

The Political Economy of Soft Power

Fall Semester 2019

Class Hours: Thursday, 9:30am-12:30am

Location: Bldg. 140-2, Rm. 202

Instructor: Max Nurnus

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Course Description

Soft power, as a concept, has sparked significant debate and research in the field of International Relations ever since the term was coined by Joseph Nye three decades ago. Beyond the academic field, it has also received attention in diplomatic strategies, the media and by the public. This course introduces and analyzes soft power from multiple angles to highlight its theoretical origins and context as well as its practical manifestations. The first part of the course presents soft power as part of a larger academic discourse on power, both within the field of International Relations and beyond, and highlights some of the criticism that the concept has received. In the second part of the course, soft power is linked to several related concepts, such as public diplomacy and nation branding, normative power and propaganda. The third and final part of the course examines the soft power and the soft power strategies of several actors on the international stage.

Course Assignments

Beyond attendance and class participation, students are expected to complete four assignments during the semester: three essays and one presentation. Grading will be based on three elements: class participation (35%), the three essays (each 15%) and the presentation (20%).

Depending on the number of students enrolled in the course, these assignments and their relative importance may be adjusted at the beginning of the semester.

Course Policies

Students are expected to be on time, to not miss more than two sessions of the course, and to prepare for class with the reading materials. Please refrain from using laptops, tablets and phones during the class. Violations of these policies will be reflected in grading. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and results in a fail.

Schedule and Reading Materials

The syllabus will be updated with the list of readings prior to the start of the semester.

#1 – September 5th: Course Introduction

September 12th: Chuseok Holiday – no class

#2 – September 19th: Power

#3 – September 26th: Power in International Relations

October 3rd: National Foundation Day – no class

#4 – October 10th: Soft Power

#5 – October 17th: Critics of Soft Power

October 23rd: Deadline - First Essay

#6 – October 24th: Public Diplomacy

#7 – October 31st: Nation Branding

#8 – November 7th: Normative Power

#9 – November 14th:

November 20th: Deadline - Second Essay

#10 – November 21st: The United States

#11 – November 28th: China

#12 – December 5th: The Islamic State

#13 – December 12th: Wrap-up

December 18th: Deadline - Third Essay