

**Political Science 4355**  
**Power, Morality, and International Relations**

**Professor David Clinton**

**Goals and Objectives:**

This course is intended to examine a phenomenon that many people doubt exists—the influence of moral principles on international relations. As the title of the course implies, to inquire into the meaning of moral conduct in the society of states is not to assume that moral guidelines are always followed, or that notions of morality are usually the most important determinant of what the players of the game decide to do. It does imply that moral guidelines are not and should not be irrelevant to international conduct. Our ideas of what acting morally really means in this anarchical society are often very hazy, however. We should think about them.

The course therefore begins with a look at the environment in which moral principles must be applied. The elements of the setting include the character of human beings, the dynamics of the interaction of large groups, and the special characteristics of international politics.

The second section examines the effect of international politics on individual human beings, by discussing the concept of human rights, by looking at the degree to which the international economy meets the requirements of distributive justice, and by asking what the effects in practice are of policies presumably intended to advance justice and human rights.

Military force is the subject of the third section. We look at the instances in which and the criteria by which wars can be said to be morally justified. We also look at the rules of war—the ways that war are or should be fought, and the limitations on military operations that are or should be observed—questions that may be particularly difficult in an era in which wars often take place across cultural divides. We look at one effort to apply these considerations to the ongoing war in Iraq.

The principal aims of this course are these:

1. to understand the more important perspectives on what it means to act ethically in political life
2. to appreciate the special conditions of international political life that affect one's ability to act ethically
3. to develop the ability to apply this knowledge to questions in contemporary international politics

**TEXTS**

The following books are required for purchase:

Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).

David Held, *Global Covenant: The Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus* (Polity Press, 2004).

James Turner Johnson, *Morality and Contemporary Warfare* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001)  
“Johnson (M)” on the syllabus)

James Turner Johnson, *The War to Oust Saddam Hussein: The Context, The Debate, The War and the Future* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005). (“Johnson (W)” on the syllabus)

Michael Maren, *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness* (Prentice Hall, 1974).

William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (Longman, 2000).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All members of the class are expected to attend all sessions of the course and to have completed the assigned readings before the date on which they are listed. In accordance with Baylor's attendance policy, a student who misses more than 25% of the scheduled classes, will fail the course.

Two papers, one of seven pages and one of ten pages, are required. In writing these papers, you will observe all the rules of good English usage outlined in the Strunk and White book. You are responsible for seeing that the papers are your own work, and for abiding by the provisions of the university honor code in these assignments, as in all aspects of the course. The paper topics will be distributed at a later date, but it can be stated now that these are not research papers. They will ask you to reflect on the question and then make the most convincing case you can for your point of view. Passing the course requires completion of all course requirements. The penalty for late submission of papers is one letter grade per day. Weekends count as one day.

The course requirements contribute to the overall course grade in the following proportions:

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Class attendance and participation: | 20% |
| First paper:                        | 15% |
| Second paper:                       | 20% |
| Midterm exam:                       | 20% |
| Final exam:                         | 25% |

Grading Scale:

|           |           |          |           |          |
|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| 91-100%=A | 87-90%=B+ | 81-86%=B | 77-80%=C+ | 70-76%=C |
| 60-69%=D  | 0-59%=F   |          |           |          |

For those students taking the course for graduate credit, the course requirements are as follows:

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Class attendance and participation:                         | 25% |
| First paper (12 pages), due on the day of the midterm exam: | 35% |
| Second paper (15 pages), due on the day of the final exam:  | 40% |

Grading Scale for Graduate Credit:

|           |           |           |          |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 95-100%=A | 91-94%=A- | 87-90%=B+ | 84-86%=B | 81-83%=B- |
| 77-80%=C+ | 74-76%=C  | 71-73%=C- | 60-69%=D | 0-59%=F   |

## COURSE OUTLINE

| Date                                                                   | Topic                                                  | Readings                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Week one                                                               | Introduction                                           |                                    |
| <u>Part I: The Setting for Moral Action in International Relations</u> |                                                        |                                    |
| Week two                                                               | Human Nature and Collective Action                     | Niebuhr, viii-118                  |
| Week three                                                             | The International System and Contemporary Developments | Niebuhr, 119-90, Johnson (M), 8-22 |
| <u>Part II: Issues in International Relations</u>                      |                                                        |                                    |
| Week four                                                              | Human Rights                                           | Donnelly, 1-38, 57-97, 165-68      |
| Week five                                                              | Human Rights, Distributive Justice                     | Donnelly, 99-163, Held, x-xv, 1-70 |
| Week six                                                               | Distributive Justice                                   | Held, 73-157                       |
| Week seven                                                             | The Pitfalls of Practice<br>–Paper I due               | Maren, 1-91                        |

|                                                      |                                               |                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Week eight                                           | The Pitfalls of Practice                      | Maren, 92-280                     |
|                                                      | Midterm Exam                                  |                                   |
| <u>Part III: The Hardest Issue: The Use of Force</u> |                                               |                                   |
| Week nine                                            | The Just War Tradition                        | Johnson (M), 22-40                |
| Week ten                                             | The Resort to War                             | Johnson (M), 41-118               |
| Week eleven                                          | Conduct in War                                | Johnson (M), 119-58               |
| Week twelve                                          | Cultural Diversity                            | Johnson (M), 159-90               |
| Week thirteen                                        | The Aftermath of War                          | Johnson (M), 191-218              |
| Week fourteen                                        | Applying Just-War Principles<br>–Paper II due | Johnson (W), 3-146                |
| Week fifteen                                         | Conclusion                                    | Johnson (M), 219-27; Held, 161-78 |
|                                                      | Final Exam                                    |                                   |