



Lakehead University
Global Political Economy (2026)

POLI-4615-FA

Tuesday 2:30-5:30PM – RB-3027

Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Maiangwa
Office: RB 2041
Hours: by appointment
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Course Description

This course dives into the dynamic relationship between politics (power) and economics (wealth) on a global scale. We'll explore how international economic relations, through trade, imperialism, global finance, development, and more, shape political outcomes and influence everyday life.

Topics include:

- Global trade and imperialism
- Finance and development
- Gender, race, and health in global systems
- Security, governance, and global institutions

We'll trace the evolution of the global political economy across key historical eras, examining how past systems laid the groundwork for today's world order.

You'll also critically engage with major theoretical frameworks:

- Realism
- Neoliberalism
- Liberal institutionalism
- Critical theory

Through debates, case studies, and analysis, we'll assess how these theories explain shifting trends in global power and wealth, and what they mean for justice, equity, and sustainability.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Develop a high-level critical understanding of Global Political Economy (GPE)**
Engage with key debates, concepts, and frameworks that shape the global economic system and its political dimensions.
- **Understand how history has shaped the development of the GPE**
Analyze historical events and processes - such as colonialism, industrialization, and globalization - that have influenced the structure and evolution of the global economy.
- **Be familiar with the major theoretical approaches to the GPE**
Critically assess perspectives such as liberalism, Marxism, feminism, and postcolonialism, and understand how they interpret global economic relations.
- **Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of one particular facet of the GPE**
Conduct focused research and analysis on a specific area such as trade, finance, development, migration, or environmental governance within the global political economy.

Required Materials and Texts

This course uses the following textbook as the primary material.

Robert O'Brien, R & Williams, M. (2025). *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics*, 7th Edition. New York: Palgrave. Price: \$70 on Amazon

Additional materials are specified in each lecture week in the course schedule.

Evaluation

Documentary Analysis: 20%

Research Paper: 30%

Seminar Presentation: 30%

Research Paper Presentation: 12%

Participation: 8%

Class Format

This course is delivered in person, inclusive of weekly lectures and seminars. Each week's lecture includes a synthesis of the reading material and additional information that advances knowledge of the week's topic.

Course Structure and Work Requirements Course Structure: Class will hold once a week for a total of three hours. Weekly activities will vary (see the schedule, below) but a major emphasis is on seminar presentation. Students are expected to read all assigned materials and take an active part in discussions.

Assignments:

- 1) **Documentary Analysis** (Due October 13th): Students will prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a Netflix documentary titled Rotten and YouTube The Corporation. In particular, students will analyze 3 episodes of this documentary: Troubled Water, Bitter Chocolate, Garlic Breath, and Milk Money. Questions to be answered/discussed include what is the dominant issue in the documentary? Who are the actors? What is the connection to the GPE? What solutions can you propose?
- 2) **Research Paper** (Due December 1st) 3500 to 4000 words or 10 pages in length, including the bibliography. Minimum of 12 scholarly sources. The Research Paper will address in depth a historical or contemporary issue in the GPE.
- 3) **Research Paper Presentation** (Due November 3rd). Each student will prepare a 10 min (minimum) presentation discussing their research project. The presentation will address the main elements of the project: 1) the topic, 2) the research question and hypothesis, and 3) the main themes drawn from the literature. The purpose of the presentation is to seek input from the class on how to improve the project in anticipation of preparing the final version of the Research Paper.
- 4) **Class Participation** (Ongoing): Participation is an essential feature of the course. This course is largely discussion based so attendance and preparation are critical.
- 5) **Seminar Presentation** (Ongoing): Students are expected to participate consistently in ongoing class seminars. Participation constitutes 30% of your final mark, and therefore it will be unlikely for you to succeed in the course if you are unable to participate consistently. Each week you are expected to produce a critical response that 1) identifies the most important insights you have learned from the course material of the week and 2) provides a minimum of 2 question prompts for discussion. Your response should

NOT be a summary of the reading(s). It should be 300-350 words in length and should be submitted in MyCourseLink. Each response is worth 3%. **No late responses will be accepted.**

Evaluation of Written Assignments/Projects:

80-100% (A range): Shows advanced competency in meeting the research and/or analytical and/or communications and/or cognitive and/or technical requirements of the assignment. The work is of exceptional quality. The work is insightful, detailed, articulate, grammatically correct, technically correct, and well organized.

