POLI358: The Political Economy of International Organizations

Winter Semester 2018
Tuesday and Thursday, 4:05-5:25pm

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Course Description and Objectives

The course focuses on the main issues in international cooperation and on the role of economic international institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), in world politics. The course requires that students have previously taken an introductory International Relations course as a prerequisite. The reading list features some technical articles; for these it is sufficient to have a basic understanding of formal and econometric models. Further, a simplified version of such models will be presented in class slides and a good grasp of these should be enough to do well in this course.

The course is divided into three parts. The first addresses the main debates related to international cooperation, e.g. the design of international institutions, the impact of domestic politics on international cooperation, and the effectiveness of cooperation. The second part covers the international trade institutions. Namely, we will discuss the role of the WTO and trade agreements as well as the relationship between multilateral and preferential liberalization. The third part covers the Bretton Woods institutions (i.e. World Bank and International Monetary Fund), the European Union, and environmental organizations.

By the end of the course, students will:

- Be familiar with the main debates about international cooperation;
- Have a thorough knowledge of the most important economic international institutions;
- Be able to understand and critically evaluate widely-used political economy models.

Course Requirements

Part of the mark for the course is based on participation in conferences led by the T.A. Participation is mandatory and is crucial to improving analytical thinking. Participation accounts for 10 percent of the final grade.

Students are required to write a short paper, which should be a response to a question assigned in class. The question will be based on a current event. In order to answer the question students are asked to use concepts and theories covered in the first and second part of the course. The short paper should not be longer than six pages, double-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font with regular margins. The short paper is due on March 13, 2018. The short paper accounts for 30 percent of the final grade.
There are two exams: a midterm and a final exam. Both exams require answering to three open questions, which can be chosen among six questions. The midterm exam focuses on the first part of the course and will take place in class (at the end of the first part of the course on February 15, 2018). The final exam focuses on the second and third part of the course and will take place in the last class of the course on April 12, 2018. The mid-term exam accounts for 25 percent of the final grade, whereas the final exam accounts for 35 percent of the final grade.

Grade Distribution
- Conference participation: 10%
- Short paper: 30%
- Midterm exam (in class): 25%
- Final exam (in class): 35%

The Fine Print
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more info)

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Instructors who adopt the use of text-matching software to verify the originality of students’ written course work must register for use of the software with Educational Technologies and must inform their students before the drop/add deadline, in writing, of the use of text-matching software in a course.

Late work will be penalized by one letter grade (e.g. from B to B-) per day. If you drop-off late work outside of class, you must have it time-stamped and signed by a secretary in the political science department.

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Required text
There is no textbook. The course is mostly based on articles published in top IR journals. All readings are either available through JSTOR, or will be posted on the course website. Students are strongly recommended to read pieces marked as [BACKGROUND READING] before class. Some topics might be subject to (mostly minor) revisions during the term.
Tentative schedule

January 9: Course description and logistics

1. MAIN DEBATES ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Week 1. Introduction

January 11: Why Cooperate?


January 16: The Problem of Cooperation Under Anarchy


Week 2. The Two Stages of International Cooperation: Bargaining and Enforcement


January 18: Why do states join international agreements?


January 23: Why do states comply with international agreements?


January 25: Class Cancelled

Week 3. Domestic Politics and International Cooperation


January 30: Interest Groups


February 1: Domestic Institutions


Week 4. The Design of International Institutions

February 6: Explaining the design of international agreement


**February 8: Does the design matter?**


**Week 5. Formal vs. Informal Rules in International Institutions**

**February 13: What is informal governance in IOs?**


**February 15: Midterm Exam**

**2. Global Trade Governance**

**Week 6. The World Trade Organization**

**February 20: Background and Bargaining Process**


February 22: DSM and Effectiveness


Week 7. The Political Economy of Preferential Trade Agreements


February 27: Why the New Regionalism?


March 1: Building Block or Stumbling Block?


March 5-9: Study Break

Week 8. Foreign Direct Investment and Bilateral Investment Treaties

March 13: Foreign Direct Investment


March 15: Bilateral Investment Treaties


3. Bretton Wood Organizations and Beyond

Week 9. The International Monetary Fund

March 20: IMF and Development


March 22: Explaining IMF Conditionality


Week 10. The World Bank and Aid Allocation

**March 27: The Political Economy of Aid**


**March 29: The WB, Aid, and Development**


Week 11. The European Union


[BACKGROUND READING]

**April 3: Explaining Cooperation in the EU**


**April 5: Enlargement and Globalism**


**Week 12. Environmental and Energy Treaties**

**April 10: Environmental Cooperation**


**April 12: Final Exam**