

Major Global Issues and Challenges

国際社会研究演習

Assessment Information

Course Leader: Dr. Senan Fox
Email Address: senanfox@staff.kanazawa-u.ac.jp
Personal Website: <http://www.senanfox.com/>
Room: 3522 (Ningen Shakai 5-goukan) (人間社会 5 号館)
Consultation Times: Email Dr. Senan Fox in advance if you wish to meet him to discuss your studies.

Assessment Requirements:

1. Seminar Class Weekly Homework Assignments (30%),
2. one Seminar Presentation (35%)
3. and one Essay (35%)

(This is the assessment requirement for students taking two quarters i.e. one full semester).

Recommended Text Books:

Author: John Baylis (ed.) *et al*
Book Title: *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (7th edition)
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Year: 2017
ISBN-10: 0198739850
ISBN-13: 978-0198739852

Author: Antony Best *et al*
Book Title: *International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (3rd Edition)
Publisher: Routledge
Year: 2015
ISBN-10: 0415656427
ISBN-13: 978-0415656429

1) **Seminar Class Weekly Homework Assignments = 30%**

AND

- 2) **1 Seminar Presentation = 35%**. Your presentation will be graded according to the quality of your presentation. Visit Dr. Senan Fox's website <http://www.senanfox.com/> for examples of effective presentations. Choose a presentation topic from the list of weekly seminar topics shown in the syllabus information.

For example, its structure - i.e. was it well planned? (for example, does it include bullet-points and titles?), Ideas might include an introduction section, an analytical section (showing the successes and failures of campaigns to fight a global problem, obstacles to progress etc., and a conclusion section with the presenter's own views and ideas (reinforced with actual examples and facts). Topic examples (from syllabus) include - the United Nations (and International Law), Racism and Discrimination, Global Poverty etc.), Is the information used directly relevant to the presentation topic? (in terms of the presentation's content and time period i.e. there is usually no need to discuss issues thousands of years ago, except with cases such as Israel and Palestine), Did it include relevant background information about the topic? Did the student effectively use pictures and visual data to enhance the presentation? Did it benefit and assist other students in the seminar?, Did the student use maps, handouts, or other documents in the presentation? Does the presentation include factual information, statistics, illustrations, primary source information (such as extracts from historical or official present-day documents, quotations from NGOs, leaders, combatants, ordinary people, the views of respected scholars etc.)?

Students should avoid vague generalizations that do not refer to any facts or evidence or present a simple chronological narrative of the issue, which does not show any analysis or independent thinking.

Students should also be careful with timekeeping – make sure not to arrive late or to go beyond the presentation time limit (about 20 minutes in total). It is also a good idea to practice in advance of the real presentation in order to avoid IT problems or other complications. Past problems have included incompatible software (Microsoft versus Apple software, outdated software, USB and memory stick problems, computers that cannot connect to the projector etc.)

Do not be afraid to engage or stimulate the audience's attention if you wish. For example, to ask them questions, to ask them do they know about a certain fact, to ask them to comment on a picture or a graph etc.

Please send the teacher a short presentation handout to provide to other students before the presentation seminar. A handout usually consists of two or three pages with bullet-points or a list that the audience can follow while watching the presentation (in order to make notes). If possible, the handout should include information about sources used to complete the presentation (books, websites,

etc.)

Presentations should be structured in a clear and easy to follow manner. See below for example -

a) INTRODUCTION - (a brief statement about the issue – for example, ‘a brief statement of five to ten sentences about what ‘Human Rights’ are).

b) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – (a chronological description of the background to the issue)

c) INFORMATION ABOUT WHY THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO FOR EXAMPLE.

d) CHALLENGES TO ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERY HUMAN BEING (For example, what are the prospects for a world where everyone’s human rights are guaranteed and protected? What factors and issues prevent this goal? What factors and issues assist this goal? Choose a case study (women’s rights in Afghanistan, workers’ rights in Bangladesh etc.) to illustrate the difficulties involved in the fight for human rights.

e) SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION (The presenting student should summarize the findings and results of his or her presentation. The student should also display a solid analysis of the issue and of its key characteristics, and propose possible solutions and ways to address present-day challenges and obstacles that are related to the presentation topic.