70-79% (B range): Exhibits a good effort in meeting the requirements of the assignment or examination. The work may be less focused, detailed, organized or less widely researched than a paper worthy of a higher grade or communicates fewer ideas with less detailed analysis than an assignment worthy of a higher grade.

60-69% (C range): Average approach and level of success in communicating analysis, factual material, and ideas. The work offers less detailed analysis and/or a lack sufficient research, and /or a less articulate or less clearly focused argument and/or may have technical flaws

50-59% (D range): A poor level of competency in meeting the requirements of an assignment or examination. The work is poorly organized and/or written, features generalized statements, lacks supporting details and/or critical analysis, and features significant technical flaws

Below 50% (F): Failure to meet the requirements of the assignment.

Please Note:

- Students should come up with their essay topics based on their individual interests. Such topics should first be cleared with the instructor.
- All essays should have a title page indicating the title of the essay, the name of the student, the course number, the name of the instructor, and the department.
- In terms of formatting, all essays should be doubled-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point fonts, 1 inch margin and should be handed in on or before the due date in class. Manipulating the margins or font size will be penalised.
- All written assignments must be submitted on time, otherwise a 2 per cent penalty will apply each day the essay is late.

- For citation and referencing, please use the APA referencing style 7th edition for all written work. Failure to follow these instructions will affect your grade.
- The essays will be evaluated based on grasp of the topic, quality of argument, depth of analysis, originality of approach, familiarity with the issues and literature, as well as structure, organisation, grammar, referencing and formatting.

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs may request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Such students should at the earliest opportunity advise the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the instructor of such needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate their needs. Those who encounter extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course should, as soon as possible, discuss these circumstances with the instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

Lakehead Policy on Academic Dishonesty

As academic integrity is crucial to the pursuit of university education, students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. In order to make sure that a degree awarded by Lakehead University is a reflection of the honest efforts and individual academic achievement of each student, Lakehead University treats cases of academic dishonesty very seriously and severely penalises those caught in violation of the university's policy on academic honesty.

Policy on Electronic Devices

Cell phones are distracting and therefore should be turned off and kept out of sight during lectures. A visible phone will be assumed to be used. In such a scenario, the instructor may ask the offending student to leave the class. Except where prior permission is sought from the instructor and given, no audio or video recording of lectures is allowed. Where permission is sought and granted, such recordings should be only be for the student's private use.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (September 8)

Course Introduction: What is GPE?

Günter Walzenbach, A. (2016) What is the Global Political Economy? [Global Political Economy \(e-ir.info\)](http://www.global-political-economy.info/)

Week 2 (September 15)

Theories and Methods

Readings: Required textbook Ch1&2

Leander, A. (2009) Why we need multiple stories about the global political economy. *Review of International Political Economy* Vol 16:2, 321-328.

Renée Marlin-Bennett, 2010. *International Political Economy: Overview and Conceptualization*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.239>

Notes: Week 2 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class

Week 3 (September 22)

Creating the First GPE: Asia, Africa, and European Expansionism

Readings: Ch3

Maiangwa, Benjamin; Muhammad Dan Suleiman; and Chigbo Arthur Anyaduba (2018) *The Nation as Corporation: British Colonialism and the Pitfalls of Postcolonial Nationhood in Nigeria*. *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 25: No. 1.

Falola T. (2022) *Africa and the World Before the Second World War*. In: Oloruntoba S.O., Falola T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Africa and the Changing Global Order*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77481-3_3

Notes: Week 3 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Week 4 (September 29) The Second GPE: Industrial Revolution, Pax Britannica and War

Readings: Ch4

Steinsson, J. 2021. How Did Growth Begin? The Industrial Revolution and its Antecedents. University of California, Berkeley October 5, 2021. <https://eml.berkeley.edu/~jsteinsson/teaching/originsofgrowth.pdf>

Ardalan K. (2019) Global Political Economy and War: Four Paradigmatic Views. In: Global Political Economy. Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10377-4_8

Notes: Week 4 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Week 5 (October 6)

The Accelerating Global Economy

Readings: Ch5;

John Mearsheimer, 2019. Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order. International Security 43(4): 7-50.

