

*University of Georgia*  
*International Relations 1100, Summer 2007*  
**Introduction to Global Issues (# 02-133)**  
**Special Graphic Novel Edition**

**Prof. Maurits van der Veen**

**Class**

Monday-Friday 09:15-11:30am  
275 SLC  
Office hours: Wed. 2-4pm & by appt.

**Office**

324 Candler Hall  
542-3357  
maurits@uga.edu

**Course description**

A global issue is any issue that crosses national borders. As anyone who regularly reads or watches the news will know, there is an almost inexhaustible collection of issues that meet this definition. Any attempt to survey them is bound to fail and, perhaps worse, is likely to do little more than skim the surface. This course, therefore, takes a somewhat different approach.

We will read a number of books that each deal with a single issue area from a single author's point of view. Each of these books engages questions of domestic politics as well as international politics. Each also is *political* in itself, in that it has an argument to make, rather than simply presenting a dry summation of the facts. The books were chosen to cover a wide range of geographical areas, political approaches, specific issues, and relevant actors.

The books were also chosen because they convey their message not just in words, but in images as well. They fall into a category generally known as graphic novels. However, unlike most graphic novels, they do not deal with fictional worlds or stories — instead, they depict real-world events and situations.

The central goal of the course is to get you interested in *thinking about* global issues. Almost as important is a second goal: to provide you with the skills needed to become a critical consumer of information about global issues. We will see that almost all such information is shaped by assumptions, beliefs, and claims which ought not to be accepted at face value. In each of the works we read, a large part of the story is in the pictures, with images conveying facts as well as argument. Accordingly, we will spend some time discussing how this visual aspect shapes our impressions of the readings.

When thinking about global issues, we want to try to understand *why* political actors make the choices they do, what is at *stake* in these choices, and what the *implications* of their choices are, in the short, the medium, and the long term. This means not just thinking about what goes on today, but also about how we got to this point, and about where we are likely to (or should!) go next. Furthermore, it means thinking about politics *within* countries (comparative politics) as well as politics *between* countries (international relations).

This course serves as the entry point for a major in the Department of International Affairs. However, it is set up so that even if you have no intention of choosing this major, you will still learn a lot about the world around us and, hopefully, also acquire an ongoing interest in (and ability to think critically about) how politics shapes that world, as well as in how cartoons and comics can reflect but also shape our perceptions.

### **Course policies & requirements**

The reading ought to be a pleasant task rather than a chore. I expect you to do the reading before class. Occasional pop quizzes will verify that you are doing so; more importantly, however, you will find that you will get much more out of the class presentations and discussions if you come prepared to ask questions about and discuss the reading for that day.

Course requirements are two exams, worth 25% of your grade each, a paper, worth 30%, and 4 multiple choice pop quizzes, worth 3% each. Class participation accounts for the remaining 8%. The exams will be given in class, on July 18 and 27. The paper will be a comparative book review. You will compare one of the books we read for the course to a non-graphic work covering basically the same issue and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each. More information about the paper will be provided in a separate handout.

You need to let me know ahead of time if you cannot make a class. After-the-fact excuses for missing class on days that happened to feature a quiz are unlikely to be accepted. The same goes for the midterm exam: do not expect to e-mail me a day later with a flimsy excuse and expect to be able to take a make-up exam without penalty. Similarly, if you need an extension on your paper, and have a good reason, let me know in advance. Unapproved late submissions of the paper will be penalized one third of a grade per day (i.e from A to A-, from A- to B+, etc.).

### **Office hours &c**

My office hours are Wednesdays, 2-4pm and by appointment. Please do come see me if you have any questions or comments about the reading or anything else about the course. If you need to reach me to make an appointment, I am most easily reached by e-mail.

### **Course material**

As noted above, the required reading for this course consists of 7 graphic novels. In addition, I will refer on occasion to comics available online. Throughout the course we will also view numerous propaganda cartoons made in the United States and the Soviet Union during the World War II and Cold War eras. Many of these are available (in poorer quality) through YouTube, and I will provide links to them after we view them in class, so that you can watch them again later, if you like.

All books for the course are available for purchase at the UGA Bookstore, but can also be ordered online, for example through Barnes and Noble or Amazon. They are:

- Delisle, Guy. 2005. *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea*. New York: Drawn & Quarterly.
- El Fisgón (translated by Mark Fried). 2004. *How to Succeed at Globalization: A Primer for the Roadside Vendor*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Jacobson, Sid, and Ernie Colon. 2006. *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation*.
- Pekar, Harvey, Heather Roberson, and Ed Piskor. 2007. *Macedonia*. New York: Villard (Random House).
- Rall, Ted. 2006. *Silk Road to Ruin*. New York: Nantier Beall Minoustchine Publishing.
- Sacco, Joe. 2002. *Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia, 1992-1995*. New York: Fantagraphics Books.
- Satrapi, Marjane. 2004. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. New York: Pantheon.

*Recommended*

- McCloud, Scott. 1994. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Paperbacks.
- Sacco, Joe. 2002. *Palestine*. New York: Fantagraphics Books.
- Satrapi, Marjane. 2004. *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return*. New York: Pantheon.

Links to additional recommended readings and related material will be available on the course website.

## Calendar

### Introduction

Fri. July 6 *Global Issues: History, Politics, Argument*  
*The Explicit & Implicit Political Power of Images*

### I. The Politics of Terrorism, Counter-terrorism, and Nation-Building *The 9/11 Report*

Mon. July 9 *Terrorism*  
*Radical Islamism*

Tue. July 10 *Counter-Terrorism*  
Movie: Control Room

Wed. July 11 *Afghanistan*  
*Nation-building*

### II. The Politics of Revolution and U.S. – Iran Relations *Persepolis*

Thu. July 12 *Revolutionary Politics*  
*Oil Politics*

Fri. July 13 *Iran*  
*The Politics of Anti-Americanism*

### III. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics in Central Asia *Silk Road to Ruin*

Mon. July 16 *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*  
*Communism & Empire*

Tue. July 17 *The Central Asian Republics Today*  
*Personality-Cult Politics*

Wed. July 18 **Midterm Exam I**  
Movie: Team America

### IV. Ethnic Conflict and War in Europe

**a. Safe Area Gorazde**

Thu. July 19 *Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia*  
*Authoritarianism*

Fri. July 20 *The War in Bosnia*  
*Genocide: The Massacre in Srebrenica*

**b. Macedonia**

Mon. July 23 *The Non-War in Macedonia*  
*International Peacekeeping*

Tue. July 24 *Ethnic Politics*  
Movie: No Man's Land

**V. Totalitarianism and Nuclear Proliferation**  
*Pyongyang*

Wed. July 25 *Communism & Life in North Korea*  
*Totalitarianism*

Thu. July 26 *North Korea's International Relations*  
*Nuclear Proliferation*

Fri. July 27 Midterm Exam 2  
Movie: A State of Mind

**VI. Globalization & the World Economy**  
*How to Succeed at Globalization*

Mon. July 30 *Fair Trade and Development*  
Movie: Life and Debt

Tue. July 31 *Reforming the World Economy?*  
*The Importance of Thinking about Global Issues*