From a presentation guidance website (see the source below):

“Presentations need to be very straightforward and logical. It is important that you avoid complex structures and focus on the need to explain and discuss your work clearly. An ideal structure for a presentation includes:

- *a welcoming and informative introduction;*
- *a coherent series of main points presented in a logical sequence;*
- *a lucid and purposeful conclusion.”*

For more advice on making presentations, please see the following link:

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/presentation/structuring-presentation>

AND

3) **One Essay Assessment = 35%** (see details below)

Essay Assessment

1. If you choose the essay assessment option, you must complete it entirely in English.
2. **At least 50% of the books and sources used must be English language sources.** Non-native English speakers can use Japanese or other non-English language books and sources but the maximum percentage of sources allowed is 50% of the total number of books and sources used. For example, if a student used six books in total then three non-English language books are allowed. Please reference non-English language sources in both English and the source's language (for example, Japanese). Of course, if a student wishes, he or she can write the essay using only English language sources.
3. Please use sources from the university library, Senan Fox's office, Senan Fox's website (<http://www.senanfox.com>) or elsewhere. Please see advice and suggestions on essay writing below.
4. The essay must be **at least 1000 words long (minimum)**. This word limit does not include the bibliography (the list of books and other sources used to write the essay).
5. The deadline for submitting the essay is **the day of the seminar 7 or seminar 14 at 5pm (it depends on whether the student is taking classes for two quarters or just one)**.
6. Students must submit **both a hard-copy and an email with the essay attached** to a) Dr. Senan Fox's office – Room 3522 (Ningen Shakai 5-goukan) (人間社会 5号館) and b) to Dr. Senan Fox's email address – **senanfox@staff.kanazawa-u.ac.jp** before the deadline.
The submitted essay hard copy and the email attachment essay must be exactly the same essay.
7. Late submissions (after the deadline) will be penalized.
8. Please **choose only one question** from the topics shown below.

Essay Questions

Choose a seminar topic and then only **ONE essay question** from the list shown below i.e. 1 **or 2 or 3**.

*****The essay questions below relate to *students taking their first semester quarter* for the 'Major Global Issues and Challenges' course.**

Seminar 2: *Human Rights (History and Principles)*

1. What are "Human Rights"? What is the "Universal Declaration on Human Rights" (UDHR)? What have been some of the key events in history in terms of the recognition and protection of human rights?
2. Choose **one** human rights campaign by a human rights organization such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch (or your own choice), and

- critically discuss some the successes and ongoing challenges in the campaign (for example, workers' rights, the death penalty, etc.)
3. Critically discuss the successes and failures of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) in defending human rights throughout the world.

Seminar 3: *Terrorism (State, State-sponsored, and non-State, Terrorism)*

1. What is terrorism? Why, in your opinion, is there often disagreement over what actions constitute terrorism? Provide specific examples.
2. What is state, state-sponsored, and non-state terrorism? Critically discuss each of them. Provide specific examples of each type of terrorism.
3. Choose one terrorist group or organization, and discuss their objectives, their methods, and the consequences of their actions.

Seminar 4: *The United Nations (UN) (and International Law)*

1. What is the United Nations? Why was it founded? Evaluate some of its key successes and failures.
2. Critically evaluate the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Discuss its work and its history. Why do some countries call for reform of the UNSC?
3. What is international law? What major global bodies and organizations work to enforce international law? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current international legal system? Provide specific examples.

Seminar 5: *Racism and Discrimination*

1. Provide an accepted definition of racism. Provide an accepted definition of discrimination. Choose specific examples from history of when people suffered racism and/or discrimination.
2. Choose one example of racism and/or discrimination in the world today. With regards to your chosen example, what are the main challenges and problems involved in ending or at least reducing racism and /or discrimination?
3. What was the apartheid regime in South Africa (1948 to 1994)? For what purpose did the white South African apartheid government enforce racist laws and measures? Why did apartheid come to an end in 1994? What are some of the legacies of apartheid today?

