

**Selected Topics in International Relations:
Global Order and Great Power Competition**

Political Science 191B/239

Fall 2023

Thursday, 2:00-4:50 pm, 2121 Bunche Hall

Office hours: To be arranged

Draft Syllabus Vers. 0.9 (Subject to revision)

Professor Arthur Stein

Course description:

The course will focus on the major foci of contemporary international politics, the decline of global order and the return of great power competition, and the relationship between them.

The course is a reading/research seminar. Weekly reading will be 150 pages or less and mostly in one book (which makes for easier reading than a number of separate articles). This is a tentative syllabus and expect some changes, especially regarding the last session.

Course requirements:

- 1) Read the weekly assigned readings before class. [Keep track of things that you did not understand or were not clear, and we will discuss them.]
- 2) Come to the class session.
- 3) Participate in class discussion. [All three are necessary for others to learn from your questions and observations.] There will be weeks in which you will do an oral presentation on a chapter that hasn't been assigned for everyone to read.
- 4) Written assignment. You have a choice.
 - 4a) Write 2 pages discussing the week's reading, detailing the core argument, the period discussed and how it is critical to the argument, and the nature of the evidence provided for the argument (these will be among the things we discuss the class). Send the paper in by 10am the day of class.
 - 4b) Write a research paper. The paper should focus on some advanced industrial society (not the US) during one or two of three critical periods (post-World War II, 1990-2008, since 2008), and how its historical experience fits the arguments we have read about the liberal order and its decline and the relationship to great power politics.
 - 4c) For graduate students. Write a research paper focusing on US relations with another OECD country since 1990 as a case for evaluating the arguments made by the authors assigned in the course regarding the decline of the liberal order and the rise of great power competition.

General Conduct and Course Practices:

I never used to include a section such as this in my syllabi, but times have changed. I assume a basic sense of civility, courtesy and respect. Arrive to class on time. Your emails should be civil and professional and written out (no emojis or text message shorthand). So too for your written assignments. Similarly, comments in class should be respectful. Express your arguments and disagreement with reason and evidence rather than hostility and condescension. Harassment or discrimination on any basis in any form is not acceptable.

I assume you know UCLA's *Student Conduct Code* and will be guided by it. You should also know that UCLA has a Center for Accessible Education (CAE) (310-825-1501, Murphy Hall A255) which will oversee any accommodations you may require. Finally, be aware that faculty are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Coordinator—a *non-confidential resource*—should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Readings:

The assigned readings are all available online. The books by Cronin (weeks 2 and 3), MacDonald and Parent (week 7), and Shiffrin (week 8) are available for free downloading at degruyter.com. Use the UCLA VPN, go to the site, search for work, click on any chapter that comes up, then click on the entire work, and you will be able to download a PDF of it. Let me know if you have any difficulty. The other works will be available online.

1. Introductory meeting (Sept. 28, 2023)

A discussion of the focus of the course and its implications for understanding and explaining international relations. Personal introductions.

2. The Liberal Order I (Oct. 5, 2023)

What is the liberal international order and how did it originate?

Cronin, James E. 2023. *Fragile Victory: The Making and Unmaking of Liberal Order*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press. For Oct. 5, read pp. 17-160. (154 pages of readings)

Lascurettes, Kyle M. and Michael Poznansky. 2021. International Order in Theory and Practice. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, International Studies*. Oxford University Press. Read pages 1-9.

3. The Liberal Order II (Oct. 12, 2023)

How did the liberal order grow and why has it been challenged in recent years?

Cronin, James E. 2023. *Fragile Victory: The Making and Unmaking of Liberal Order*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press. For Oct. 12, read pp. 161-302. (142 pp.)

Allison, Graham. 2018. The Myth of the Liberal Order: From Historical Accident to Conventional Wisdom. *Foreign Affairs* 97, No. 4: 124-133.

4. Democracy and the Liberal Order (Oct. 19, 2023)

What has been the role and evolution of domestic political support for the Western liberal order?

Trubowitz, Peter and Brian Burgoon. 2023. *Geopolitics and Democracy: the Western Liberal Order From Foundation to Fracture*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Read pp. 1-59, 64-76, 79-81, 83-93, 96-104, 108-131 (in other words, read around the discussion of figures 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8, 4.9, 4.13).

Barnett, Michael. 2021. International Progress, International Order, and the Liberal International Order. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 14(1): 1-22.

5. Great powers and international orders (Oct. 26, 2023)

What is the role of great powers in constructing international orders, and what kinds of orders do they construct?

Lascurettes, Kyle M. 2020. *Orders of Exclusion: Great Powers and the Strategic Sources of Foundational Rules in International Relations*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Read pp. 1-55 and 164-244 (136 pages of readings).

Individuals report on chs. 4 (38 pp.), 5 (40 pp.), and 6 (33 pp.).

