

International Relations 4703G
Contemporary Challenges in the Global Community I
Winter 2025

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This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

IR4703G is one of the two capstone seminars for the international relations program. In this seminar, students will grapple with the idea of Canada entering a multipolar world. Taking for granted that the moment of American unipolarity has passed, with a Russia focused on developing a multipolar world with its war in Ukraine, foreign policy in the Global South, and promotion of BRICs, and China who may look to take advantage of the chaos in the global order, students will consider what this means for Canada. Additionally, a potentially challenging relationship with the United States, a result of the return of Donald Trump to the presidency and his promise of high tariffs, along with Canada's increasingly fraught relationship with India, there are many challenges for Canada going forward. Furthermore, consider other issues – climate change, arctic sovereignty, the pandemic, the global economy (and more!) – how has Canada navigated these challenges in the past, and what may their possible path forward be. Students will consider these issues to inform how they may suggest Canada acts going forward.

Prerequisite(s): Enrollment in year 4 of the Honours Specialization in International Relations Module, or permission of the departments.

Antirequisite(s): The former International Relations 4701E, the former International Relations 4702E.

Learning Objectives

Students should, by the end of IR4703G:

- Evaluate scholarship that discusses, in some way, previous multipolar worlds, Canada's role in those multipolar systems, or key issues Canada may have an interest in today
- Engage in debate and discussion with fellow students, scholars, and policy makers
- Refine your academic writing and develop skills to communicate to a non-academic audience
- Work collaboratively in small and large groups to develop a class wide policy brief

Methods of Evaluation

10% - Book Review (due January 17)

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15% - Case study memo (due January 28)

55% - Case study for group project (ongoing, final version due March 27)

20% - Participation

Book Review: Students will each choose a book to review. Ideally, every student would choose a different book. Students will delve into the work of one author before then adding that knowledge to our collective approach to determining how a nation like Canada may operate in a multipolar world. Books listed either offer insights to Canada's role in a multi-polar world, offer insights into the world that may develop or Canada's relations with key nations in this world, or reflect on previous multipolar orders. If you wish to choose a book not on this list, the student should contact the professor. Students will read the book and write a book review on its content of 1250-1500 words by January 17.

Possible choices include:

Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?*

Andrea Chandler, *Canada and Eastern Europe, 1945-1991*

Adam Chapnick and Asa McKercher, *Canada First, Not Canada Alone*

Alexander Colley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony: The Unravelling of the American Global Order*

Philip Cunliffe, *The New Twenty Years' Crisis: A Critique of International Relations*

Marc De Vos, *Superpower Europe: The European Union's Silent Revolution*

B. Michael Frolic, *Canada and China: A Fifty-Year Journey*

Keir Giles, *Who Will Defend Europe? An Awakened Russia and a Sleeping Continent*

Franklyn Griffiths, Rob Huebert and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security and Stewardship*

Gary Marcuse and Reginald Whitaker, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957*

Jade McGlynn, *Russia's War*

Asa McKercher and Galen Roger Perras eds., *Mike's World: Lester B. Pearson and Canadian External Affairs*

Asa McKercher and Michael D. Stevenson, eds, *North of America: Canadians and the American Century, 1945-60*

Kim Richard Nossal, *Canada Alone: Navigating the Post-American World*

Joseph S. Nye Jr., *A Life in the American Century*

Anthony Pagden, *Beyond States: Powers, Peoples and Global Order*

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Serhii Plokyh, *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History*

Sergey Radchenko, *To Run the World: The Kremlin's Cold War Bid for Global Power*

M.E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*

Benjamin Zala ed., *National Perspectives on a Multipolar Order: Interrogating the Global Power Transition*

Additional choices may be listed for our first class. Please check Brightspace before the first class!

Case Study Memo: Working alone or in pairs, students are to determine a specific case study relevant to the theme of the course and write a piece highlighting why it should be a priority in our final policy program. How does the case study reflect a key issue for Canada in a potentially multi-polar world? What are the key discussions informing this topic? The idea is to write a memo with the aim of convincing the rest of the class that this theme is important enough to warrant entry into the group project. This memo should be 1000 words, with footnotes or endnotes, in Chicago Style. A bibliography should also be included. These memos are due January 24 and uploaded on the Brightspace discussion boards for the entire class to review. Students are expected to review all memos before class on January 28.

