INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY (21.790.317.01)

Rutgers University—Newark
Spring 2013

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International Political Economy—increasingly called “Global Political Economy”—started life mainly in the 1970s as a subcategory of International Relations. Today it is at the cutting edge of not only Political Science and International Relations but interdisciplinary Social Science as well. It is not particularly about economics as such, especially in the sense that it does not primarily seek to apply the tools of formal economic analysis to the world—although such analysis can play a very important role in specific areas of research. It is about how politics is changing as the world becomes more and more intertwined, interpenetrated and interdependent. Much of this change is economic in character—new cross-border linkages in trade, production and finance, etc. But these are parts of a wider process of “shrinking the world” politically.

IPE/GPE challenges many of the traditional assumptions about the distinction between politics and economics, while it also challenges many of the assumptions about the distinction between the international and the domestic. It means that new and old interest and pressure groups, social classes and social movements, even political parties and bureaucratic actors, not only are rising and falling but also have to target a much wider range of institutions—not just traditional “governments”—and form new alliances and patterns of political behaviour in order to “capture the benefits of globalization” for their members. It means that governments increasingly are pressurized from both above and below, from both inside and outside, to develop policies and target constituencies that make them more competitive in a world where protectionist barriers are increasingly ineffective and often counterproductive. And it means that new levels of institutionalized or semi-institutionalized politics and policymaking—often called “multi-level governance”—are crystallizing and developing to deal with these new pressures, challenging and transforming what governments can and cannot do well. Transnational interest groups increasingly dominate the scene. Change is sometimes slow and piecemeal, sometimes rapid and dramatic. Protest and resistance have a role to play too.

In this course we will first look at a number of ways IPE has been interpreted—the major “analytical frameworks” or “paradigms” that dominate scholarly and policy debates. We will then examine the main historical phases in the development of the modern global political economy. After that, we will look at a whole range of developments and issue-areas central to what is often the main focus of IPE in theory and in practice—i.e., the process of globalization. We will continually be asking the key question: How can we interpret and conceptualize the dialectic of continuity and change in an increasingly interconnected global political economy.
Assignments: Your class participation will account for 25% of your grade. Irregular attendance will be graded as an F, regular attendance will be graded as B and regular attendance with active and well-prepared participation in class will net you an A. You will need to attend at least 6 of the 10 presentation meetings in addition to the day on which you are presenting, or you will fail your attendance part.

There are several written requirements:

- Mid-term exam on March 26th (25% of your grade)
- Presentation outline (25% of your grade)
- Final paper (25% of your grade)

Your presentation needs to give a theoretical overview of how your topic connects to the main approaches in International Political Economy. It needs to explain the importance of your chosen topic and how it connects to the social, political and economic relations that make up IPE/GPE. It should be based on a variety of sources and explore divergent points of view.

There is a logical sequence to the presentation topics and you are expected to present on the day assigned to you. Missing your presentation date will result in a drop in grade. If your presentation is more than a week late, it will lead to a drop by two grades.

The final paper will be 1500 words and you will receive a topic in the last week of class. Your paper will be graded on how well you answer the question and how well you can structure your argument. It tests your ability to understand and apply the course material as well as your essay writing skills in general.

Fair warning: Late arrival for your scheduled class is not tolerated. I reschedule exams and extend deadlines only if you provide documentation of extenuating circumstances and if you notify me in advance. Should no such documentation be provided, resits cannot count toward the final grade. I will prosecute to the fullest any act of plagiarism by reporting it to the Chancellor. Plagiarism is defined by the university as “the deliberate use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the passing off of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas or materials taken from another is guilty of plagiarism”.

Class Schedule

Session 1: Tuesday January 22, 2013
Introductory meeting: discussion of course aims and content, assessment methods etc.

Session 2: January 24, 2013
Historical background
Ch 1

Session 3: January 29, 2013
What is IPE/GPE?
Ch 1

Session 4: January 31, 2013
Realist and Nationalist IPE
Ch 2

Session 5: February 5, 2013
Marxist and Critical Approaches
Ch 2

Session 6: February 7, 2013
Collaboration and Coordination
Ch 3

Session 7: February 12, 2013
Domestic sources
Ch 4

Session 8: February 14, 2013
Global Trade
Ch 5

Session 9: February 19, 2013
Regional Trade
Ch 6
Session 10: February 21, 2013
China’s trading relationship with Africa – guest presenter

Session 11: February 26, 2013
The globalization of money and finance
Ch 7

Session 12: February 28, 2013
Financial crises
Ch 8

Session 13: March 5, 2013
Case study on financial crises: the EU

Session 14: March 7, 2013
Globalization of production
Ch 11

Session 15: March 12, 2013
Inequality
Ch 12

Session 16: March 14, 2013
Environment
Ch 14

Spring break

Session 17: March 26, 2013
Mid-term exam

Session 18: March 28, 2013
Presentations
International Cooperation
1. World Bank
2. IMF
3. WTO
4. UN
Session 19: April 2, 2013

Presentations
Regional cooperation
1. EU
2. NAFTA
3. Mercosur
4. ASEAN

Session 20: April 4, 2013

Presentations
Finance
1. The developing countries’ debt crisis
2. The 2008 US crisis
3. Ireland
4. Greece

Session 21: April 9, 2013

Presentations
Multinational Corporations
1. Shell in Nigeria
2. Monsanto
3. Rio Tinto
4. Coca Cola

Session 22: April 11, 2013

Presentations
Health
1. Pharmaceutical companies
2. Malaria
3. Aids HIV
4. Flu epidemics

Session 23: April 16, 2013

Presentations
Education
1. Literacy
2. Computer access
3. For profit universities
4. UNESCO international comparative studies
Session 24: April 18, 2013

Presentations
Agriculture
  1. Food price speculation  
  2. Cash crops  
  3. Agricultural subsidies  
  4. WTO agricultural policy

Session 25: April 23, 2013

Presentations
Banking
  1. Hedge funds  
  2. Derivatives trading  
  3. Investment banking  
  4. International banking regulation

Session 26: April 25, 2013

Presentations
Energy
  1. Oil production  
  2. Gas production  
  3. Solar energy  
  4. Other renewables

Session 27: April 30, 2013

Presentations
Environment
  1. Climate Change  
  2. International waste trade  
  3. Green Economy  
  4. Biodiversity loss

Session 28: May 2, 2013

Office hour to discuss your final paper – one-on-one meetings in Hill Hall 718