

IR4703F
Contemporary Challenges in the Global Community I
Fall 2025
Tuesdays: 10:30-12:30, Thursdays: 3:30-4:30

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Office Hours: TBA

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

Course Description: IR4703F is one of the capstone seminars for students in the international relations program. In this course, you will examine how the history of the international system and community, as well as the history of Canada in the world, contribute to public discussion and public policy about urgent contemporary challenges. The format of the course is to produce a report or document of some kind that contributes to some aspect of international affairs today. You will work individually, as a group, and in smaller sub-groups to produce your final project. The theme of the course changes every year and is linked to current developments in world affairs and Canadian foreign policy. In previous years, we have done a feminist audit of Canadian foreign policy, designed a campaign to get Canada elected to the United Nations Security Council, and developed a plan for Canada to transition to green energy. This year, the group project will outline a forward-looking foreign policy for Canada. As you know, Canadian foreign policy is undergoing far-reaching reconsideration by the government. Recently, Prime Minister Carney has said that the assumptions that have long guided Canadian foreign policy must be set aside and he has indicated that Canada can be a leader in ‘reshaping’ international affairs. You will need to consider recent changes and shocks as well as long-term developments in order to articulate a philosophical and strategic approach to Canadian foreign policy and its engagement with the world.

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

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

Course syllabus:

In IR4703F, you will produce a public policy project (apologies for being vague, but deciding the precise scope and format is part of the challenge of the course) that you will present to a panel of experts. You will have a lot of individual work to do, but overall, this is a group project. It is also student-guided. Your ideas and ambitions determine the scope and nature of the project. The class meets twice a week. The two-hour class on Tuesday is mandatory. This is when we decide the specific parameters and aims of the group project – it takes several weeks to figure

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this out. You will also present updates and reports on your individual work as well as the progress you are making in your groups. We have a one-hour class on Thursdays. Because so much work is done outside of class, this is a time when you can meet with your groups. As the project nears completion (crunch time!), I expect that we will meet regularly on Thursdays.

Learning Objectives:

Deepen your understanding of Canada as an international actor, past and present.

Develop your understanding of the relevance of history to policy makers.

Refine your skills of deep and diverse research.

Refine your academic writing style and develop skills of communicating to non-academic audiences.

Develop your ability to work collaboratively, identifying the specific roles that your skills and personality are well-suited to.

Methods of Evaluation: TBD

There will be several assignments during the semester, including assignments like a pitch and writing historical reviews as well as work associated with the group project, such as drafting recommendations, doing peer review, and more. Your final grade includes individual assignments as well as group work.

Course Materials and Schedule of Classes: TBD.

Because this course happens in real time, I will be revising the syllabus right up to the start of the semester. I am happy to discuss the topic and approach with you over the summer. Feel free to send me a message at fmckenzi@uwo.ca with thoughts about the topic. Let me know if you have an idea for another topic.

Additional Statements

Communication policies: There are several ways to contact me. I have weekly office hours (TBA) in Lawson Hall: you can drop by without having to make an appointment. If you cannot attend my office hours, I am happy to make an appointment for another day and time. I am also available by email: fmckenzie@uwo.ca I check email regularly and try to reply to all messages within 24 hours.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI): The use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT is permitted in this course ONLY if it enhances your learning and allows you to devote more time to research, reflection, writing and revision of your work. For example, you can use ChatGPT for activities such as brainstorming, providing literature summaries, organizing your thoughts, and checking for grammar and style. To use AI effectively, you must be in charge of this technology, using it with purpose, guidance and clarity. That means you need to do the work to be able to ensure that AI supports your research and ideas. If you use generative AI tools, you **MUST** explain how you used them and provide a copy of the product. Failure to do so will result in a grade of zero. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification.

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.