

International Political Economy (IR-A2)

Thursdays, 2-5pm, online (via Zoom) and on-site (at InIIS 7.2210)

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Description

The course seeks to familiarize students with the main theories, concepts and methods used in International Political Economy (IPE) as a true inter-discipline that is situated somewhere between International Relations, Political Economy, Economic Geography and Economics. Based on the core question(s) of “who gets what, why, when, where and how?” it 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. Towards the end of the first seminar block we will also deal with the two hot topics of 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 analytically tackle central problems of the current international economic system and the varied 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. 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 2**. Participants opting for the 9 ECTS version, in addition, have to write a final exam. The exam connects topics from all core texts in the form of a **take-home exam**. **Submission deadline** is Wednesday, **June 8**. All readings are available online via *Stud.IP (Uni Bremen)*.

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

Background Literature

There are some really good 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:

Thomas Oatley (2018), *International Political Economy*, 6th 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 – Overview

Week	Session	Date	Time	Topic
10	01	March 10	14:00 – 17:00	Introduction and course organization
11	02	March 17	14:00 – 17:00	Theories and methods
12	03	March 24	14:00 – 17:00	Trade
13	04	March 31	14:00 – 17:00	Production
14	05	April 07	14:00 – 17:00	Finance
15		April 14		Easter Break
16	06	April 21	14:00 – 17:00	Development
17	07	April 28	14:00 – 17:00	Environment
18	08	May 05	14:00 – 17:00	Data
19		May 12		Research, writing and group work
20		May 19		Research, writing and group work
21		May 26		Ascension Day
22	09 – 12	June 02	09:00 – 18:00	Group presentations, recap and evaluation

Course Schedule – Individual Sessions

Session # 01 (March 10, 14:00-17:00, University of Bremen, InIIS 7.2210)

Introduction and course organization

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. In addition, we walk through everything related to the organization of the course such as scheduling, topics, requirements and grading.

Readings

Murphy, Craig N. & Douglas R. Nelson (2001). International political economy: a tale of two heterodoxies, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3:3, 393-412.

Session # 02 (March 17, 14:00-17:00, online via Zoom)

Theories and methods

Not only has the theoretical discussion in IPE always juxtaposed perspectives from realist, liberal-institutionalist and Marxist camps. It has also substantively changed over time as the discipline evolved and became more established. Today we talk about different approaches to studying the international economy, some critical reappraisals of classics and a call for a new, engaged pluralism.

Readings

O'Brien, Robert & Marc Williams (2020). *Global Political Economy. Evolution and Dynamics*. 6th edition. London: Red Globe Press. Here: chapter 1, "Theories of Global Political Economy", 3-22 and chapter 2, "International Political Economy and its Methods", 23-41.

Cox, Robert W. (1981). Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 10:2, 126-155.

Wullweber, Joscha (2019). Monism vs. pluralism, the global financial crisis, and the methodological struggle in the field of International Political Economy. *Competition & Change*, 23:3, 287-311.

Session # 03 (March 24, 14:00-17:00, University of Bremen, InIIS 7.2210)

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, debate some of its current conflicts and discuss the application of QCA as a method.

Readings

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.

Giumelli, Francesco & Gerda van Roozendaal (2017). Trade agreements and labour standards clauses: Explaining labour standards developments through a qualitative comparative analysis of US free trade agreements. *Global Social Policy*, 17:1, 38-61.

Young, Alasdair R. (2019). Where's the demand? Explaining the EU's surprisingly constructive response to adverse WTO rulings. *Journal of European Integration*, 41:1, 9-27.

Session # 04 (March 31, 14:00-17:00, online via Zoom)

Production

Although capitalist production always comes with concentration and centralization tendencies, national firm conglomerates and their international embeddedness shaped the economic landscape prior to contemporary globalization. However, much has changed since the late 1970s. Two crucial processes in that regard have been the rise of transnational corporations (TNCs) and the increasing importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Readings

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.

Coe, Neil M. & Henry Wai-chung Yeung (2019). Global production networks: mapping recent conceptual developments. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 19:4, 775-801.

Kahn, Theodore & Zack Zimbalist (2020). Public investment versus government consumption: how FDI shocks shape the composition of subnational spending in Mexico. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1-41.

Palmisano, Samuel J. (2006). The Globally Integrated Enterprise. *Foreign Affairs*, 85:3, 127-136.

Session # 05 (April 7, 14:00-17:00, University of Bremen, InIIS 7.2210)

Finance

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. Starting with the end of the Bretton Woods Agreement, we are going to 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

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.

Eichengreen, Barry (2013). 'The Rise and Fall of the Bretton Woods System', in: Randall E. Parker and Robert Whaples (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Major Events in Economic History*, Routledge, 275-282.

Kaplan, 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 # 06 (April 21, 14:00-17:00, online via Zoom)

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

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.

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.

Chibber, Vivek (1999). Building a Developmental State: The Korean Case Reconsidered. *Politics & Society*, 27:3, 309-346.

Session # 07 (April 28, 14:00-17:00, University of Bremen, InIIS 7.2210)

Environment

In recent years, struggles over how to combat climate change and preserve the environment have newly gained steam. While the question of global environmental governance rather 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 the application of Event History Analyses (EHA).

Readings

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.

Bechtel, Michael M., Federica Genovese and Kenneth F. Scheve (2019). Interests, Norms and Support for the Provision of Global Public Goods: The Case of Climate Co-operation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 49:4, 1333-1355

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.

Session # 08 (May 5, 14:00-17:00, online via Zoom)

Data

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.

Durand, Cédric & William Milberg (2020). Intellectual monopoly in global value chains. *Review of International Political Economy*, 27:2, 404-429.

Group work: research, writing and preparation phase

May 12 – May 26

After the first block of eight weekly 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 develop a joint presentation for the final session on June 17. Presentations should not exceed 30 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 15 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 2, 09:00-18:00, University of Bremen, InIIS 7.2210)

Group presentations, recap and evaluation

In this final session students present the results of their group work. Eventually, we will have a joint recap and concluding discussion, followed by a course evaluation.