Seminar 6: *Globalization and the International Financial System*

1. Discuss some of the key events and developments in the international financial system (also known as the global financial system) since 1870.
2. What does the term 'globalization' mean? Critically assess some of the key perceived positive and negative effects of globalization.
3. What is the international financial system (also known as the global financial system)? Using specific examples, discuss some of the key strengths and weaknesses of the present-day international financial system.

Seminar 7: *Religious Extremism and Ethnic Nationalism*

1. Identify at least one religious extremist group in the world. What are its goals, methods, and characteristics? Using evidence, discuss whether religious extremism and democracy can co-exist or not?
2. Why are violent religious extremist groups an especially difficult issue for governments and the international community to deal with? Provide specific examples.
3. What is ethnic nationalism? Provide examples from around the world (in history and in the present day) of states and organizations that support (and / or have supported) ethnic nationalism. Do you think that the principles of ethnic nationalism are compatible with human rights and democracy for everyone? Support your answer with evidence.

*****The essay questions below relate to *students taking their second semester quarter* for the 'Major Global Issues and Challenges' course.**

Seminar 2 (8): *Women's Rights*

1. Critically evaluate the early stages of the struggle for women's rights in developed world Western countries such as the United States (since 1848) or the United Kingdom (since 1872) (or your own choice). In what ways were women discriminated against? Do gender inequalities still exist today in your chosen country?
2. Discuss the challenges and denials of human rights that women in poor Third World countries experience today. Choose a number of specific examples and explain why, in your opinion, women from poor countries are often still discriminated against and denied their full rights?
3. Choose one women's rights issue (such as divorce, education, employment, marriage rights, property ownership, other legal rights etc. or your own chosen topic), and assess the progress (successes and failures) made by global organizations and human rights groups (women's groups, NGOs etc.) in their fight for full equality. You may choose one or a number of countries to make your argument.

Seminar 3 (a) (9a) : *Workers' Rights*

1. What have been some of the key events in modern history in terms of the recognition and protection of worker's rights (also known as labor rights)? Evaluate the significance of some major worker's rights laws and declarations.
2. What is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

- (ICESCR)? Why is it significant? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
3. Identify some of the major workers' rights violations that workers experience in the world today? In your opinion, why are these violations still existent? Evaluate the challenges for governments and other organizations in ending or at least reducing these violations.

Seminar 3 (b) (9b): *The Rights of Children*

1. What have been some of the key events in modern history in terms of the recognition and protection of children's rights? Evaluate the significance of some major children's rights laws and declarations.
2. What is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)? Critically evaluate the progress made in the global campaign for children's rights since the signing and ratification of the UNCRC in 1989-90.
3. Provide examples of some major children's rights violations in the world today. With regards to your chosen examples, what are some of the main challenges and problems involved in bringing these violations to an end?

Seminar 4 (10): *Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity*

1. What is the definition of genocide? With the exception of the Holocaust (1933 to 1945), what have been some of the worst examples of genocide in the twentieth century? Discuss some of the successes and failures of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) in preventing genocide.
2. What was the Holocaust (1933 to 1945)? How and why did it take place (for example, without being stopped by the international community)? What were some of its major consequences and lessons?
3. Aside from genocide, identify and discuss other examples of war crimes and crimes against humanity (for example, rape, ethnic cleansing, persecution, torture, intentionally attacking civilians etc.). Where in the world have such crimes taken place? Discuss the challenges and difficulties that the international community, humanitarian organizations, and human rights NGOs have experienced in punishing those involved in war crimes?

