

International Political Economy (IR-A2)

11 May, 10am-5pm, room: tba
25 May, 10am-5pm, room: tba
15 June, 9am-6pm, room: tba

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Description

The course familiarizes students with central theories, concepts and methods of International Political Economy (IPE). Throughout the course, we consider IPE as a true inter-discipline that is situated between International Relations, Political Economy, Economic Geography and Economics. Based on the core question(s) of “who gets what, why, when, where and how?” the course tackles the interactions and mutual dependencies of political and economic dynamics on an international scale. After a critical assessment of major IPE approaches, we move on to key topics like trade, production, finance and development. In addition to these more established issues, we are also going to discuss more recent phenomena such as environmental policies, data and property rights. Combining a broad overview with in-depth applications of common theories and established research methods (single case studies, comparative studies, regression analyses, QCA or Event History Analysis), the course enables students to analyze important problems of the current international economic system and the variegated ways in which states, firms and societies interact.

Requirements and Grading

Sound knowledge of basic concepts and methods of political science is required. Prior knowledge of political economy, international relations, macroeconomics or economic history is a welcome asset. Participants are asked to actively engage in classroom discussions based on preparatory readings. As this is a text-centered, discussion-based course, thorough and serious preparation of the assigned readings is an absolute must. Therefore, students are asked to prepare one-page reading reports for each marked reading. A template can be found on StudIP. For the 6 ECTS version of the course, students have to engage in one of **six working groups** and **present the results** of their research in the final session on **June 15**. The 9 ECTS version requires an additional **take-home exam**. **Submission deadline** is Friday, **June 30**. All readings are available via *Stud.IP (Uni Bremen)*.

Grading: 6 ECTS = group work (100 %); 9 ECTS = group work (50%) + final exam (50 %).

Background Literature

There are some great IPE textbooks available. I specifically recommend **Global Political Economy** by **Robert O'Brien & Marc Williams**. We work a lot with the current 6th edition from 2020. Other textbooks include:

Benjamin Cohen (2008), *International Political Economy – An Intellectual History*, Princeton.

Thomas Oatley (2022), *International Political Economy*, 7th edition, Routledge.

John Ravenhill (ed.) (2020), *Global Political Economy*, 6th edition, Oxford University Press.

Ernesto Vivares (ed.) (2020), *The Routledge Handbook to Global Political Economy*, Routledge.

Course Schedule – Session Overview

Session	Date	Time	Topic
Block I			
01	May 11	10:00-11:30	Introduction, Theories and Methods
02	May 11	11:30-13:00	Trade
03	May 11	14:00-15:30	Production
04	May 11	15:30-17:00	Development
Block II			
06	May 25	10:00-11:30	Finance & Financialization I
05	May 25	11:30-13:00	Finance & Financialization II
07	May 25	14:00-15:30	Finance & Financialization III
08	May 25	15:30-17:00	Digital Capitalism & the Environmental Question
Group work and virtual office hours			
	June 1		Group work: preparation of final presentations
	June 8		Group work: preparation of final presentations
Block III			
09 – 12	June 15	09:00 – 18:00	Group presentations, recap and evaluation

Course Schedule – Session Details

Session # 01 (May 11, 10:00-11:30)

Introduction, Theories and Methods

In this introductory session we try to get a first understanding of what International Political Economy (IPE) as a discipline is about, what its main controversies have been and how it has evolved over time.

Readings

Cohen, Benjamin J. (2008). *International Political Economy. An Intellectual History*. Princeton, NJ and Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press. Here: chapter 6, “What Have We Learned?”, 142-168.

O’Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 2, “International Political Economy and its Methods”, 23-41.

Session # 02 (May 11, 11:30-13:00)

Trade

Global trade is one of the oldest issues in International Political Economy. Depending on the analytical lens preferences of nation states, the corporate sector or wider civil society play a crucial role for shaping and changing trade regimes. In this session we look at the historical evolution of the global trade order, the preferences of businesses and the emergence of new powers.

Readings

*Chase, Kerry A. (2003). Economic Interests and Regional Trading Agreements: The Case of NAFTA. *International Organization*, 57:1, 137-174.

O’Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 6, “International Trade”, 119-147.

*Stephen, Matthew D. and Michal Parízek (2019). New Powers and the Distribution of Preferences in Global Trade Governance: From Deadlock and Drift to Fragmentation. *New Political Economy*, 24:6, 735-758.

Session # 03 (May 11, 14:00-15:30)

Production

Capitalist development features tendencies of economic concentration and centralization. National firm conglomerates and their internationally embedded networks shaped the economic landscape already prior to contemporary globalization. However, much has changed since the late 1970s. Two crucial processes in that regard are the rise of transnational corporations (TNCs) and the increasing importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Readings

- *Bath, Vivienne (2012). Foreign Investment, the National Interest and National Security. *Foreign Direct Investment in Australia and China*. *Sydney Law Review*, 34:4, 5-34.
- O'Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 7, “Transnational Production”, 148-173.
- *Talbot, John M. (2002). Tropical commodity chains, forward integration strategies and international inequality: coffee, cocoa and tea. *Review of International Political Economy*, 9:4, 701-734.

