

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
PSC 492: Controversies in Political Science
Online Syllabus
Credits: 4
Prerequisites: PSC 113/116

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Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to various controversial issues surrounding globalization. We will examine and understand pros and cons of controversial issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, US-China relations, global economic crisis, international trade, and income inequality, to list a few. We will also discuss issues such as (1) the impact of COVID-19 on politics and the economy; (2) how national governments around the world responded to the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) how other globalization issues such as international trade affect Americans' daily lives and shape American politics and policy.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this course, the students should be able to:

1. Answer questions about the current COVID-19 pandemic:
 - a. Describe how national governments around the world responded to the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - b. Explain the reasons why national governments coped with the pandemic differently;
 - c. Understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the world economy;
 - d. Compare and contrast the economic recession caused by COVID-19 and the 2009 Great Recession;
 - e. Explain governmental strategies to cope with economic recessions.
2. Answer questions about "globalization." More specifically, students should be able to:
 - a. Describe the history and current status of international trade in the world;
 - b. Understand the reasoning behind typical public attitudes toward globalization (i.e., pro-globalism and anti-globalism);
 - c. Identify major international trade agreements and framework in history;
3. Answer questions on "how has globalization shaped American politics and policy," including:
 - a. Identify important schools of thought on the relationship between markets and states under globalization;
 - b. Explain typical strategies that countries use to attract foreign investment and protect vulnerable citizens;
 - c. Explain why some governments increase compensation in face of globalization, and others "race to the bottom" with tax cuts and decreases in spending;
 - d. Describe the impact of globalization on domestic tax and welfare policies;
 - e. Describe measures and policy solutions to regulate globalization activities and intervene globalization impacts.
4. Answer questions on US-China relations, including:

- a. Evaluate the possibility of China replacing the US as the next hegemon with evidence;
 - b. Understand the power transition theory, and use it to explain whether or not a potential power transition between US and China will result in war;
 - c. Identify the problems China has with its economy
5. Answer questions about income inequality in the world, including:
 - a. Define three types of global income inequality and identify measurements of income inequality;
 - b. Credibly explain the causal mechanism between globalization and decreasing income inequality among countries;
 - c. Explain the relationship between globalization and income inequality within the US;
 - d. Identify the causes and impact of rising income inequality.
6. Answer questions about economic crises, including:
 - a. Identify the economic and political reasons for the 2009 Great Recession;
 - b. Describe major economic crises in the world in history;
 - c. Compare the 2009 Great Recession with the recession caused by COVID-19;
 - d. Explain strategies that national governments can adopt to cope with economic crises.
7. Write a research paper related to the topics discussed in this course:
 - a. Identify a research question related that the student is interested in;
 - b. Review previous literature on the topic;
 - c. Collect data to test your own explain/theory;
 - d. Develop your hypothesis and test it;
 - e. Evaluate your theory and conclude your findings.

Required textbook and readings:

Textbook: Thomas Lairson and David Skidmore. 2017. *International Political Economy: The Struggle for Power and Wealth in a Globalizing World*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Other materials: Documentaries will be assigned nearly every week over the duration of course. Many of them are available to view for free, or for a nominal cost. Links of the documentaries are included in the course Sakai site. All other posted materials on Sakai such as online lectures, quizzes, assignments, readings in PDF, resources for research paper activities are all required materials for this course. You need to treat them seriously and complete all required materials.

Techonology requirements:

Computer access to the internet is required in order to successfully navigate this course. Firefox is the recommended browser for Sakai compatibility and can be downloaded free from www.mozilla.com/firefox. You will require additional plug-ins (Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash, Real Player, Quicktime). These are all free downloads. Internet Explorer for Windows, version 6 or higher is also an option. Be sure to turn off pop-up blocker.

Sakai help:

Here is the link for Sakai help: <https://sakai.uri.edu/portal/help/main>. In the Sakai menu on the left you will see Sakai Documentation at the bottom of the menu. If you click on it, it will take you to the help pages. You can also call the Help Desk at 401-874-4357. Remember to use Firefox as your browser as there have been compatibility issues with Internet Explorer and Safari. Firefox works on both PC and Mac platforms.

Classroom protocol:

For this online course, Sakai is our “classroom.” In the online learning environment, “attendance” is measured by your PRESENCE in the site as well as your CONTRIBUTIONS to the site. The importance of regular log-ins and active participation cannot be overstated. I will gauge your participation by your regular, on-time forum postings and responses, and timely assignment submissions. If you’ve never taken an online course, “hanging out” on Sakai will take some getting used to, and it will be easy to forget about the course from time to time. I recommend that you check out the Online Learn Orientation at <https://sakai.uri.edu/portal/site/8287ab7d-aa33-4fa7-ad8c-066fe8203251>. This short orientation will provide you with an introduction to the important aspects of taking an online course. I further recommend that you get in the habit of daily attendance online to maximize your successful completion of the course. Please refer to the **Schedule of Readings, Assignments, Quizzes, Exams** at the end of this syllabus and on the Sakai site for details on how and when you will be expected to contribute to the course.

Online learning:

As stated above, the best way to begin this course is to view the **START HERE** tab, and read the syllabus. In addition, you can find more helpful information at this site: <http://web.uri.edu/online/learningonline/>. Finally, the syllabus is your map to this course. This course is divided into 10 weeks. Each week contains its own learning objectives, assigned readings, videos, and links to other important content on the internet, written assignments, quizzes, and discussion activities.

Assignments and Grading Policy:

Response papers (30%)

Quizzes (30%)

Research Project (40%)

Response papers (30%) There are 3 response paper assignments throughout the course. Response papers will be posted on Forums with a fixed deadline of 5pm on Wednesday every week. A grading rubric is provided below for this assignment.

Criteria	Unsatisfactory (=0)	Limited (>0 and <10)	Satisfactory (= 10)
Response paper	No response paper is posted, or response paper shows little or no evidence that readings and documentaries were completed or understood.	Response paper is posted late, or Response paper is incomplete, i.e., not answering all the questions or lacking supporting evidence from the assigned readings and documentaries.	Response paper is posted on time, and it answers all questions posted for that week, shows ample evidence from the readings and the assigned documentary, displays an understanding of the required readings and documentary. Response paper also needs to properly use terminology and citations, without typos and grammar mistakes.

Quizzes (30%) There will be weekly quizzes throughout the semester, and they will be mostly multiple choice questions and short answers. The quizzes are based on the facts and knowledge of this course. Students have to read and study all the learning materials in this course to be able to succeed in these quizzes.

Research Project (40%) Students are required to each write a research paper. Four components of the research paper (research question, literature review, hypotheses, and data and methods) will be due throughout the semester. The research paper will be evaluated by four metrics: (1) whether or not the research question is interesting, (2) quality of literature review, (3) whether or not research design is scientific and valid, (4) whether or not the data collection is authentic.

Late work policy:

ASSIGNMENTS/QUIZZES/FINAL RESEARCH PAPER NOT SUBMITTED BY THE DEADLINE WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO. Please back up your work on a flash drive, email to yourself, and/or store in a cloud. **It is a good idea to have a back-up plan in case of computer problems, e.g., a friend's computer, a library computer, etc.**

Grading Scale:

A (93 and above)	A- (90-92)	B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)	
C+ (77-79)	C (73-76)	C- (70-72)	D+ (67-69)	D (60-66)	F (<60)

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating and plagiarism are very serious offenses and will be handled in accord with university policy. All submitted work must be your own. If you consult other sources (class readings, articles or books from the library, articles available through internet databases, or websites) these **MUST** be properly documented, or you will be charged with plagiarism and will receive an F for your work. In some cases, this may result in a failure of the course as well. In addition, the charge of academic dishonesty will go on your record in the Office of Student Life.

Specific information regarding definitions of cheating and plagiarism can be found at <http://www.uri.edu/facsen/8.20-8.27.html>. For details concerning the actions taken against those who commit these infractions students should again consult the above web site.

