International Relations and Multilateral Diplomacy

INST 3000 (3 credits / 45 hours)

Switzerland: International Studies and Multilateral Diplomacy

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Description

From its base in Geneva, this course provides an in-depth examination of the evolving nature of diplomacy in contemporary international relations. It considers the impact of the profound changes affecting the contemporary international system on the concept of diplomacy and evaluates how the practice of diplomacy can be adapted to global, regional, and local levels. The course also examines the approaches of economic, environmental, and humanitarian diplomacy. It evaluates traditional and non-traditional approaches to diplomacy, taking into consideration the strategies of both state and non-state actors as well as international and regional organizations. A major emphasis is put on the position of the UN system and the European Union in a multilateral diplomatic perspective.

Teaching incorporates in-class lectures and field visits to international organizations based in Geneva, Brussels, and Paris, including United Nations and European Union agencies. The course draws on the resources of leading academics and institutions, as well as insiders’ firsthand experiences. Required readings correspond to different course themes. Review and reflection sessions are organized on a regular basis to help students to synthesize and create connections among lectures, presentations, and readings.

Learning Outcomes

The International Studies and Multilateral Diplomacy course comprises 45 hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the evolution of Multilateral Diplomacy in the Contemporary International System;
- Comprehend the main processes of diplomatic negotiations;
- Analyze the main challenges that the UN System has to face in the 21st Century;
- Comprehend and contrast different perspectives of state and non-state actors on International Relations;
- Comprehend the main processes and factors impacting Humanitarian Diplomacy in the context of the evolving nature of conflicts in the 21st century;
- Analyze the evolving role of the European Union in Contemporary Diplomacy;
- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the main aspects of Economic and Environmental Diplomacy.
Language of Instruction
The course is taught in English, but students will be simultaneously learning French and expected to engage community members in this language (to the best of their abilities) when the opportunity arises. Students are also expected to read the French press and academic articles in French related to the course.

Course Schedule
Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Contemporary Multilateral Diplomacy: Processes and Strategies
This module seeks to examine the main aspects, functions and strategies of contemporary multilateral diplomacy.

Session 1: Multilateral Diplomacy and the Iranian Nuclear Negotiations
The objective of this session is to examine the processes of Multilateral Diplomacy in the context of the recent Iranian nuclear negotiation.

Required Readings:

Background reading:

Session 2: Multilateral Negotiation Exercise (3 sessions: Introduction, preparatory workshops and negotiation exercise)
This negotiation exercise session provides an opportunity for students to develop negotiation skills and to better understand multilateral negotiations techniques and processes. This negotiation simulation is chaired by a former Swiss Ambassador.

Required Readings:
**Session 3: Diplomacy in the Digital Age**
The objective of this session is to discuss the influence of Digital Technology on the evolution of Contemporary Diplomacy.

*Required Readings:*

**Module 2: Humanitarian Diplomacy**
This module seeks to present the main components of International Humanitarian Law and its role in armed conflicts. It aims at discussing the strategies and challenges of Humanitarian Diplomacy in the contemporary world system.

**Session 1: Field Visit to ICRC: Humanitarian Diplomacy and International Humanitarian Law**
Students will learn about the mission and the strategies of the ICRC, and will acquire knowledge about the fundamentals of International Humanitarian Law.

*Required Readings:*

**Session 2: “Geneva Call”: IHL and Armed Non-State Actors in Contemporary Conflicts**
This session deals with the problem of application of International Humanitarian Law in the context of internal conflicts and the specific strategy of the organization “Geneva Call” to deal with the issue of armed non-state actors.

*Required Reading:*

**Session 3: Review and Reflection Session**
This session seeks to review and discuss the main themes of Modules 1 and 2, including the critical assessment of the required readings.

**MIDTERM EXAM**
Module 3: Post-Brexit Europe in Multilateral Relations: Study trip to Brussels & Paris
This module seeks to examine the role of the European Union in international relations and its diplomatic strategies in the context of Brexit and the changing relations between continental Europe and the United States. Students will attend in Geneva an introductory lecture the on European Integration process and a second lecture on the European Union in an evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic context. Then, during their stay in Brussels, students will attend lectures at the European Union headquarters.

