

International Political Economy
POLS 3390, Spring 2026 10:10 – 11:05pm M/W/F; HPR 134

Instructor Information	Dr. Amentahru Wahlrab E-mail: awahlrab@uttyler.edu Office Hours: CAS 124A; M/W 11:30am-2pm and by appointment & Zoom option.
I. Course Overview:	This course provides students with a general overview of the international economic system. By the end of the class, students will understand various dynamics within the world economy—including production, trade, finance, and the division of labor—and analyze how they are interconnected. They will also be able to use different theories of political economy to explain particular contemporary issues, including questions of economic development and poverty, neoliberalism, and financial crises.
II. Readings and Office Hours	<p>Readings</p> <p>There are four required books for this class. They are available at the campus bookstore or online.</p> <p><u>You must purchase these books</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Robert O'Brien and Marc Williams, <i>Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics</i>, 7th edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). \$47.95~Amazon<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ISBN-10 : 1350347892▪ ISBN-13 : 978-13503478922. Pietra Rivoli, <i>The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade</i>, 2nd edition (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2014). \$20.99~Amazon<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ISBN-10 : 1118950143▪ ISBN-13 : 978-11189501423. David Harvey, <i>A Brief History of Neoliberalism</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). \$25.75~Amazon ISBN-10: 0199283273 ISBN-13: 978-01992832794. Michael Lewis, <i>The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine</i> (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010). \$10.27~Amazon ISBN-10: 0393338827 ISBN-13: 978-03933388295. Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy, <i>Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). \$10.68 ~Amazon ISBN-10 : 0198849672 ISBN-13 : 978-0198849674 <p>All other readings will be available on the library's e-reserve or the course's Canvas site.</p>
Zoom Office Hours	I prioritize meeting with students outside of class to discuss issues pertaining to class, readings, assignments, or other topics of interest. If the times listed above

do not work for your schedule, please feel free to contact me to set up a time that does.

Email I am usually available via email most weekdays. I will make sure to respond to your email within 24 hours, but cannot guarantee a response over the weekend. That being said, I find email a poor replacement for face-to-face conversation which is often more productive, efficient, and enjoyable than conducting discussions over email. *Phone is not a good way to contact me.*

Hardcopies of Readings Because we will be referring to the readings throughout the course, please *bring hard copies of all the readings to class.*

Late “Add” Policy This course depends upon a cumulative base of knowledge. Therefore, if you add this course after the first meeting, you will be required to: catch-up with the readings, meet with me to discuss the material you have missed, and complete all assignments.

III. Assignment and Grades

You must complete all assigned written and oral work in order to pass the course. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will fail the course.

Your 3 (5-7 pages) interpretive essays 75%, your attendance and participation 10%, your film analyses 7.5%, and your (4 pages) essay on equality 7.5%. Thus, your course grade will reflect your willingness to participate in discussions, class attendance, and the overall quality of your written work. You are allowed a total of **2 absences** (no documentation necessary); each additional absence will result in a penalty of 3% (up to the total of 10%). Students who distinguish themselves during our class discussions will receive *extra credit*--meaning that if you find yourself between two grades at the end of the semester, you will receive the *higher grade*.

Please be advised that *overparticipation* and the monopolization of class discussion at the expense of your peers may count against you, especially if such actions consistently derail the course agenda. I reserve the right to cut off discussion at any point in order keep us on track and help *all* students to understand the relevant material. A significant element in the study of politics is the ability to learn to listen to other voices.

For the purposes of this seminar, you should interpret the grades you receive in the following terms:

An “A” will only be given to oral and written work that is clearly superior in form as well as content. Typically, such works are coherent, well-organized, and adhere to the given time frame or page length. “A” students show their thorough and careful reading of the text(s), bring in outside materials for reference, and generate genuine interest and excitement for their topic. They stay focused on their theme. If this grade is to mean something, just doing a “good job” is not good enough for an “A.” You must demonstrate your ability to go *beyond* the expected.

1) *Interpretative Essays* (5-7 pages):

Much of the above pertains specifically to essays/papers as well. In addition to treating the subject in a sophisticated and creative manner, “A” papers exhibit elegant and clear prose. Such papers draw connections between nonobvious points; they are well organized and furnish adequate citations of primary and secondary sources without losing their own unique and distinct “voice.” An “A” term paper in an advanced undergraduate course should add a “new wrinkle” to the existing body of literature on this topic.

2) *Film Analyses* (2-4 pages)

The above applies here as well. However, these are meant to provide me with further evidence of your thinking and to reward you for watching the movies and thinking about them in a more sophisticated manner. They will be graded on a simple check, check plus, or check minus scale.