Helpful Resources at URI

A few helpful resources at URI that students are encouraged to use:

- (1) **The Writing Center:** It is always a good idea to have someone look at your writing before submitting it to the class-it will only improve your grades. The Writing Center is a great resource on campus. You may make repeat appointments, requesting the same tutor each time if you wish. See their Web Page: <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/writing/center/index.shtml> for tips on how to make the best of your Writing Center visit.
- (2) **The Enrollment Services Office:** If you have any questions about enrolling, dropping a course, or checking progress on grades posting, you may contact Enrollment Services at URI. See their Web page: <https://web.uri.edu/enrollment/contact-us/>
- (3) **University Ombud:** If you have any problems with University procedures and processes, you may use the University Ombud service. It is a confidential, objective, and last resort for such problems. See their Web Page: <https://web.uri.edu/ombud/>

Office of Disability Services

Any student with a documented disability is welcome to contact me early in the semester so that we may work out reasonable accommodations to support your success in this course. Students should also contact Disability Services for Students, Office of Student Life, 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098. From the University Manual: **6.40.10 and 6.40.11 Accommodations for Qualified Students With Disabilities:** Students are expected to notify faculty at the onset of the semester if any special considerations are required in the classroom. If any special considerations are required for

examinations, it is expected the student will notify the faculty a week before the examination with the appropriate paperwork.

Professional Conduct:

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses, which are dealt with firmly by the College and University. Scholastic integrity presumes that students are honest in all academic work. **Cheating** is the failure to give credit for work not done independently (i.e., submitting a paper written by someone other than yourself), unauthorized communication during an examination, or the claiming of credit for work not done (i.e., falsifying information). **Plagiarism** is the failure to give credit for another person's written or oral statement, thereby falsely presuming that such work is originally and solely your own. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, visit the following website: <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism>, the URI Student Handbook, and University Manual sections on plagiarism and cheating at <http://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/>.

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation;
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently;
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams;
- Unauthorized communication during exams;
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student;
- Taking an exam for another student;
- Altering or attempting to alter grades;
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams;
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references;
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty;
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the Instructor.

Please note the following section from the **University Manual**:

8.27.17. Instructors shall have the explicit duty to take action in known cases of cheating or plagiarism. The instructor shall have the right to fail a student on the assignment on which the instructor has determined that a student has cheated or plagiarized. The circumstances of this failure shall be reported to the student's academic dean, the instructor's dean, and the Office of Student Life. The student may appeal the matter to the instructor's dean, and the decision by the dean shall be expeditious and final.

Such action will be initiated by the instructor if it is determined that any written assignment is copied or falsified or inappropriately referenced.

Any good writer's handbook as well as reputable online resources will offer help on matters of plagiarism and instruct you on how to acknowledge source material. If you need more help understanding when to cite something or how to indicate your references, PLEASE ASK.

Please note: Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the published “**Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulations**” which can be accessed in the **University Student Handbook**.

Course Schedule (**Please refer to Sakai for the most updated readings for each week:**
Start Here

Week 1:

Read Chapter 1 and 2

Watch documentary: People's Republic of Capitalism I

Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)

Research paper activity due: Research questions

Take Quiz 1 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 2:

Read Chapter 3

Watch documentary: People's Republic of Capitalism II

Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)

Research paper activity: Schedule a Skype meeting with Prof. Ping Xu

Take Quiz 2 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 3:

Read Chapter 4

Watch documentary: People's Republic of Capitalism III

Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)

Research paper activity due: Skype with Prof. Ping Xu to discuss and finalize your research question

Take Quiz 3 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 4: (2/24-2/28)

Read Chapter 5

Watch documentary: People's Republic of Capitalism IV

Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)

Research paper activity (see Sakai)

Take Quiz 4 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 5:

Read Chapter 6

Watch Public Talk online: Globalization and Inequality

Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)

Research paper activity (see Sakai)

Take Quiz 5 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 6:

Read Chapter 7

Watch documentary: Inside Job

Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)
Research paper activity (see Sakai)
Take Quiz 6 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 7:

Read Chapter 10
Take Quiz 7
Watch documentary: TBA
Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)
Research paper activity (see Sakai)
Take Quiz 7 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 8:

Read Chapter 11 and 12
Documentary: Plastic Kingdom
Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)
Research paper activity (see Sakai)
Take Quiz 8 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 9:

Videos and readings on Sakai
Write up Response Paper (due 5pm Wednesday)
Research paper activity (see Sakai)
Take Quiz 9 (due 11:59pm Friday)

Week 10:

Resource: How to Write a Scholarly Research paper
Resource: Structure/Outline of a Research Paper
Lecture on Video: How to Conduct your Own Research with an Example
Example: Globalization and the Polarization of Government Spending in American States
Research paper activity: Putting it all together

Week 11:

Work on your research paper
Research paper is due by the end of this week at 5pm, April 24, Friday. Please upload your research paper under dropbox.