Session # 04 (May 11, 15:30-17:00)

Development

How to best achieve socioeconomic development is one of the most contested issues in politics and economics. Free market globalists face off defenders of the nation state as a relatively protected space in which the economy can flourish. In this session, we deal with two fundamental aspects of development policies: the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the emergence of developmental states.

Readings

- *Babb, Sarah (2013). The Washington Consensus as transnational policy paradigm: Its origins, trajectory and likely successor, *Review of International Political Economy*, 20:2, 268-97.
- *Galdini, Franco (2022). ‘Backward’ industrialization in resource-rich countries: The car industry in Uzbekistan. *Competition & Change*, 1-20.
- O'Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 11, “Economic Development”, 260-287.

Session # 05 (May 25, 10:00-11:30)
Finance I (The Bretton Woods Regime)

The globalization of financial flows has been one of the major game changes in the 20th century with substantial consequences for stability, inequality, investment and much more. We start with looking back at the Bretton Woods system of fixed but flexible exchange rates. Why did it come about, what did it look like and how did it end?

Readings

- *Fioretos, Orfeo & Eugénia C. Heldt (2019). Legacies and innovations in global economic governance since Bretton Woods. *Review of International Political Economy*, 26:6, 1089-1111.
- *Helleiner, Eric (2019). The life and times of embedded liberalism: legacies and innovations since Bretton Woods. *Review of International Political Economy*, 26:6, 1112-1135.
- O'Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 8, "The Global Financial System", 174-209.

Session # 06 (May 25, 11:30-13:00)
Finance II (Drivers of Financial Liberalization)

In this second part of our finance trilogy we are look at comparative case evidence from the Global South and scrutinize the domestic politics of global finance as well as the role of Chinese investments.

Readings

- *Stephen B. (2016). Banking unconditionally: the political economy of Chinese finance in Latin America. *Review of International Political Economy*, 23:4, 643-676.
- *Pepinsky, Thomas B. (2013). The domestic politics of financial internationalization in the developing world. *Review of International Political Economy*, 20:4, 848-880.

Session # 07 (May 25, 14:00-15:30)

Finance III (Financialization)

Going beyond financial liberalization, the interdisciplinary research agenda of “financialization” analyzes the consequences of the global rise of finance for households, nonfinancial firms and states alike. In this session we look at the spatially variegated dimension for different macro-economic regions across advanced and emerging economies.

*Bonizzi, Bruno, Annina Kaltenbrunner and Jeff Powell (2020). ‘Subordinate Financialization in Emerging Capitalist Economies’. In: Philip Mader, Daniel Mertens and Natascha van der Zwan (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Financialization*, London/New York, 177-187.

*Karwowski, Ewa (2020). ‘Economic Development and Variegated Financialization in Emerging Economies’. In: Philip Mader, Daniel Mertens and Natascha van der Zwan (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Financialization*, London/New York, 162-176.

*Stockhammer, Engelbert & Karsten Kohler (2020). ‘Financialization and Demand Regimes in Advanced Economies’. In: Philip Mader, Daniel Mertens and Natascha van der Zwan (eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Financialization*, London/New York, 149-161.

Session # 08 (May 25, 15:30-17:00)

New Challenges: Digital Capitalism and the Environmental Question

In recent years, struggles over how to combat climate change and preserve the environment have gained traction. While the question of global environmental governance remained benched for a long time, the annual climate summits including demonstrations, alternative forums and media coverage have moved “the environment” to the front pages of newspapers and party manifestos. Thematically, we look at different steps in global environmental policymaking and discuss persisting North-South divisions. Methodologically, we talk about Event History Analyses (EHA).

Integrated into the reorganization of the global corporation a new business models in digital and technology sectors have been challenging conventional wisdom. Intellectual property rights and data-driven strategies of profit generation represent two relevant dynamics associated with what might be considered the latest stage in capitalism.

Readings

*Culpepper, Pepper D. & Kathleen Thelen (2020). Are We All Amazon Primed? Consumers and the Politics of Platform Power. *Comparative Politics Studies*, 53:2, 288-318.

O’Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 12, “Global Environmental Change”, 288-314.

*Shim, Jae-Mahn & Eunjung Shin (2019). Drivers of ratification rates in global biodiversity governance: local environmentalism, orientation toward global governance, and peer pressure. *Environmental Politics*, 1-21.

Group work: research, writing and preparation phase

June 1 and June 8

After the first two blocks of eight sessions on major themes and developments in IPE, we enter a phase of group work, research and preparation. Each student joins a working group, which develops a joint presentation for the final session on June 15. Presentations should not exceed 35 minutes, aim at introducing a given topic/problem, illustrate some independently collected, original empirics (quantitative or qualitative, current or historical) and lead over to a classroom discussion of another 20 minutes. Some introductory literature will be provided, but students are asked to search for additional texts.

Group 1 – Polarization, contestation...wealth & taxation

Group 2 – Workers of the world, unite. Labor rights in production and trade

Group 3 – How Europe hits home. The Europeanization of political economies.

Group 4 – Lesson learned? The IMF in the global economy.

Group 5 – (Not so) new kids on the block: Sovereign Wealth Funds

Group 6 – Building an investment state? The role of public Development Banks

Sessions # 09-12 (June 15, 09:00-18:00)**Group presentations, recap and evaluation**

In this final session students present the results of their group work. We wrap up the course with a brief recap and evaluation.