrity:*** Without regard to motive, student conduct that is academically dishonest, evidences lack of academic integrity or trustworthiness, or unfairly impinges upon the intellectual rights and privileges of others is prohibited. A non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct includes: cheating on exams and other assignments, committing plagiarism, using false citations, submitting work for multiple purposes, submitting false data, falsifying academic documentation, abuse of library privileges, and abuse of shared electronic media. All students in this course are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor), and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, "What is Plagiarism?", "Sanctioning Guidelines", and "Expedited Sanctioning Process." Georgetown subscribes to *SafeAssign*, a Web-based service that, among other things, is able to sniff out possible plagiarism in student work.

***Plagiarism:*** The presentation of someone else's ideas or work as your own, without proper acknowledgement is the worst crime a scholar can commit. The sources for all information and ideas in your papers that are not your own must be documented using the documentation system followed by the American Psychological Association or the Modern Language Association. In addition, all quotations must be identified as quotations, using quotation marks and documentation of the source of the quotation. Anything less than these standards is plagiarism and will be treated as such. Work that appears to have been plagiarized or otherwise violated the Honor Code (see below) will be reported to Georgetown's Honor Council. If the Council finds that the work violates the university's standards of academic honesty the work will receive a grade of zero for the assignment for the first offense; a second infraction will earn an F for the course. The Honor Council may impose sanctions of its own as well.

***Late Submission:*** Assignments are due by the time class begins. If I do not specify, I will accept either hard-copy or electronic submission. No late assignments will be accepted without reasonable excuse to be determined at the sole discretion of the Professor. Regardless, you will incur a letter grade penalty for each day that the assignment is late.

***Incomplete Option:*** Students are expected to complete all coursework by the end of the semester in which that coursework is taken. In extreme, documented instances (typically related to unexpected, documented health reasons), it may be necessary for students to request an Incomplete, "N," grade and a limited extension of time to complete the required coursework. Incompletes are not automatic, and should be requested first by the student of the professor. If the professor grants a student additional time to complete the coursework, and the work is completed by the date established by the professor on or before the incomplete deadline, the "N" is changed to the appropriate grade.

***The Honor Code Pledge:***

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life,  
I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System:  
To be honest in any academic endeavor, and  
To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

**OTHER ITEMS**

***Faculty Bio:*** Amanda Slobe, a contractor with ActioNet, Inc., is the Special Assistant to the Chief Information Officer at the U.S. Department of Energy. She also teaches the International Relations Academic Seminar in Georgetown University's Semester in Washington, D.C. Program. Prior to her current role, she worked in the Office of Foreign Missions at the U.S. Department of State. She earned her B.A. in International Relations at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo, during which she spent a summer in Spain studying Spanish and a semester in Cairo, Egypt, studying Intensive Arabic and teaching English to asylum seekers and refugees. After her undergraduate studies, she moved back to Egypt where she earned her M.A. in International Human Rights Law from the American University in Cairo where she witnessed history unfold during the Egyptian Revolution. Finally, **please note** that any opinions expressed are solely those of the instructor and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Energy or the U.S. Government.

***Students with Disabilities Policy:*** Students with disabilities should contact the **Academic Resource Center (Georgetown Downtown, Ms. Mara Bellino Disability/Learning Skills Advisor; 202-784-7366; arc@georgetown.edu; academicsupport.georgetown.edu/academic)** before the start of classes to allow their offices time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter for ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

***Counseling and Psychiatric Service (CAPS):*** CAPS serves as the university's primary mental health agency for its students and campus community. CAPS staff collaborates directly with students in overcoming difficulties that may interfere with the accomplishment of their educational, personal, and career goals. To learn more about CAPS services please visit: <http://caps.georgetown.edu/>

***Georgetown Writing Center:*** As a member of the Georgetown community, you will have full access to the University Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>) located in **Georgetown Downtown and Lauinger Library 217A**. Offered to students at all levels, the center's tutoring has proved helpful to those wishing to improve their grammar and style, to respond more effectively to assignments, to learn to organize both short papers and lengthy research projects, and to turn first drafts into publishable projects. Some students seek assistance on a regular basis; some only occasionally. For well-established students, the writing tutors have also offered on-line help, responding to questions about papers submitted through email attachments and counseling students through phone conference.

***Inclement Weather, School Closing, Emergency Information:*** During inclement weather or other emergencies, check <http://preparedness.georgetown.edu>, or call (202) 687-7669 for information about school/event closings. If the university is open, class will meet on schedule. Should the university be closed class will not meet, however, any writing assignments submitted through Blackboard will be due as usual. Students are advised to sign up for the text messaging service for instant notification of school closings. You may sign up for this service at Student Access.

*End of Syllabus*