

POLS 5345: Topics in International Relations

International Political Economy: Power, Capital, and Global Order

Course Level: Graduate

Instructor: Prof. Amentahru Wahlrab

Course Length: 14 (15 counting finals) weeks

Meeting Times: Wednesdays 6pm -8:45pm,

Format: Seminar discussion, student-led presentations, and research papers

Course Description

This course examines the evolution and dynamics of international political economy (IPE) through historical, theoretical, and strategic lenses. Students will explore how global capitalism has shaped international relations, how states and institutions wield economic power, and how economic warfare and chokepoints influence global order. The course integrates ethical and political analysis to understand the implications of economic systems on global justice and governance.

Required Texts

- 1) DeLong, J. Bradford. *Slouching Towards Utopia : An Economic History of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Basic Books, 2023.
ISBN-10 : 1541604245
ISBN-13 : 978-1541604247
- 2) Robert O'Brien and Marc Williams, *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics*, 7th edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025). \$47.95~Amazon
ISBN-10 : 1350347892
ISBN-13 : 978-1350347892
- 3) Frieden, Jeffry A. *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2020.
ISBN-10 : 0393358259
ISBN-13 : 978-0393358254
- 4) Fishman, Edward. *Chokepoints: American Power in the Age of Economic Warfare*. New York, NY: Portfolio/Penguin, 2025.
ISBN-10 : 0593712978
ISBN-13 : 978-0593712979

Course Objectives

- Understand key theories and debates in international political economy.
- Analyze the historical development of global capitalism and its political consequences.
- Evaluate the strategic use of economic tools in global power relations.

- Explore the ethical dimensions of inequality, development, and economic warfare.

Assignments

- **Weekly Reading Reflections** (500 words)
- **Midterm Presentation:** Case study on a global economic event or institution
- **Response Paper:** Ethical analysis of a strategic economic policy
- **Final Research Paper** (20-25 pages): Topic chosen in consultation with instructor

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings	Activities
1	Introduction to IPE	O'Brien & Williams Ch. 1; Fishman, <i>Chokepoints</i> : Preface, Prologue & Ch. 1; Frieden, <i>Global Capitalism</i> : Preface, Prologue & Ch. 1; DeLong, <i>Slouching Towards Utopia</i> : Introduction	Overview of IPE frameworks
2	Historical Foundations of Global Capitalism	Selected readings	Discussion: Rise of markets
3	The Twentieth Century Economy	Selected readings	Seminar: Utopia and progress
4	Institutions and Global Governance	Selected readings	Case study: IMF & WTO
5	The Role of the State in IPE	Selected readings	Debate: State vs. market
6	Globalization and Inequality	Selected readings	Reflection: Ethics of growth
7	Midterm Presentations	Selected readings	Student-led case studies
8	Economic Warfare and Strategy	Selected readings	Simulation: Sanctions policy

Week	Topic	Readings	Activities
9	Transnational Corporations and Power	Selected readings	Seminar discussion
10	Crises and Reforms	Selected readings	Response paper due
11	The Fall and Rise of Capitalism	Selected readings	Roundtable
12	Chokepoints and Economic Leverage	Selected readings	Policy analysis
13	Ethics and Global Economic Justice	Selected readings	Integrative discussion
14	Final Paper Presentations	Selected readings	Final papers due