Seminar 5 (11): *War and Peace (the Causes and Consequences of Conflict, and the Challenges of Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Reconstruction)*

1. Choose one example of a country (in the post-1945 world or in the present day), which was or has been affected by conflict. What were some of the key reasons for conflict in that country and what were or have been some of its major consequences?
2. Select one or a number of case studies, and critically evaluate the measures taken by the United Nations and the international community to prevent the outbreak of conflict or to end conflict since 1945 (in relation to your chosen case study or case studies).
3. Discuss the challenges and difficulties faced by war-torn areas and the international community in terms of post-conflict reconstruction, peacekeeping, and recovery.

Seminar 6 (12): *Global Poverty*

1. Choose one or a number of countries and identify and discuss some of the causes, characteristics, and effects of poverty. What types of problems do people living in poverty experience?
2. Provide specific examples of some of the major successes and failures of international organizations such as the United Nations and NGOs in fighting global poverty.
3. Using supporting evidence, discuss why poverty is an issue of global concern. In what ways can poverty in one country or in numerous countries have serious consequences for countries elsewhere in the world?

Seminar 7 (13): *Environmental Issues and Resource Competition*

1. Identify and discuss some of the most serious environmental concerns and problems in the world today. Make a convincing argument as to why the international community should be concerned about these issues?
2. What is resource competition? Discuss the reasons why it has become an issue of increasing importance in recent decades? Refer to an example or examples of where resource competition has caused heightened tensions or conflict between countries in the world.
3. Evaluate the successes and failures of international organizations and NGOs in combating environmental pollution and degradation. Reinforce your argument with supporting evidence.

*****The essay questions below relate to *students taking their third semester quarter* for the 'Major Global Issues and Challenges' course.**

Seminar 2 (14): *Russia (since the end of the Cold War)*

1. Using specific examples, discuss how the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) positively and negatively influenced the wider world in the 1990s.
2. Critically evaluate the influence of Vladimir Putin (and the background to his rise to power) in Russia today.
3. Discuss Russia's reasons and motivations for supporting pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine as well as Crimea's separation from Ukraine since 2014?
4. Identify and discuss some of the key causes of tension between Russia and the West (the USA, the European Union, and NATO member states) since 2000.

Seminar 3 (15): *Iraq and Afghanistan (since 2001)*

1. What were the background causes and reasons for the US-led invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003?
2. Have the invasions been successful in their objectives? Give specific reasons

- to support your answer.
3. Why were there so many protests around the world against the invasion of Iraq in 2003? Provide specific examples to defend your answer.

Seminar 4 (16): *The South China Sea disputes*

1. What are the central reasons for the South China Sea disputes?
2. Is it fair to say that China is the main cause of tension in the South China Sea?
3. Why have the South China Sea disputes become more troublesome in the last twenty years?

Seminar 5 (17): *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*

1. Critically evaluate **one or more of the key events** in the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1945 (for example, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Six Day War in 1967, the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the First and Second Intifadas in 1987-1993 and 2000-2005, the Oslo Accords in 1993, the Camp David Summit in 2000 etc.)
2. Provide a balanced discussion of the historical background to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.
3. What, in your opinion, are the central challenges to finding peace between Palestinians and Jews living in Israel and Palestine? Provide specific examples to defend your answer.

Seminar 6 (18): *US – Latin America Relations*

1. Discuss the historical background and reasons for the United States' strong interest in Latin American affairs and politics.
2. In your opinion, has US influence and intervention in Latin American domestic politics been positive or negative? Provide specific examples.
3. Discuss the US' historical role in the affairs of one of the following countries: Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Nicaragua, or Panama.

Seminar 7 (19): *The Middle East since the Arab Spring (in 2010)*

1. What is the meaning of the term 'Arab Spring'? Using one or more examples (choose a country), discuss how the 'Arab Spring' developed into a regional movement.
2. Critically evaluate the positive and negative consequences of the 'Arab Spring' in Egypt?
3. What is the background to, and causes of, the current conflict in Syria?
4. Using specific examples, discuss the reaction of the United States and other 'Western' states to the 'Arab Spring'. Did they support it from the beginning? Did they support 'Arab Spring' protesters in each country?

