

Duke TIP- Scholar Weekend Proposal

*****This is a preliminary outline for April 2013 course

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10 Things They Don't Teach You in International Relations

Course Description

Traditional high school classes that seek to incorporate current events often lack a systematic framework for discussing and analyzing international relations. Furthermore, the focus of these discussions is generally limited to traditional concerns in security studies and economics. This course begins with a focus on cognitive and emotional decision making theories rather than traditional liberal/realist interpretations of world events. Using this systematic and critical basis for analysis, students will explore six issue areas rarely discussed in traditional curriculum- race and ethnicity, gender, the arts, civil liberties, food, and international norms. Moreover, these issue areas are more tangible, relevant, and accessible to high school students than many "high" politics issues such as war or international trade.

Course Plan

Day 1: General Theoretical Overview and Framework

1. Why "liberal" and "realist" are not what you think
Students will discuss how traditional international relations theories- namely liberalism and realism- view world events.
2. Why understanding gambling is important for decision making
As an introduction to decision making, students will be exposed to rational choice theory (the dominant approach to decision making in international relations). In opposition to rational choice, students will explore how Prospect Theory augments the way we think about decision making and rationality more generally.
3. Why cognitive neuroscience matters for international relations
Building off previous discussion of Prospect Theory, students will discuss new research in cognitive neuroscience such as fairness, revenge, in-group/out-group, and trust.
4. How critical theory messes with your mind
Students will discuss critical theory broadly defined, including feminist thought, critical race theory, and world systems theory.
5. How race and ethnicity have shaped the dispersion of power
As an introduction to specific issue areas and a preview of Day 2, students will discuss how race and ethnicity have impacted international conflict and economics using both historical examples and current events. Specific topics will include Japanese internment, genocide, and intervention policies.

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Day 2: Application to Specific Issue Areas

6. How gender impacts development and conflict
Gender is rarely discussed at length in traditional settings. Yet, for example, evidence suggests that gender equity is highly correlated with levels of development and levels of domestic stability. Students will discuss how gender impacts specific issues such as climate change, war, and diplomatic relations.
7. How the arts influence international relations
The arts have always been intertwined with issues of war, governance, and globalization. Specific issues such as nationalism, art heists, blacklists, and humanitarian efforts will be discussed both in terms of the arts impact on these issues and these issues impact on the arts.
8. How foreign policy impacts civil liberties (and vice versa)
In an American context, curtailment of privacy and speech in wartime has been a hot button topic for centuries. These issues, in addition issues related to cruel and unusual punishment and seizure of property, are especially relevant in a historical context and today.
9. Why what you eat matters to international relations
In an age of globalization, very few countries are self sufficient in terms of food production. Thus, a drought in Australia impacts prices in Egypt. In recent years, dramatic swings in food crises have led to revolts in developing countries, and some even argue that volatile food prices impacted the Arab Spring.
10. Why you should care about international norms
Failure to explicitly address norms as motives for an individual's behavior overlooks key cognitive and emotional assets of decision-making. This issue area melds the theoretical focus on Day 1 with the issue areas of Day 2, many of which implicitly and explicitly involve international norms.