Lecture 1
3 April 2018
Copyright: Ronald B. Mitchell, 2018

I. Introduction
   A. Today’s lecture to get flavor of course. Wrap up with course requirements.
   B. Section is mandatory starting THIS week
   C. **Course goal:** Better understanding of the causes of international conflict and the means by which countries resolve them. Political science NOT history course. Not WHAT happened but WHY things happened. Explain rather than describe international relations.
   D. CHANGE in international relations
      1. Security/Terrorism - end of cold war; Iran and N. Korea getting nuclear weapons; civil wars more common than cross-border wars; armies involved in humanitarian assistance as much as war; small arms problem; NGOs prompt landmine treaty. Sept 11 changed American views but not countries like Israel that live with terrorism; San Bernardino shootings and others continue.
      2. Politically – some countries combine (EC, NAFTA, South American Free Trade Area, China/HK); some disintegrate (Sudan, USSR, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia); some liberated (Arab Spring)
      3. Economically - globalization - most people know more about Microsoft and Coke than about Benin or Moldova or Paraguay. Reshuffling of who’s on top. Regional trade blocs with European Union and NAFTA, and their potential dissolution. Integrated world economy: global financial crisis.
      4. Human rights and social welfare – migration into Europe; rights of women under Taliban; female genital mutilation in some African states; sex trafficking; indigenous people’s rights; right to freshwater, clean environment.
      5. Environmentally – many new issues coming onto international agenda from climate change, deforestation, desertification.
      6. Health; WHO established; Zika virus/AIDS efforts fought collectively; Gates Foundation
   E. CONTINUITY in international relations
      2. Politically - world government and disintegration of nation state unlikely in near future. Desire for states and nationalism remain strong – Brexit, Trump victory
      3. Economically - powerful economic countries still exploit and extract resources from poorest
      4. Environmentally - all countries harm the environment in own country & on global commons
      5. Human rights/social welfare – poverty & degradation remain too common around the world
      6. Health - millions in developing world still die from diseases that don’t exist in developed countries. Life expectancies in developed world are 75 and above but in African countries are 55 and below

II. International relations is, in part, a story of changing borders due to:
   A. Wars, but wars are fought NOT just over territory but also across many less tangible divides, many of which involve human ideas
   B. People create borders to separate “different” people but borders also make people view themselves as different from each other
   C. Race and ethnicity
   D. Religion
   E. Economics and Trade
   F. Migration
   G. Internet

III. International affairs in all aspects of life, visible daily in NYT.
   A. Front page questions:
      1. Migration into Europe
      3. Why is N. Korea developing nuclear weapons? If they succeed, will it help them achieve their political, security, economic goals? Why did Libya give up nuclear ambitions? What about Brazil and Argentina - why did they give up nuclear goals but won’t let IAEA inspect?
      4. Why was there a landmine treaty in 1997, but not before? Why did governments allow NGOs to get control of the agenda on this? Why do some countries give up landmines while others don’t?
B. Business section:
1. Why did a subprime mortgage crisis in the US in 2008 bring world to brink of economic collapse?
2. European Union creating new rules and agencies to prevent economic crises. Will they work? Effects of Brexit and renegotiating NAFTA.
3. Bailout of Greece and its debt – would this have occurred in absence of European Union?
4. Why did European countries adopt Euro? Will they keep it? Has EU helped European economies?

C. Environment and social problem questions:
1. Is Mexico more likely to clean up its environment after signing NAFTA than it was before?
2. China challenging US to meet Paris Climate Agreement commitments
3. Conservation International bought logging concessions in Guyana to protect and not log forests
4. Last World Conference on Women was 1995 in Beijing? Any decrease in violence against women?
5. Will human rights violations in various countries decline in future? If so, how? Rohingya Muslims have been pushed out of Myanmar or killed. Syrian government preparing to use chemicals.

D. Arts / entertainment / sports?
1. What explains “medal counts” and nationalism of athletes at the Olympics? Do the Olympics foster understanding and global citizenship or do they foster nationalism?
2. The #METOO campaign led to discussion around the world.
3. Trump business interests intersect with his presidency in ways that sit at intersection of IR, business, and entertainment

IV. Causality and counterfactuals
A. Recurring theme of course: Identifying causes and effects
B. If “A causes B” then it must be true that “Not-A would cause Not-B”
1. If “Sun causes My Warmth” then “No Sun would cause Not My Warmth” (or “if the sun weren’t out I would be cold”)
2. If “Anarchy causes War” than “Not Anarchy would cause Not War” (“Gov’t would cause Peace”)
3. If “Human Nature as Aggressive causes War” than “Human Nature as Peacable would cause Peace”
   a) But can’t think of situation in which counterfactual would be true. What about other species?
   b) If this is true, what does it mean about war? Doesn’t it mean that War is Constant?

V. Structure and agency: can people create change? If so, when and how?
A. Ongoing tension between structure and agency, between constraints of impersonal forces and ability of:
   1. Human choices to produce different outcomes within existing structural constraints
   2. Human choices to make a difference by altering structure itself over time
B. But human choices are constrained by large structural forces that make any single human choice unlikely to be determining of the outcomes, even if they can be influential
C. Because people have choices that have consequences (even if probabilistic), morality matters

VI. Review of syllabus
A. Theory provides basis for thinking about many issues. Teach theory so can apply it to specific issues
B. Thinking about causality. What causes conflict? What causes violent conflict? Was WWII caused by Hitler, poor international management, or German nationalism?
D. Brief overview of course themes
   1. Types of interaction (focus of theories): conflict, harmony, and cooperation
   2. Actors - states, IGOs, NGOs, MNCs, individuals
   3. Goals and issues: military, economic, social, environmental
   4. Means - war and force, economic power, treaties and diplomacy, enviro power, people power
   5. Levels of analysis. Individual, governmental, or international system level
   6. Theories of interaction: realism, liberalism, dependency theory, feminist theory
E. Major theme: how different theories help us explain an event, beginning of a war, signing of treaty, opening of trade between countries. Goal: look at explanations offered by each of several theories.

VII. Logistics
A. Teaching assistants - phones, office hours, etc. on syllabus and on webpage
B. Canvas website for course; INCLUDES online readings individually and as Zip file to read offline
C. How to read for this class
D. Read New York Times online or via UO Bookstore or get home delivery. Check with bookstore
E. Course requirements: See late policy and grade complaint policy on syllabus.

© Ronald B. Mitchell, do not use without permission: http://rmitchel.uoregon.edu/sites/default/files/ir/lecture01.pdf