

Countdown to Spring

Written by Dylan Kissane

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DYLAN KISSANE, JAN 9 2013

It's a little more than a week before the start of the new semester here at the Centre d'Etudes Franco-Américain de Management (CEFAM) and the school's sole international politics course, *POL 210: Issues in International Politics*, is almost set to go. The final PowerPoint presentation has been uploaded to the intranet for students, the reading list has been compiled and lesson plans for the months ahead have been prepared. As a professor, it's time to take a final big breath before launching into another busy Spring. It's also a chance to introduce myself and this blog to the e-IR readership, and to let you know what's coming up in the weeks and months ahead.

Your blogger is Dr Dylan Kissane, Professor of International Politics at CEFAM in Lyon, France. We are a small liberal arts business school offering BBA and MBA degrees to students in partnership with universities in the United States and Canada. I have taught international politics at CEFAM since 2009, as well as previously serving as the school's Research Coordinator, Assistant Dean for the MBA and, presently, Director of Graduate Studies.

My IR background is primarily located in international relations theory, with a focus on complex and chaotic international politics. I've presented and published my work in Australia, Europe and the Middle East – an up to date list of my work, including peer-reviewed articles, books and book sections can be found at my website.

Here at CEFAM I teach a range of courses in sociology and cultural studies, international strategy and international business, but it's my *Issues in International Politics* class that I enjoy the most. Since taking over this course in 2010 I've made it my own and it now runs year round: in the Spring and Summer as a face-to-face course and in Fall, Spring and Summer as an online course.

In a standard IR program a course like this would be a first year survey course. Covering the basics of international relations theory, broad themes in international politics, and some specific case studies of contemporary political issues, it's a course that is meant to both whet the appetite of students for international politics and demonstrate why any future business person needs to understand the role that politics plays in the globalised world.

However, unlike a standard IR program, this is usually the only course in international politics that my students will take. My classroom is full of business majors – future financial analysts, accountants, marketing gurus, and economists – so it is a real challenge to get them interested in IR for their three hours of class with me each week. When your students would much rather be studying balance sheets than the balance of power, professors have to be creative and find ways to bring the world of international politics to life.

Political Business will be an account of just how pedagogical innovation can bring even the least interested students to life. It will record the ways through which business students are introduced to IR, how they are taught, how they learn, and the challenges that both they and I encounter in and out of the POL 210 classroom. Focused on teaching and learning in IR, this blog will give readers a chance to go 'behind the blackboard' and understand how a course is developed, why certain subjects are included or avoided, and the ways in which a course can subtly change each year to better reach the professor's pedagogical goals.

I'm looking forward to blogging the semester to come for e-IR – welcome to ***Political Business***.

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Dylan Kissane is Professor of International Politics at CEFAM in Lyon, France. He is the curator of The Ivory Tower blog on E-IR.