3) *Equality essay* (4 pages)

While the above also applies, this paper will require your additional analysis of three guest lectures on 1/21/2026, 1/26/2026, and 2/2/2026. Each guest lecture will focus on one or more theorists who address the issue of “equality”. Each guest speaker will provide you with opportunities to ask questions. Be sure to come prepared to ask questions. Your written work will require a comparison of the three speakers discussion and your assessment of the role the concept of equality plays in IPE.

A useful style manual will help you with citation formats. I recommend: Kate L. Turabian et al., *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 9th edition. ed., Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Late paper policy

Papers will be marked down one third of a grade every (business) day they are late (i.e. 24 hours late turns a B+ into a B). If you do not turn in a paper you get zero points. If a paper is late two weeks or more you will automatically receive an F (59%). It is in your interest to turn all assignments in, even if they are late, since failing to turn in even one paper makes it almost mathematically impossible to pass the class.

NOTE: This fairly lenient late policy will be compensated for by the fact that there will be NO extensions given, except in case of an extreme emergency. If an emergency arises, documentation is required (police reports, obituaries, etc.) and I should be notified as soon as possible.

Turing in papers

You must turn in all papers through Canvas in Microsoft Word format. Late papers will receive grades only, no comments.

- No late or make-up assignments, exams or papers are accepted, unless previously authorized by Dr. Wahlrab.

“A” paper—provides an original, insightful, and well-argued thesis which is defended systematically using significant citation; demonstrates a sophisticated

understanding of the course material; is elegantly written and thoroughly proofread.

“B” paper—proves a coherent thesis which is defended; uses sufficient citations; demonstrates an understanding of the course material; is well written.

“C” paper—provides a more-or-less coherent thesis; uses adequate citations; demonstrates a basic understanding of the course material; is readable.

“D” paper—provides a basic argument; uses minimal or no citations; demonstrates minimal understanding of the course material; is poorly written

“F” paper—Paper is turned in but does not meet basic requirements (too short, does not answer the question, etc.). Not turning in a paper results in a zero.

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III. Weekly Reading Schedule

1. ** — denotes that the reading is available on the course’s Canvas site.

2. Unmarked readings are assigned books.



! denotes you must read by the beginning of the week

❖ Denotes Subheading

➤ Denotes Topic

📖 Denotes Further reading (recommended but not required)

	SECTION I: GROUNDWORK TO THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY
Week 1	<p>❖ <i>Introduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is “international political economy”? ➤ What are “liberal markets”? ➤ What is “capital”? ➤ What is bought and sold on the international market? <p>➤ <i>History of the International Market System (1945-2024)</i></p> <p>! O’Brien and Williams, Chapter Five “Growing a Global Economy 1945-2019,” pp. 91-105.</p> <p>! **Jeffrey Frieden, <i>Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century</i> (New York: W.W.Norton, 2006), pp. 287-300.</p> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>History of the International Market System (1400-1945)</i> 📖 O’Brien and Williams, Chapter Three “Creating the First Global Economy: 1400-1800.”

	 O'Brien and Williams, Chapter Four "The Second Global Economy: 1800-1945".
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Theoretical Perspectives and Methodology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! O'Brien and Williams, Chapter One "Theories of Global Political Economy." ! O'Brien and Williams, Chapter Two "International Political Economy and Its Methods." <p><i>January 21st: Guest Lecturer: Evelyn Bebling on Equality</i> <i>Comparing Theories of IPE (in class activity)</i></p>
	SECTION II: DYNAMICS OF THE WORLD ECONOMY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>International Trade</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! O'Brien and Williams, Chapter 6 "International Trade," pp.109-131. ! Milanovic, Branko. "The Great Convergence: Global Equality and Its Discontents." <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 102, no. 4 (2023): 78-93.  Frederick Kaufman, "How Goldman Sachs Created the Food Crisis," <i>Foreign Policy</i> (April 27, 2011): http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/27/how_goldman_sachs_created_the_food_crisis
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Transnational Production</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! O'Brien and Williams, Chapter Seven "Transnational Production," pp. 132-153. ➤ <i>International Finance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! O'Brien and Williams, Chapter Eight "The Global Financial System," pp. 154-181. ! **Nicholas D. Kristof and Edward Wyatt, "Who Sank, or Swam, in Choppy Currents of the World Cash Ocean," <i>The New York Times</i>, February 15, 1999 ! ** Nicholas D. Kristof and David E. Sanger, "How U.S. Wooed Asia to Let Cash Flow In," <i>The New York Times</i>, February 16, 1999. <p><i>January 26th: Guest Lecturer: Grace Cho on Equality</i> Movie Clip (in class): <i>Commanding Heights</i> (Yergin and Cran; 2002)</p>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Division of Labor?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! O'Brien and Williams, Chapter Nine "Global Division of Labor," pp. 182-199. ! Katherine Boo, "The Best Job in Town," <i>The New Yorker</i>, July 5, 2004. <p><i>February 2nd: Guest Lecturer: Allan Tellis on Equality</i></p>