*****The essay questions below relate to *students taking their fourth semester quarter* for the 'Major Global Issues and Challenges' course.**

Seminar 2 (20): *Iran*

1. What was the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran? What were its causes and consequences for regional and global security?
2. Using specific examples, discuss why post-1979 Iran's relationship with Israel and the United States is often so negative?
3. Why, in your opinion, does Iran want to possess nuclear weapons? Why are Israel and the United States so opposed to Iran developing a nuclear bomb? Provide details and examples to reinforce your argument.

Seminar 3 (21): *India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh*

1. Discuss the central reasons for occasional tensions between India and Pakistan.
2. Identify and critically evaluate some of the key challenges that India faces in its quest to become an economically prosperous and fully developed state.
3. Provide specific examples to show how corruption, poor governance, and poverty impact upon the lives of ordinary people in Bangladesh.

Seminar 4 (22): *The European Union (EU)*

1. Discuss the EU's strengths and weaknesses as a political and economic union.
2. Identify and evaluate the main threats to the stability and viability of the EU.
3. Choose and critically discuss one of the following issues: –a) EU-Turkish relations, or b) EU-Russia relations, or c) the enlargement of the EU.

Seminar 5 (23): *The Korean Peninsula*

1. What are the historical reasons for the division of Korea between North Korea and South Korea?
2. Discuss the different reasons why North Korea is a threat to the peace, security, and economic prosperity of North-east Asia and the wider world.
3. Using specific examples, why, in your opinion, has North Korea become so determined to develop nuclear weapons since the 1990s?

Seminar 6 (24): Africa (Key Challenges and Problems)

1. Critically discuss the historical background and causes of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994.
2. Choosing one example (an African country), discuss the challenges to peace, social justice, and economic development in Africa today.
3. Choose and discuss ***one*** of the following issues: a) Corruption in Africa, ***or*** b) HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, ***or*** c) Conflict in Africa. Provide specific examples to reinforce your essay.

Seminar 7 (25): The Rise of China

1. Explain and discuss the positive and negative domestic aspects of China's economic rise since 1978.
2. Critically assess Deng Xiaoping's role in guiding China's economic and foreign policies from 1978 until the early 1990s. Provide examples and details.
3. Using specific examples, critically evaluate the major challenges of China's rise in terms of its relationship with other states, particularly neighboring countries.

Suggested Course of Action

The following guidelines are a suggested course of action if you wish to successfully complete the essay assessment and to perform to your best ability. **These guidelines are not compulsory nor will they be graded** (essay plans and initial drafts for example) but it is recommended.

1. Think carefully about the essay question that you would like to choose. Think about the types of books and other sources you will use when writing the essay. Please use the reading material used in the seminar. You are also welcome to use other sources (in the library, from the internet, from Dr. Senan Fox's office, Dr. Senan Fox's website etc.). If you have any questions or uncertainties, then please ask Dr. Senan Fox.
2. Submit an essay plan in advance of the deadline to Dr. Senan Fox. Arrange a meeting with Senan to discuss the essay in more detail and to receive feedback. Think carefully about how you will structure the essay. Ask yourself the following:
 - 'What books or other sources will I use?'
 - 'Have I taken care not to use unreliable sources such as 'Wikipedia'?
 - 'What argument will I make?'
 - 'Have I taken care not to simply write a narrative-type essay with no argument and no independent thinking or opinions?'
 - 'Will I agree with the question, disagree with the question, or find a middle ground when writing the essay?' (for example, agree then disagree and then conclude with my own opinions),
 - 'How many paragraphs will I include in the essay?'
 - 'Have I included the views and opinions of scholars and writers in my essay?'

- ‘Have I correctly referenced all sources used in my essay, for example, (Drifte, 2003:187) or footnotes or endnotes? Can I show the reader from where exactly I found information that is not my own? (Author, Book Publication Year, Page Number).
- ‘Does my bibliography include full information about all books and other sources used when writing the essay?’

3. Submit a rough initial draft of the essay to Dr. Senan Fox. Use this time to ask more questions, to receive feedback, to make extra changes, to find some new books and sources, and to improve the essay before the real submission date.