Session 1: The European Integration Process from the Beginning to Brexit
This session aims to present and discuss the historical and political backgrounds of the European Integration Process. The session will also look at the future of the EU in light of the political changes in Europe.

Required Readings:


Session 2: The European Union in an Evolving Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Context
This session seeks to examine the geopolitical and geoeconomic context that impacts the current evolution of the European Union.

Required Reading:

Session 3: Field Visit to the EU Commission: European Union as an Actor in Contemporary Diplomacy
This session seeks to critically assess the role of the European Union as a regional actor in contemporary international relations. In addition to this presentation, other speakers will discuss the evolution of transatlantic relations and the role of Europe in the 21st century during the study trip.

Required Reading:


Session 4: Review and reflection session
This session seeks to review and discuss the main themes of Module 3, including the critical assessment of the required readings.

Module 4: Development Diplomacy and Multilateral Organizations
This module aims at examining the role and strategies of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in multilateral economic relations, and their impact on development diplomacy.

Session 1: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: UNCTAD and Contemporary Development Diplomacy
This session examines the role of UNCTAD in development diplomacy.

Required Reading:

Session 2: WTO, Diplomacy, and Trade- Field visit to the WTO
This session presents the main functions of the World Trade Organization in the management of the multilateral trade system.

Required Reading:

Background Reading:

Module 5: Environmental and Economic Diplomacy
This module aims at examining the increasing influence of economic and environmental factors on diplomatic processes, on bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

Session 1: Field visit to the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the WTO and EFTA: Trade Diplomacy: The Swiss Approach
Students learn about the objectives and the main processes of economic diplomacy and its role in enhancing the power position of states in contemporary international relations, with a focus on Swiss foreign policy.

Required Reading:
Background Reading:

Session 2: Environmental Diplomacy
This session seeks to present the main factors that impact environmental diplomacy in its political, legal, and diplomatic contexts.

Required Reading:

Session 3: Review and reflection session
This session seeks to review and discuss the main themes of Modules 4 and 5, including the critical assessment of the required Readings.

FINAL EXAM

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:
Midterm, final exams, and participation constitute the course requirements. In all exercises, students are asked to reflect analytically and to integrate the briefings, lectures, readings, as well as review sessions.

Midterm Exam (35%):
Students have to respond to one essay question and two short questions. Recommended length for the essay question is 3 pages, and 1 page for each of the short questions (total of about 5 pages). Students can consult the IRMD syllabus to see the bibliography, and the program calendar to remember the organizations we visited or the names of the speakers. But it is not an open book exam: students cannot use their notes, the required readings or other materials. Students are encouraged to integrate lectures, briefings and readings.

Final Exam (45%):
Students must respond to two essay questions related to modules 3, 4 and 5. Recommended length for each essay question is about 3 pages (total of about 6 pages in Times New Roman, 12, 1 ½ spaced). Students can consult the IRMD syllabus to see the bibliography, and the program calendar/Paris Brussels study trip program to remember the organizations they visited or the names of the speakers. But it is not an open book exam: students cannot use their notes, the required readings or other materials. For this exam students are encouraged to integrate lectures, briefings and readings.

Oral Presentation (10%):
Students are required to make a 5-minute oral presentation (followed by a 5 minute question/answer period) on a topic related to the course during one of the review and reflection sessions.

Participation (10%):
Attendance, punctuality, interest in the subject, discussion, questions, and completion of Reading assignments are absolutely essential for passing the International Relations and Multilateral Diplomacy Course.

**Assessment:**
- Midterm Exam 35%
- Final Exam 45%
- Oral Presentation 10%
- Participation 10%

**Grading Scale:**
- 94-100% A Excellent
- 90-93% A-
- 87-89% B+
- 84-86% B Above Average
- 80-83% B-
- 77-79% C+
- 74-76% C Average
- 70-73% C-
- 67-69% D+
- 64-66% D Below Average
- below 64 F Fail

**Expectations and Policies**

- **Show up prepared.** Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- **Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements.** This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- **Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer.** These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- **Comply with academic integrity policies** (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- **Respect differences of opinion (classmates’, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits).** You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad [Student Handbook](#) for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational
experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices.