

# **Perspectives on World Politics: International Law, Development, and Organizations**

McGill Summer Academy

July 2023

## Instructors

Ms. Alice Chessé: [alice.chesse@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:alice.chesse@mail.mcgill.ca)

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Office hours: by appointment

Teaching Assistants: MSA Crew Members

Room: ENGMD 280

## Schedule

Lectures: M-F, 9:30 am to 11:00 am

Coffee Break: 11:00 am to 11:15 am

Workshops: M-F, 11:15 am to 12:15 pm

## Description

This course introduces students to the analytical study of world politics from three different perspectives: international law, development, and organizations. The topics explored in this course engage with the two-way relationship between domestic and international politics. Students will explore how this relationship regulates and informs our understanding of phenomena such as war, humanitarian intervention, global governance, and democracy. The course provides students with an overview of critical issues in international relations, international law, and comparative politics, encouraging them to think critically about the nature of global conflict, human rights, cooperation, and governance in the current world. More fundamentally, we will address enduring debates that have shaped the field of political science and world politics, such as: how and why does international cooperation occur? What are the state's obligations towards its citizens? What is the role of the United Nations? What is the impact of international law? How do non-state actors affect international development, peace, and security? How does one prevent war, genocides, and massive population displacements? Why and how does gender matter?

## Student Participation

*Lectures:* Lectures will take place in person every day from Monday to Friday. Students are expected to attend lectures and are invited to participate by asking questions, making comments, and interacting with their instructor and their peers. Students are also

expected to get to class having done the preparation work required for the day's lecture (i.e., watching a video, listening to a podcast, or reading a short article) in order to actively participate in class activities.

*Workshops:* Students will take part in daily workshops to discuss topics addressed during the lecture and assignments. It is an opportunity to exchange with each other in a respectful and amiable environment. It is also a place where students will start working collaboratively on their final team project.

*Final Project:* Students will participate in a research project during the program. They will work in teams of five or six. Teams will be built in class during the first day of the program. Topics will be selected from a list provided by the course instructors (see Appendix I). Preparation time will be provided in class during workshops. However, team projects will also require extra work outside the classroom. Please plan accordingly.

### Classroom Etiquette

During this program, we want to create a stimulating and inclusive environment for learning. To do this, we expect you to respect a few basic ground rules:

1. We start lectures and workshops on time and expect you to arrive on time.
2. We expect that you enter the lecture ready to work and have read/watched/listened to the assigned material beforehand, that is, all the preparation material listed (readings, watching videos, listening to podcasts, etc.). Please make sure, throughout the program, that you take notes on all assigned preparation material and arrive in class ready to discuss it. Students are welcome to cover any material listed as "optional" if they want to push their reflection further, but this is not a formal expectation.
3. Your mobile phones must be silenced and put away during lectures and workshops.
4. Please respect fellow students by listening attentively during discussions. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or other discriminatory remarks are not tolerated.
5. Emails will be answered during normal business hours of the University (9:00 am-5:00 pm). Your team leaders are your first point of contact. If you need further help or clarification, you can get in touch with the instructors. Instructors will be available for office hours every afternoon by appointment only. Appointments can be made by email.

### Special needs

If you face any barriers to learning, please feel free to let us know at any time before and/or during the program. In our efforts to foster an inclusive and agreeable learning environment, we will do our best to accommodate students who have particular needs.

## Schedule

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### **Course 1: An introduction to International Relations: From war to international interventions**

*Instructor:* Alice Chessé

#### *Preparation material*

- Walt, Stephen M., "[How to get a BA in IR in 5 minutes](#)," *Foreign Policy*, May 19, 2014
- Sjoberg, Laura, "[Mansplaining IR](#)," *Relations International*, May 21, 2014
- Watch the Hoover History Working Group Seminar (Stanford University) on Mary Sarotte's book, [Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate](#), 2021, Yale University Press (18 min)
- Walt, Stephen M., "[An International Relations Theory Guide to the War in Ukraine](#)," *Foreign Policy*, March 8, 2022

#### *Lecture Description*

Part I: An Introduction to International Relations: What kind of science is Political Science? How can we conceive of political order beyond the nation-state?

Part II: From war to international interventions: A brief history of world politics: What are wars and international interventions? How have they shaped world politics since the Westphalia settlement (17th century)?

#### *Workshop*

Part I: Ice-breaking activity and class debate: Does the Russian invasion of Ukraine mark the beginning of a new Cold War? What should be done to preserve order in Europe and beyond?

Part II: Workshop on final project: Create the final project teams and develop your project plan.

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## Course 2: Development: Theoretical Approaches, Ethics, and Methods

*Instructor:* Alice Chessé

### *Preparation Material*

- Listen to the *Failures from the Field* podcast “[The Feel Good vs. The Real Good- Abby Falik, Global Citizen Year](#),” (15 min)
  - Shahriari, Sara, “[The Good Life](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, May 31, 2012
- Weinberg, Bill, “[New Water Wars in Bolivia: Climate Change and Indigenous Struggle](#),” *North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA)*, September 2, 2010

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: What is “development”? When did the concept enter states’ and international organizations’ discourses and practices? How did the concept evolve, and why? What are some of the different approaches to development? Are they compatible?

Part II: We will explore a case study of an alternative development philosophy implemented in Ecuador and Bolivia: “Living Well”: We will challenge common understandings of development and tackle some issues of development evaluation: Why do we “measure” development? What do we want to measure, and what for? What does research on development look like?

### *Workshop*

Part I: Small-Group Discussion: Development and Climate Change.

Part II: Workshop on final project: Literature review.

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## Course 3: International Organizations and the United Nations System

*Instructor:* Alice Chessé

### *Preparation material*

- Listen to *The Guardian Long Read* podcast, “[WHO v. coronavirus: why it can’t handle the pandemic](#),” (37 min)
- Riedl, Rachel Beatty, “[This is why global AIDS interventions fail](#),” *Washington Post Blog (Monkey Cage)*, July 14, 2018

- Dionne, Kim Yi, "[African governments are far from powerless in global health initiatives like those against AIDS](#)," *Washington Post Blog (Monkey Cage)*, August 11, 2018
- Watch "[SIS Bookshelf: Rachel Sullivan Robinson](#)," from the School of International Service (SIS) (American University) (3min)

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: What are international organizations? Are they instruments, forums, or actors in world politics? What is their source of power and authority?

Part II: Case study: The UN System and Global Development: This lecture introduces the functioning of the UN system through the issue of global development: What are the key political issues affecting the UN's efficiency? What are the prospects for reforming the UN? How has the agenda for development become one of the top priorities of the UN?

### *Workshop*

Part I: WHO's to blame? A debate on the World Health Organization's management of global pandemics.

Part II: Methods workshop on final project: Case studies and introduction to the comparative method.

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## **Course 4: Gender, Development, and Crises**

*Instructor:* Alice Chessé / Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury

### *Preparation Material*

- Scroll through and read the [infographic](#)
- Schlegel, Simon, "[Mitigating the Gendered Effects of Ukraine's Refugee Crisis](#)," *Crisis Group*, March 16, 2022

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: Overview of sex, gender, and feminism: What are some of the existing gender "gaps" and what does it mean to adopt a "gender perspective"? How has feminism, as a movement and philosophy, challenged dominant views on development and democracy? What is intersectionality, and how can it be applied to the study of development and humanitarian crises?

Part II: Feminism in international organizations and states: In what ways does the UN push forward a “feminist agenda” globally? What are “gender-sensitive” policies and interventions in times of crisis?

### *Workshop*

Part I: Small-group discussion: In what ways is war gendered?

Part II: Workshop on final project: Present your findings in a creative and effective way: Wrap-up your research designs and present them to the group (5 min presentation): What is your research question? What is your research design?

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## **Course 5: Global Governance**

*Instructor:* Alice Chessé

### *Preparation Material*

- Maizland, Lindsay, “[Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures](#),” *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 17, 2021
- Listen to *The Negotiators* podcast, “[Inside the Paris Climate Agreement](#)” (30min)
- *Optional:* Listen to *Heat of the Moment* podcast, “[Paris’s Promises and Glasgow’s Gut Check: Assessing the U.N. Climate Change Conference’s Impact](#),” (27min)

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: Governance without government: This lecture introduces the study of global governance: It presents the variety of non-state actors active in world politics (Non-Governmental Organizations, Multinational Corporations, Civil Society Organizations, etc.) and discusses how they act collectively to address global issues through governance complexes and networks: What kind of politics is involved in global governance? How does power work without coercion?

Part II: Experts in global governance: What role do experts play in global governance? What power comes from the production of knowledge and how does it affect international interventions? What forms of resistance exist, notably from civil society? The lecture will address these questions through a case study of transnational contestation of the global governance of development.

## *Workshop*

Part I: Class activity on global climate agreements and the prospects for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 28th Conference of Parties (COP 28) in Dubai, November-December 2023.

Part II: Workshop on final project: Implement your research program: Analyzing evidence and developing an argument.

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## **Course 6: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and the State**

*Instructor:* Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury

### *Preparation Material*

- Listen to the *Global Dispatches* podcast, “[What Political Science Can Teach Us About How Different Countries Are Handling COVID-19](#),” (32 min)
- Dishart, Emily, Meyers, Jeffrey B., and Rose Morgan, “[Canada’s Legal Disinformation Pandemic is Exposed by the ‘Freedom Convoy’](#),” *The Conversation*, February 18, 2022
- Bontcheva, Kalina and Julie Posetti, [Disinfodemic: Deciphering COVID-19 Disinformation](#) 2020, UNESCO (read the introduction, conclusion, and skim content)

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: What is the state? What are regimes? What are the differences between democracy, authoritarianism, and hybrid regimes? Why have states taken divergent trajectories in different parts of the world and how do we evaluate their capacities to provide public services, enforce the rule of law, and protect human rights?

Part II: How does political regime influence development and crisis management? How is the rise of technologies and the internet around the world changing the way citizens participate politically?

### *Workshop*

Part I: Small-Group Activity: Is Covid-19 an “infodemic”? How does information matter in Covid-19 responses?

Part II: Peer review session on the final project: Come prepared with the script of your final group project, for a peer review session: You will read the work of another team and provide constructive feedback.

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## **Course 7: Introduction to International Law and Use of Force**

*Instructor:* Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury

### *Preparation Material*

- Watch “[What is international law?](#),” “[Where do international laws come from?](#),” “[Who are the actors in international law?](#),” and “[Weaknesses of international law](#),” from BBC Learning English (2 min each)
- Bowcott, Owen, “[Was the War Legal? Leading Lawyers Give Their Verdict](#),” *The Guardian*, March 2, 2004
- *Optional:* Yoffie, Adam G., “[The Palestine Problem: The Search for Statehood and the Benefits of International Law](#),” *The Yale Journal of International Law* 36, pp. 497-511

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: Introduction to International Law: How does international law shape inter-state relations? What are the sources of international law? Who are the actors in international law? What are some problems of (issues of compliance and enforcement) of international law?

Part II: Legality of use of force in international relations: Does international law permit its actors (mainly states) to resort to threat or use of force?

### *Workshop*

Part I: Discuss: Is Palestine a ‘state’ as far as international law is concerned?

Part II: Discuss: Was the US-led war on Iraq in 2003 legal?

Part III: Small group activity on the final project with your team.

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## **Course 8: International Human Rights Law**

*Instructor:* Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury



### *Preparation Material*

- Watch "[Human Rights in Two Minutes](#)," from Amnesty Switzerland (3 min)
- "[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)," *United Nations*, December 10, 1948
- "[Human Rights Dimensions of COVID-19 Response](#)," *Human Rights Watch*, March 19, 2020

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: What are human rights? Who does it protect? What do we know about the history and nature of international human rights law? What is the relationship between the state and the individual in international human rights law?

Part II: What is the institutional framework of international human rights law? What are the different substantive rights? An overview of a) civil and political rights b) economic, social, and cultural rights.

### *Workshop*

Part I: How does the coronavirus pandemic affect human rights?

Part II: Democracy vs authoritarianism and the relationship with human rights during the coronavirus pandemic.

Part III: Small group activity on the final project with your team.

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## **Course 9: Humanitarian Intervention**

*Instructor:* Suvolaxmi Dutta Choudhury

### *Preparation Material*

- Watch "[Jennifer Welsh, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect - 20th Anniversary Rwanda Genocide](#)," from the United Nations (6 min)
- Watch "[Kosovo war: The conflict that won't go away](#)," from BBC News (6 min)
- Packer, George, "[International Inaction](#)," *The New Yorker*, October 1, 2006

### *Lecture Description*

Part I: What is humanitarian intervention? Who can intervene? On behalf of whom? Is it legal/legitimate to use force for the protection of human rights?

Part II: Humanitarian intervention in practice: Cases of humanitarian intervention.

### *Workshop*

Part I: Kosovo vs Darfur: Short quiz followed by discussion.

Part II: Small group activity on the final project with your team.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Final Project: Facing Global Issues and “Crises”: Actors, Institutions, and Actions**

#### Instructions and Topics

Do global issues require global solutions? What role does “the local” play in solving world problems? Why are some issues understood as “crises” and others ignored by political and economic actors? How do different inequalities shape how we collectively understand and respond to problems?

The goal of the final project is twofold. First, it is for students to analyze, in a team, a global issue of their choice, combining different perspectives explored throughout the course (comparative politics, international relations, human rights, and/or international law). Second, it is for students to present their findings in an accessible and creative way (through a podcast, a PowerPoint presentation, a short movie, an artistic performance, etc.). Students will work in teams of five or six. Teams will be built in class during the first day of the program.