Case Study for Group Project: Once the class has determined the themes that will be included in the final project, students will work on two themes, one as the lead, another as the support. The idea here is that this allows the opportunity to discuss and circulate ideas more easily, while also having some overlapping considerations between different themes. This work is worth 55% of the class grade; each case study will receive a grade and a student's mark is determined by the average final marks of the two case studies as follows: 40% for the case study the student was the lead on; 15% for the case study the student supported.

Participation: The success of the group project requires students to be active each week and providing consistent contributions to its many moving parts. Each week, this mark will focus on student involvement in class discussions and their participation in the development of the project. Contributing to discussions, resolving disputes, taking on leadership roles, formatting the project, taking notes, and so forth are all ways students can earn marks. Additionally, students will submit a survey at the end of the course following the meeting with experts, outlining their contributions to the group project and reflecting on the conclusions of the experts. This, too, will be considered in the final mark.

Late Penalty:

As consistent and timeliness are necessary to keep the group project on schedule, each assignment has a late penalty of 5% per day including weekends. Each assignment is due for 11:59 pm ET on the date it is due.

The book review is due January 17 at 11:59 pm ET on OWL. This assignment has an automatic 3 day grace period, should students need additional time, to complete the assignment (Especially as it is early in the term). All other assignments will maintain their deadlines, more to ensure

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our class time can be utilized effectively. Students, if desired, are able to use their one undocumented absence for the case study memo, however, it potentially may mean less class engagement with their ideas given the fast pace of this course.

Course Materials

There are no books to purchase from the UWO Bookstore nor will there be any additional costs for taking this course. Common readings will be linked on OWL Brightspace. Specific works, such as for the book review, will need to be acquired by the student through Western Libraries.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1:

January 7: Introduction, discussion of group project, assignment of books for review
January 9: Initial discussion to frame class theme

Week 2:

January 14 & 16: Historical context and discussion of books assigned for review

Readings for January 14 & 16:

Students will be expected to have started to read their assigned books for review and should have some preliminary, if not firmer, evaluations of how Western nations, including Canada, have responded to the development of a bipolar or multipolar world

Week 3:

January 21 & 23: Discussion of the current world situation and the potential bipolar/multipolar world developing

By the end of this class, we will have a sense of the key problems a nation like Canada could face in the present world order.

Crisis Memos will be due Friday, January 24 at 11:59 pm ET on OWL Brightspace under the discussions tab.

Week 4:

January 28 & 30: Defining key problems in the present world and their historical backgrounds: Defining and Assigning Case studies and determining groups

Week 5:

February 4 & 6: Presentations of case studies: Defining the case studies and considering the historical background. How did we get to where we are?

Week 6:

February 11 & 13: Presentations of case studies: Determining levels of importance, recommendations, and explaining the plan of action.

Writing of group case studies should begin this week.

Week 7: READING WEEK – No classes February 18 & 20

Week 8:

February 25 & 27: Progress reports and continued research and group work.

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Week 9:

March 4 & 6: Discussions of case studies to determine coherent final report

Week 10:

March 11: Polished drafts of case studies to be submitted for peer review

March 13: Peer reviews should be partially completed; planning meeting to determine what is still needed to be completed

Week 11:

March 18 & 20: Full draft must be completed for final edits

Week 12:

March 25 & 27: Finalize project for submission to experts

Week 13:

April 1: Meet with the Experts

April 3: Debrief/Overflow

Additional Statements

Communication policies: Students are welcome to come to the professor's office hours or to arrange another time to meet the professor at his office if they have questions or concerns about the course. Additionally, they may contact the professor via email. The professor will aim to respond to students within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. Please use your UWO email address for any correspondence.

Use of electronic devices: Students are welcome to use electronic devices for the purposes of writing notes, reviewing course materials, or, in the crisis simulation, perform tasks related to it. Recording tools are not allowed without written permission from the instructor.

Use of generative AI tools: You may not make any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for any assignments in this course.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.