	<p><i>Paper assignment: Choose an issue connected to the global political economy. Show how theories of international political economy help and hinder our understanding of that issue. Due Saturday. You must use at least five of the readings discussed so far. Standard essay rules apply: 5-7 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman font, normal margins (roughly 1500-2000 words).</i></p>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Case Study: Textiles</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Growing and Subsidizing Cotton</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Rivoli, <i>The Travel of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy</i>, pp. xvii-xx, 1-73
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Sewing and Selling Shirts</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Rivoli, <i>The Travel of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy</i>, pp. 77-155. ➤ <i>Sweatshops</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Rivoli, <i>The Travel of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy</i>, pp. 156-261. ! Movie (in class): <i>China Blue</i> (Peled, dr.; 2005, 86 min)
	SECTION III: DEBATES IN DEVELOPMENT
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Economic Development</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! O'Brien and Williams, "Economic Development," pp. 219-241. ! **W.W. Rostow, <i>The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 4-16. ! **Raul Prebisch, "The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems," pp. 1-7. ! **Vijay Prashad, <i>The Darker Nations</i> (New York: The New Press, 2007), pp. 62-74.
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Development as Discourse?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! James Ferguson, <i>The Anti-Politics Machine</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 25-73. ➤ <i>Development as Freedom?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! □ **Amartya Sen, <i>Development as Freedom</i> (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), pp. 3-53, 87-110.
	SECTION IV: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Neoliberalism</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! David Harvey, <i>Brief History of Neoliberalism</i>, pp. 1-63 ! David Harvey, <i>Brief History of Neoliberalism</i>, pp. 64-119, 152-182. ! Film: Robert Reich. <u>Inequality For All</u>. (California: Radius TWC, 2013)
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Case Study: Austerity and Structural Adjustment (Jamaica)</i>

	<p>! □ **Jamaica Kincaide, <i>A Small Place</i> (New York: Plume, 1988), pp. 3-37.</p> <p>! Movie (in class): <i>Life and Debt</i> (Black, dr.; 2001, 80 min)</p> <p>! ***Paper due</p> <p><i>Debates:</i></p>
<i>Week 11</i>	<p>➤ <i>Why is China investing in Africa?</i></p> <p>! **Deborah Brautigam, <i>The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 1-21, 43-70</p> <p>! **Harry G. Broadman, "China and India Go to Africa: New Deals in the Developing World, <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 87(2), March-April, 2008, pp. 95-109.</p> <p>➤ <i>Can the Millennium Development Goals Reduce Poverty?</i></p> <p>! **Jeffrey Sachs, "The Millennium, 9/11, and the United Nations" and "The Global Compact to End Poverty" in <i>The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time</i> (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), pp. 210-225 & 266-287.</p> <p>! **Howard White and Richard Black, "Millennium Development Goals: A Drop in the Ocean?" in <i>Targeting Development: Critical Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals</i> (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1-24.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">SECTION V: GOVERNING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS</p>
<i>Week 12</i>	<p>➤ <i>Can Government Govern International Markets?</i></p> <p>! O'Brien and Williams, "Governing the Global Political Economy," pp. 295-311.</p> <p>➤ <i>Can Citizens Govern International Markets?</i></p> <p>! **Naomi Klein, "Reclaiming The Commons," <i>New Left Review</i> 9, May-June 2001, pp. 81-89.</p> <p>! **Vandana Shiva, "The Living Democracy Movement: Alternatives to the Bankruptcy of Globalization," <i>Another World is Possible</i> (New York: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 115-124.</p> <p>! **Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "The World Social Forum: Toward A Counter-Hegemonic Globalization (Part I)."</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">SECTION VI: UNDERSTANDING THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS</p>
<i>Week 13</i>	<p>➤ <i>2008 Financial Crisis</i></p> <p>! Michael Lewis, <i>Big Short</i>, pp. xiii-xviii, 1-103.</p>
<i>Week 14</i>	<p>➤ <i>2008 Financial Crisis</i></p> <p>! Michael Lewis, <i>Big Short</i>, pp. 104-268.</p>
<i>Week 15</i>	<p>➤ <i>European Sovereign Debt Crisis</i></p> <p>! **Nick Paumgarten, "The Hang Over," <i>The New Yorker</i>, February 25, 2013.</p>

	! **This American Life, “Continental Breakup,” January 20, 2012 (stream online)
<i>Week 16</i>	<i>Finals</i>