Lascurettes, Kyle M. and Michael Poznansky. 2021. International Order in Theory and Practice. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, International Studies*. Oxford University Press. Read pages 9-18.

Mearsheimer, J. J. 2019. Bound to Fail: the Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order. *International Security* 43(4). Read pp. 9-27.

6. No class session (Nov. 2, 2023)

7. Managing decline (Nov. 9, 2023)

How do great powers manage their relative decline?

MacDonald, Paul K. and Joseph M. Parent. 2018. *Twilight of the Titans: Great Power Decline and Retrenchment*. Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Read pp. 1-79 (or 68), 179-200. (101 pp. of reading)

8. Exploiting power changes (Nov. 16, 2023)

How do rising great powers exploit changes in relative power?

Shiffrinson, Joshua R. Itzkowitz. 2018. *Rising Titans, Falling Giants: How Great Powers Exploit Power Shifts*. Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Read pages 1-41, 99-186. (129 pp. of reading)

9. Thanksgiving (Nov. 23, 2023) HAPPY HOLIDAY!

10. Democracy and great power rivalry (Nov. 30, 2023)

What are the implications of domestic regime type for great power rivalry?

Kroenig, Matthew. 2020. *The Return of Great Power Rivalry: Democracy Versus Autocracy From the Ancient World to the U.S. And China*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Read pages 1-70, 113-154. (112 pp.)

Individuals report on chs. 11 (15 pp.), 12 (26 pp.), 13 (17 pp.)

11. REVISED: Concurrences and Implications (Dec 7, 2023)

Was there ever a liberal order? And if so, was it only possible because of unipolarity? (This reading is tentative and may be skipped.)

Barnett, Michael N. 2019. The End of a Liberal International Order That Never Existed. *The Globalist*, April 16: 8 pages.

Jentleson, Bruce W. 2018. The Liberal Order Isn't Coming Back: What Next? *Democracy Journal* no. 48 (Spring): 11 pages.

Mearsheimer, J. J. 2019. Bound to Fail the Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order. *International Security* 43(4). Read pp. 27-50.

Staniland, Paul. 2018. Misreading the "Liberal Order": Why We Need New Thinking in American Foreign Policy. *Lawfare*, July 29: 8 pages.

Stein, Arthur A. 2020. Still Peddling: Momentum and the Semi-Liberal Semi-Global Order. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 13.

There is a development in comparative politics that is concurrent with recent developments: democratic backsliding. What is the case for democratic backsliding and what would be its implication for the liberal order and great power competition?

Hyde, Susan D. 2020. Democracy's Backsliding in the International Environment. *Science* 369(6508): 1192-1196.

Treisman, Daniel. 2023. How Great is the Current Danger to Democracy? Assessing the Risk With Historical Data. *Comparative Political Studies*. Forthcoming. 25 pages of text and notes.

Populism poses a particular challenge both to the liberal order and democratic governance and has implications for great power competition. (Each of the following contains different insights, but there is some inevitable duplication, so skim.)

Verbeek, Bertjan and Andrej Zaslove. 2017. Populism and Foreign Policy. In *The Oxford handbook of populism*, edited by Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul A. Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo and Pierre Ostiguy, 21 pp. of text. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Plagemann, Johannes and Sandra Destradi. 2020. The Foreign Policy of Populists. *Horizons* no. 15: 110-118.

Upadhyay, Shreya. 2023. Populism and Its Impact on Foreign Policy. In *Encyclopedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century*, edited by Joseph Chacko Chennattuserry, Madhumati Deshpande and Paul Hong, 1-6. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Wainer, Daniel F. and Philip Giurlando. 2023. Introduction to Populist Foreign Policy (PFP). In *Populist Foreign Policy: Regional Perspectives of Populism in the International Scene*, edited by Philip Giurlando and Daniel F. Wajner. Cham: Springer International Publishing. Read pages 8-26.

RECOMMENDED: The rise of populism, the far right, and democratic decline are linked to great power competition through the influence operations of foreign intelligence services.

Shekhovtsov, Anton. 2018. *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir*. London: Routledge. Read xvii-xxviii, 162-164, 203-206. (20 pp. of reading)

RECOMMENDED: What are the implications of the decline in the liberal order and the rise of great power competition for resolving key global problems, such as climate change?

Aklin, Michaël and Matto Mildenerger. 2020. Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change. *Global Environmental Politics* 20(4). Read pp. 4-23.

Aklin, Michaël and Matto Mildenerger. 2023. Reply: The Persistent Absence of Empirical Evidence for Free-Riding in Global Climate Politics. *Global Environmental Politics* 23(1). Read pp. 145-150.

Given the arguments we have discussed, should we expect the result of the US election in 2024 to make any difference to the global order and great power competition? If so, in what regard? And given our answer to the above, what would we expect foreign governments to be preparing for in the wake of a US election?