

FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Professor: **Carl Rihan**

Session: **July 2025**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **10h**



Objective of the Course

This course is expected to introduce students to both international relations and foreign policy and to serve as a foundational course for those interested in pursuing studies in these respective fields. The course builds on several themes explored in Master Classes and will focus on the functioning of States within the broader “Global Order”. The course will explore the historical foundations of the current international order as well as the main schools of thought of foreign policy, before moving to a hands-on analysis of select contemporary affairs, more particularly:

1. Security Studies and Geopolitics, in relation to the rise of multipolarity and the unfolding crisis in Ukraine.
2. International Political Economy, in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the backlash of the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Global Governance and International Organizations, in relation to the rise of cybersecurity challenges and the disruptions caused by cryptocurrencies.
4. Artificial Intelligence, Data Science and some of their applications in the field of international relations.

By the end of the course, it is expected that students will have grasped the theoretical foundations of international politics, the characteristics of the “anarchical society” of States, the nature of international and transnational challenges, and would have learned how to elaborate foreign policy action proposals and discuss foreign policy challenges in an informed manner.



Summary

The post-1990 era is one characterized by the spread of globalization and the intensification of global trade and cultural exchanges. It is also an era witnessing the

ebb and flow of global politics, particularly with the move from unipolarity to multipolarity, trade wars, increased global inequalities, global demographic transitions, transnational extremism, and the rise of complex and multifaceted threats to security. In such a context, States seek to address challenges besetting them often by attempting to reinforce, revise, or challenge the existing international order.

What is the nature of the international order, both politically and economically? What are the main theories of international relations and what are the main vectors through which States seek to influence international politics? What are the most pressing international and transnational challenges and what can be done to address them? What are the most important international organizations and what is their impact on global politics? What is international governance, and can international development be dissociated from international security? How can States and societies cooperate effectively to mitigate the economic and political fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic? How can States and International Organizations manage risks and opportunities related to the Digital Revolution, to Cryptocurrencies, and to Cybersecurity? This course, which will wrap up with the preparation and presentation of foreign policy briefs, will seek to answer these key questions.



Organization of the course

Session 1: Foundations and Theories of International Relations

This introductory lesson will focus on the historical context underlying the foundation of the modern international order. It will hence discuss the key political transformations that the world has witnessed since the early modern era, with a key focus on the emergence and transformations of the “modern State”. It shall then delve into the theories of international relations that underpin and permeate all political assessments and foreign policy analyses, with a key focus on the realist and liberal schools.

Required readings:

Smith, Owens and Baylis, “Introduction,” in Baylis et.al. *The Globalization of World Politics* (2014).

Armstrong, “The Evolution of International Society,” in Baylis et.al. *The Globalization of World Politics* (2014).

Session 2: State Power, the Balance of Power, and Hegemony

Among the fundamental issues that political analysts have to grapple with is the conceptualization and measurement of State power. More than often, political and foreign policy decisions are based on perceptions of power rather than actual, tangible measurements. How can a political scientist or foreign analyst, therefore, measure State power, and what metrics can be used to that effect? Moreover, given the fact that foreign policy is the expression of State power on the international scene, how do States usually behave so as to ensure their security and further their interests, and what behavioral patterns can be detected? In this session, we shall focus on the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 so as to further understand how decision-making in relation to conventional State security takes place.

Required readings:

Hans Morgenthau, "Elements of National Power," in *Politics Among Nations* (1948).
John Baylis, "International and Global Security", in *The Globalization of World Politics* (2019).

Session 3: Cooperation and Economic Flows Among States and People

The postwar world, and particularly that which emerged after the end of the Cold War, has been marked by an unprecedented move towards globalization and the intensification of world trade. While States have been acting as drivers, modulators, and disruptors of the international economy throughout history, it has been posited that the international economy is now functioning beyond the grip of the State. If some have underlined that the international economy has created new opportunities for development, including the emergence of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Financing for Development (FFD), others are much more skeptical, seeing clear patterns of rivalry and inequality embedded therein. This session shall focus on both the cooperative trends that have arisen through the intensification of trade as well as attempts at regulating the international order through global governance via international organizations. We shall thus focus on the impact of Agenda 2030 and the Covid-19 pandemic on international relations.

Required readings:

Matthew Watson, "Global trade and Global Finance", in *The Globalization of World Politics* (2019).
Nicola Philips, "Global Political Economy" in *The Globalization of World Politics* (2019).
Optional reading:
Suzan Park, "International Organizations in World Politics" in *The Globalization of World Politics* (2019).

Session 4: Unconventional and Emerging Threats

Ever since the Vietnam war, a paradigm shift has occurred within foreign policy studies in an effort to account for the challenge of proxy and guerilla warfare. Moreover, ever since September 11, 2001, challenges related to varying definitions of what constitutes terrorism on one hand, and to the spread of violent extremism on the other, have taken international security studies by storm. This has led to the growth of new fields of study, including Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) and countering terrorism financing. Private and public sector actors cooperate but also clash in the application of such mechanisms. Moreover, the development of Data Science, Machine Learning and of Artificial Intelligence, has brought to the forefront both threats of weaponization and surveillance from State and non-State actors. What are the world's emerging threats, what impact do they have on States and societies, and what place are they likely to occupy in the future of international relations?

Required reading:

Rohan Gunaratna, "Strategic Counter-Terrorism: A Game Changer in Fighting Terrorism?" *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, Vol. 9, No. 6 (June 2017).

James Brusseu, "Deleuze's Postscript on the Societies of Control, Updated Big Data and Predictive Analysis," *Theoria*, Issue 164, Vol.67, no.3 (September 2020).



Bibliography

A digital reading booklet shall be communicated to you at the start of class. Technical and/or optional readings shall be communicated to you via the Moodle/Google Drive course.



Requirements for validation

Students will be assessed on their participation in class throughout the programme (20% of the grade) and on an oral exam: the Petit Oral (80% of the grade). The Petit Oral will take place on the Thursday of the second week of the programme. It will consist of a group presentation on a determined topic and a written presentation. A specific time will be dedicated to questions.



Professor's Biography



Carl Rihan is an Associate and Visiting Fellow of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (Hamburg), specializing in the economic determinants of fragility, conflict and geopolitics. A seasoned field practitioner, Carl has served for over ten years as programme coordinator and researcher at the Basil Fuleihan Institute of Economy and Finance, a partner organization of the International Monetary Fund and of the OECD in Beirut, Lebanon. The author of *Coup in Damascus: Syria and the Birth of Arab Military Rule* (2025) and co-author of *Governance Cooperation in a Conflict-Ridden Context* (2024). He currently teaches Business Management and Social Studies at Ecole Jeannine Manuel (Marcq-en-Baroeul) and lectures on International Security and Governance at SciencesPo Lille. He holds a B.A. and an M.A. in Political Studies from the American University of Beirut and a Ph.D. from Sciences Po Paris.