

DIPLOMACY

The course will focus on the many diplomatic negotiations, successful and unsuccessful, that have made headline news since the end of World War II. We will begin by briefly discussing the five diplomatic agreements that brought us from Europe's medieval concept of a universal state and universal religion to today's World Order encompassing every sovereign nation regardless of its religion. The five agreements are the Peace of Augsburg (1555), the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the Congress of Vienna (1815), the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and the Atlantic Charter (1941).

We will then analyze the international order envisioned in the Atlantic Charter, which marks the beginning of today's world order. We will contrast that vision with the traditional national diplomatic goals of the United Kingdom, France, Russia and the United States as well as the those of the League of Nations.

We will devote the rest of the course analyzing the record of how the international community sought to resolve threats to today's World Order: war and peace, disarmament, world trade, reduction in poverty, climate change and human rights. We will devote one class to each of these six issues.

War and peace was the core objective of creating both the League of Nations and the United Nations. We will discuss the historical record of both organizations' efforts to prevent or end wars.

International disarmament negotiations began after World War I, but accelerated after the development of nuclear weapons during the Cold War.

World trade has expanded rapidly since World War II thanks to international tariff negotiations held under the aegis of the World Trade Organization and its predecessor (GATT). We will discuss the relevant issues and accomplishments of each major agreement.

Poverty reduction in historically poor nations was a key goal of major UN agencies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, regional economic commissions and specialized development funds. The lecturer has worked with most of them during his 40-year career.

Climate change was not mentioned in the Atlantic Charter, but became a major focus of diplomatic negotiations lead by the United Nations. We will discuss the Kyoto and Paris climate agreements.

The Atlantic Charter put democracy and respect for human rights at the top of the UN's purpose along with world peace. We will review and assess UN programs in this field.

In each case, the course will evaluate the most important diplomatic initiatives and agreements. Participants are encouraged to comment on and discuss the lecturer's presentation.

LEADER: Robert Ross was raised in a diplomatic family. His career involved the Cold War and the economic development of the Third World. He has lived, studied, worked, or hiked in 90 countries.

LOCATION: In-person

WEDNESDAYS: 10:00 a.m. to noon, 8 weeks beginning March 2 through April 20

MAXIMUM: 20