Notes: Week 5 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to the next class

Week 6 (October 14)

Trade, Production and Finance – Documentary Analysis

Readings: Ch6

Amusan T. (2022) Sub-Saharan Africa in the International Trading System: Understanding the Recent Trends. In: Oloruntoba S.O., Falola T. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of Africa and the Changing Global Order. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77481-3_18

Helleiner E. A. 2010. Bretton Woods moment? The 2007-2008 crisis and the future of global finance. *International Affairs* 86(3):619-36.

Notes: Week 6 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Presentation

Week 7 (October 20) Reading Week

Week 8 (October 27)

Global Credit and Monetary System

Readings: Ch 8 & 9

Murau, Steffen and Jens Van t' Klooster. 2022. Rethinking Monetary Sovereignty: The Global Credit Money System and the State." *Perspectives on Politics*: 1-18.
DOI: 10.1017/S153759272200127X

Notes: Week 8 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Week 9 (November 3)

Gender

Readings: Ch11

Griffin, P. 2010. Gender Governance and the Global Political Economy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* Vol 64: 84-104.

Waylen, G. 2006. You still don't Understand: why troubled engagements continue between feminists and (critical) IPE. *Review of international studies*. 32 (1):145-164.

Notes: Week 9 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Presentation Due

Week 10 (November 17)

Race and the Global Political Economy

Ch 12

Lake David. 2016. "White Man's IR: An Intellectual Confession." *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (4): 1112–22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s153759271600308x>.

Loken, Meredith, and Kelebogile Zvbogo. 2020. "Why Race Matters in International Relations." *Foreign Policy* 237: 11–13.

Sen, Maya, and Omar Wasow. 2016. "Race as a Bundle of Sticks: Designs That Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (1): 499–522. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-032015-010015>.

Notes: Week 11 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Week 11 (November 24)

Contemporary Challenges

Readings: Ch13, 14, 17

Busumtwi-Sam J. (2019) International Migrations, Diasporas, and Remittances. In: Shaw T., Mahrenbach L., Modi R., Yi-chong X. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary International Political Economy. Palgrave Handbooks in IPE. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1057/978-1-137-45443-0_12

Farias, D. 2019. Outlook for the "Developing Country" Category: A Paradox of Demise and Continuity. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(4): 1360-2241.

Notes: Week 10 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Week 12 (December 1) Diaspora, race and Immigration

Readings: The Paradox(es) of Diasporic Identity, Race, and Belonging, edited by Benjamin Maingwa. Palgrave MacMillan (Chapters 5, 6, 9, 10)

Notes: Week 12 response due 6PM (EST) on the day prior to class.

Research Paper Due

Week 13 (December 8)

Global Governance: Governing the Global Political Economy

Readings: Ch18

Head, Ivan L. South-North Dangers. Foreign Affairs; Summer 1989

Ikenberry, GJ. 2015. The Future of Multilateralism: Governing the World in a Post-Hegemonic Era. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*. Vol 16(3): 399-413.

LAKEHEAD RESOURCES

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! If it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your academic advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus, including:

The Student Success Centre has many programs and support services in place to help you achieve your academic and personal goals while studying at Lakehead University. They provide academic support through tutoring services, career exploration, co-operative opportunities and leadership development. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre>.

The Lakehead Library provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person with more details available here <https://library.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Public Computer Labs are available on campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For more details go to <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/helpdesk/computer-labs>.

Student Life and Services offers health and wellness resources both on and off campus, as well as opportunities for involvement in health and wellness activities. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/or>.

Office of Human Rights and Equity. You have the right to an education that is free from any form of discrimination. A wide variety of resources are available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity/resources>.