Each team will choose one issue area:

- (1) A global pandemic (HIV/Aids, Covid-19, etc.)
- (2) Global warming and climate change
- (3) A humanitarian crisis

To analyze your issue area, each team should choose one question out of a list of two/three questions, as stated underneath each issue area:

#### **(1) A global pandemic**

- (i) Why do some states respond better to the pandemic/epidemic than others? Compare the policy approaches of two countries of your choice and make sure to explain why this comparison is relevant to answer the question. Make sure to define what you mean by “better response.”
- (ii) Is there a connection between global pandemics and ‘human rights’? Explain why and how with a single case study or comparative cases.

(iii) WHO's to blame? This question invites you to reflect upon how the World Health Organization is handling global pandemics like the Coronavirus, Ebola, or HIV/AIDS pandemics. What difficulties is it facing and what does it reveal about the state of the UN system? Does state sovereignty undermine responses to global health challenges? What kind of reform is warranted to improve IGOs' role in global health governance?

**(2) Global warming and climate change**

(i) Citizens, particularly the youth, are increasingly mobilizing to denounce and fight climate change and its effects on planet Earth and its people. How do technologies and the internet affect how individuals engage in environmental activism? You may tackle this question by looking at, for example, online political events and protests, emerging patterns of "cyber-activism," or explore the ways in which unequal access to technologies reinforce inequalities with regards to the climate crisis. You may also focus on the impact of "fake news" on citizens and governments' approaches to global warming.

(ii) Explain why/how the effects of climate change on certain groups of people, such as women, indigenous peoples, etc. could be far worse. Use a single case or comparative cases to illustrate your argument.

(iii) Why does the global governance of climate change consistently fail to take meaningful collective action to reduce global warming and cut greenhouse gas emissions? The increase and diversification of actors in global climate governance has affected the effectiveness of global climate action. What role do experts and civil society play in this process? What are the prospects of the upcoming UNFCCC COP28 in November-December 2023?

**(3) A humanitarian crisis**

(i) How is the humanitarian crisis of your choice, "gendered"? In other words, how are gender inequalities reproduced through the event? Based on your research, how can different actors intervene to mitigate or redress those inequalities?

(ii) When do states collectively intervene in foreign conflicts? For this question you may contrast two cases of international conflict when the international community did and did not intervene. What factors are most critical to the decision to intervene? How do international organizations enforce collective security? What coercive measures can they leverage collectively to tackle security threats and respond to humanitarian crises?

Once your team has selected an issue area and one question related to it, you are ready to move forward with your project, by following the steps: (1) compose your team and draft your project plan, (2) start your literature review, (3) design your methodological approach, (4)

design your presentation, (5) implement your research plan, (6) participate in a peer-review exercise and improve your final project, (7) analyze your results, and finally, (8) present your findings. We will be working together on each of those steps though the workshops described below (see also the syllabus). The final projects will be evaluated by a scientific committee (your instructors!) who will select the three best projects, based on quality, scientific rigor, and originality.

### Schedule

Step	Research process	Instructions	Date
1	Team composition and project plan	Create your team, brainstorm about your topic, and draft a project plan.	Workshop Day 1
2	Literature review	Each project should include around 15 different and reliable sources of information. If you use the comparative method, the sources should be balanced across the two cases.	Workshop Day 2
3	Methodological approach	Develop either a <u>single case study</u> or a <u>comparative analysis</u> (2 cases) to apply abstract concepts (i.e.: crisis, governance, impacts, mobilization, human rights, political action, etc.) to concrete examples.	Workshop Day 3
4	Design your presentation	Develop a creative way to present your results in teams (ex.: a podcast, a Prezzi/powerpoint presentation, an artistic performance, etc.). Briefly present your initial project plan to the class.	Workshop Day 4
5	Implement your research plan	Teamwork on collecting primary and/or secondary sources, building your literature reviews, analyzing the findings, and developing an argument.	Workshop Day 5
6	Peer-review	Give and receive constructive feedback on your final projects, at whatever stage they are at. Improve your projects based on the feedback.	Workshop Day 6
7	Analyze your	As you analyze your sources and data, each	On your own

	findings	project should develop <u>a central argument</u> that builds on the empirical case(s) (your case study or comparative cases).	time: Days 7, 8, 9
8	Present your findings	Formally present your final project and findings on the last day of class. The best presentations will be rewarded by your instructors and peers!	Final Day (10)