

**Eve of Destruction:
Global Crises and World Organization in the 20th Century**

History 300 / CRN 14253 / Fall 2019
MWF 1:30 – 2:20 pm (3 credit hours)

This is a course in international history. It is not about any particular country or region; rather, it traces an emerging global conversation about the most urgent world problems and their possible solutions. The emergence of such institutions as the World Health Organization, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, non-governmental organizations, and global media outlets created new venues for identifying and communicating about issues that affected international life.

Although the course explores a wide range of case studies, it does not claim to present a comprehensive “world” history. Coverage is topical, resembling in many respects the potpourri of issues that have barraged the League of Nations and the United Nations over the past century. What matters ultimately is the *form* of cooperation. Why was the UN to prove reasonably effective in addressing some problems, while NATO or informal groupings like the G-7 prevailed in other circumstances? How did ideas about the use of force for conflict resolution change over time?

For students with a serious interest in international affairs – whether in history, the social sciences, or any other major – this course aims to provide an orientation to some of the most contentious decisions of the past century.

Learning Outcomes

Completing this course will enhance your ability to:

- comprehend, recall, and synthesize key interpretations presented in lectures
- read, analyze, and discuss historical documents as well as academic journal articles
- respond to complex paper assignments and exam questions with clearly written essays
- think historically about international problem-solving

Course Policies

Attendance is essential. You are allowed *six* unexcused absences; after that, each absence may be counted against your course grade. I don't need to know why you've missed class – that's your business. But use your free passes wisely.

Common courtesy suggests that you should arrive on time. If you must leave early, please inform us ahead of time and then raise your hand at the appropriate time. A lecture is not the same thing as a television viewing! Your coming and going may represent a significant distraction.

Please refrain from using any electronic devices in class – no iPhones, iPads, or laptops. Srsly. Otherwise your casual meanderings around the World Wide Web would distract everyone around you. If you want to take notes, use pen/pencil and paper. Old school is real school. Course lectures will be available for you to review on BoilerCast, and other course materials can be found on BlackBoard.

Academic integrity: The assignments in this course require you to formulate complex thoughts in your own words. Attempts to pass off another's words as your own – be it on an exam or in your primary

source exercise – will carry harsh penalties. Plagiarized papers will earn a “zero” for the assignment and may lead to further consequences, including notification of the Dean of Students Office. The “University Regulations” handbook contains further information on dishonesty.

Course Requirements

Final course grades will be calculated as follows:

Participation (includes quizzes)	10%
First paper (due Sept. 19)	20%
Midterm exam (on Oct. 4)	20%
Second paper (due Nov. 3)	20%
Take-home final exam (due Dec. 13)	30%

Disclaimer: In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructor via email or phone.

Course Readings

The following books should be purchased at Follett’s, the University Bookstore, or Amazon.

- Meisler, Stanley. *United Nations: A History*, revised ed. New York: Grove Press, 2011. (Please do not buy the 1996 edition; the 2011 version is very different.) ISBN-13: 978-0-871-13656-5.
- Unger, Corinna. *International Development: A Postwar History*, paperback ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-1-472-57629-3.

Please note that several **historical documents** and **article-length readings** will be distributed to the class in PDF format. These readings **do** constitute course material and are subject to coverage on the midterm and final.

Contact Information

Prof. Gray (wggray@purdue.edu) Office hours in University Hall 328: MW 2:30 – 3:45 or by appointment Office phone (765) 494-2772	
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Class and Reading Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Associated Readings
Aug. 19	Introduction: the threat of destruction	
Aug. 21	The 19th-Century international system	

Aug. 23	Discussion: a decline in violence?	Pinker, Jervis, Snyder essays
Aug. 26	The Great War and international society	
Aug. 28	The League at its best, 1919-1929	Gray essay; League Covenant
Aug. 30	Discussion: laws of war	Dunant; Geneva Convention; Brussels Conference; Fourteen Points
Sept. 2	NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)	
Sept. 4	Special Guest: Walter Isaacson	
Sept. 6	Discussion: Development and Empire	Unger, 1-48
Sept. 9	The League at its worst, 1929-1936	Lytton Report (excerpts)
Sept. 11	The Axis challenge	
Sept. 13	Planning for victory – the United Nations	Meisler, 1-35; Atlantic Charter; UN Charter
Sept. 16	The human rights revolution	UNHDR; Genocide Convention
Sept. 18	Partitioning Palestine	Meisler, 36-54
[Sept. 19]	[FIRST PAPER DUE @ 11:59 pm]	
Sept. 20	The Bretton Woods system	
Sept. 23	Discussion: The New Development Infrastructure	Unger, 49-78; Point Four speech
Sept. 25	“Uniting for Peace”: Korea and the Cold War	Meisler, 55-74; Uniting for Peace
Sept. 27	The Suez Crisis	Meisler, 75-114
Sept. 30	The UN and African decolonization	Meisler, 115-134
Oct. 2	The Cuban Missile Crisis	Meisler, 135-152
Oct. 4	MIDTERM EXAM	
Oct. 7	NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)	
Oct. 9	The Non-Proliferation Treaty	Gavin article; NPT
Oct. 11	Discussion: <i>The Ugly American</i>	Unger, 79-101; Burdick/Lederer excerpts

Oct. 14	Cyprus and Nigeria: (mis)managing civil wars	
Oct. 16	The Vietnam War in international politics	Meisler, 153-169
Oct. 18	Discussion: the “Green Revolution”	Unger, 103-125; Cullather article
Oct. 21	Polarization and terrorism: 1967 and its aftermath	Meisler, 169-184
Oct. 23	“Limits to Growth” and the Oil Shock	Meisler, 185-221; Limits to Growth
Oct. 25	The radical 1970s	Unger, 127-42; NIEO
Oct. 28	NGOs and international civil society	Iriye chapter
Oct. 30	The IMF and the rise of austerity economics	Unger, 143-51
Nov. 1	From détente to the second Cold War	
[Nov. 3]	[SECOND PAPER DUE, 11:59 pm]	
Nov. 4	The democratic wave, 1985-95	Meisler, 222-256
Nov. 6	The Gulf War, 1990-91	Meisler, 257-277
Nov. 8	Debacle in Somalia	Meisler, 278-311
Nov. 11	Civil wars and foreign interventions in Yugoslavia	Meisler, 312-333
Nov. 13	Genocide in Rwanda	Meisler, 334-344; Power article
Nov. 15	War crimes tribunals: The Hague & beyond	Wald <u>or</u> Koomen article (choose)
Nov. 18	The Kosovo Crisis: NATO at war	Webber article
Nov. 20	Globalization: the world flattens	
Nov. 22	American unilateralism – the Bush years	
Nov. 25	The Iraq War in international politics	Meisler, 345-370
Nov. 27-29	NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)	
Dec. 2	The Millennium Goals	Meisler, 371-390; Millennium Goals
Dec. 4	American withdrawals: Obama and Trump	
Dec. 6	Conclusion: a fracturing world?	Unger, 153-58