

Course Code: PCS 822
Course Title: Contemporary Global Issues (**Elective**)
Credit Hours: 3

Course Objectives

Human beings and nations have always been facing new issues/challenges from time to time. In today's world, we have seen the so-called Arab Spring and its impacts on nations like Syria and Egypt. We have also seen an increase in youth activism, e.g., protests on the sidelines of the FIFA World Cup held in Brazil. In addition, there are serious ongoing challenges in the form of poverty, transnational crimes, climate change, and certain diseases like HIV/AIDS. On one hand, some of these challenges create tensions among nations, but on the other hand, they also create opportunities among nations. This interdisciplinary course seeks to explore contemporary global issues. It provides an in-depth understanding of themes related to social, political, economic, and cultural processes; global linkages/interdependencies; and power relations that connect individuals, communities, groups, states, and regions across the globe. It examines the values and vision emerging from regional perspectives that lead to conflict and/or cooperation in the international system. It contrasts the increasingly complex problems faced by different regions with the growing integration of the global economy.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will develop analytical tools to better understand the interconnected nature of global issues and enhance their capacity to think critically and ethically about the world and their role in it.

Teaching and Structure

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Guest lectures
- Presentations
- Simulations and Group Activities

Course Contents

- Introduction to global issues
- Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare
- The military-industrial complex and nuclear proliferation
- Populism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Identity
- Human rights
- Global Poverty
- Women, children, and development
- Public Health and Pandemics
- Environmental security
- Conflict over natural resources and future prospects
- Population and migration / Refugees and IDPs
- Death of IOS
- Global Power Shift: U.S.–China Strategic Competition in the 21st Century
- The Post-Secular Turn: Rethinking the Role of Religion in Global Politics
- New Social Movements in the Digital Age
- Global Terrorism
- The Age of AI and our Human Future
- Final Exam

Assessment

	Duration	Frequency	Weighting (%age)
End semester examination	3 hours	1	30 – 50
Mid Term	2 hours	1	15 – 25
Quizzes	-	Minimum: 3	05 – 15
Class Participation	-	-	0 – 5*
Assignments / Project(s) / Case Studies	Own time	-	10 – 40

*Shall be allocated only if there are no case studies.

Reference Material:

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- Kissinger, H. A., Schmidt, E., & Huttenlocher, D. (2021). *The age of AI: and our human future*. Hachette UK.
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- Blaut, J. M. (1987). *The national question: Decolonizing the theory of nationalism*. London: Zed Books. (Chapter1)
- Raja Qaiser Ahmed & Rafiullah Khan (2020): The rise of peripheral nationalism in Pakistan and the Pashtun Tahafuz movement, *Asian Ethnicity*,
- Grosby, Steven. (2005). *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP.
- Wither, J. K. (2016). Making sense of hybrid warfare. *Connections*, 15(2), 73-87.
- Brubaker, R. (2017). Why populism? *Theory and Society*, 46(5), 357–385.
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- Pieterse, J. N. (2019). What do people want? *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 102(2–3), 111–127.
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- Wajner, D. F., Destradi, S., & Zürn, M. (2024). The effects of global populism: Assessing the populist impact on international affairs. *International Affairs*, 100(5), 1819-1833.
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- Dijkstra, H., & Debre, M. J. (2022). The death of major international organizations: When institutional stickiness is not enough. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 2(4), ksac048.
- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, M. (2021). *What Kills International Organizations? When and Why International Organizations Die*.
- Dalby, S. (2012). Climate change and environmental security. In *Security Studies: An Introduction*. (pp. 333-345). Routledge.
- Graeger, N. (1996). Environmental security?. *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(1), 109-116.
- Zeitoun, Mark. "Global environmental justice and international transboundary waters: an initial exploration." *The Geographical Journal* 179, no. 2 (2013): 141-149.
- Gleick, P. 1993. Water and conflict. *International Security* (8)1:79-107.
- Homer-Dixon, T.F. (1991). On the Threshold: Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict. *International Security* 16(2), 76-116.
- Hurrell, Andrew. (2006). "Hegemony, liberalism and global order: what space for would-be great powers?" *International Affairs* 82(1):1-19
- Freedman, L. (2020). Who Wants to Be A Great Power?. *Prism*, 8(4), 2-15. Who Wants to Be a Great Power? By Lawrence Freedman.
- Stiglitz, J. E., & Rodrik, D. (2024). Rethinking global governance: cooperation in a world of power. *Cambridge, MA*.
- Sean Golden. (2020). The US and China in the New Global Order. CIDOB opinion.
- Suisheng Zhao. (2025). The Collapse of the US-led World Order: China Gains Ground but not Ready to Replace It. The ASAN Forum.
- James McBride and Andrew Chatzky. (2019). Is 'Made in China 2025' a Threat to Global Trade? Council on Foreign Relations.
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- Patricia Weiss Fagen. (2011). Refugees and IDPs after Conflict: Why They Do Not Go Home. Special Report. USIP.

- Bauman, Z. (2013). *Wasted lives: Modernity and its outcasts*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Garner, Godfrey, and Maeghin Alarid-Hughes. *Origins of Terrorism: The Rise of the World's Most Formidable Terrorist Groups*. CRC Press, 2021.
- Introduction to International Terrorism. UNODC.
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- Haer, Roos van der, and Kathleen J. Brown. 2024. "The Effect of War Exposure on Children: An Exploration of Conflict and Post-Conflict Gendered Experiences." *The International Journal of Human Rights* 29 (1): 46–67.
- Miller, C. (2022). *Chip war: the fight for the world's most critical technology*. Simon and Schuster.

Newspapers/ Documentaries/ Films and Fiction

Newspapers/ Documentaries/ Films and fiction will be recommended during the course because they provide vital perspectives that complement academic readings. These sources offer real-time insights, humanize abstract theories, and reveal the cultural, emotional, and narrative dimensions of global challenges such as war, climate change, inequality, and migration. Newspapers help students stay informed about evolving global events, while documentaries and films visually and emotionally engage with complex realities, often exposing voices and experiences excluded from traditional scholarship. Fiction, meanwhile, opens up imaginative and critical understandings of power, identity, and resistance across different contexts. Together, these mediums enrich interdisciplinary learning, sharpen critical thinking, and bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and lived experiences.

Newspaper/ Magazines:

Guardian, NewYork Times, AlJazeera, Dawn, Middle East Monitor, Times

Documentaries and weblinks:

- Populism is reshaping our world. *The Economist*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekc5EAPPPgk>
- Short but perilous: Children's smuggling journey across Afghanistan's border
- Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/stories/short-perilous-childrens-smuggling-journey-across-afghanistans-border>
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2009. "The Danger of a Single Story"
TEDGlobal, 18:34, https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en.
- Cothes to Die For (Documentary)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04bwxnd>.
- How Hindu Nationalism Threatens India's Muslims. VICE news on HBO
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMqkG6VMn4o&rco=1>

- Dark Waters: Africa's deadliest migration route - BBC Africa Eye Documentary
- Why isn't the DR Congo the world's richest country? | Mapped Out. DW Documentary
- Belfast (directed by Kenneth Branagh)
- Balsher Singh Sidhu. TED-Ed. "Are we running out of clean water?"
- Selina Neirok Leem. 2021. TEDTalk. 6:11. "Climate change isn't a distant threat -- it's our reality".

Fiction and Film

- Animal Farm by George Orwell.
- 1984 by George Orwell
- Exit west by Mohsin Hamid
- The Journey (directed by Mohammad Ghoraban Karimi)
- Turtles Can Fly (directed by Bahman Ghobadi)
- Stoning of Suraiya (directed by Cyrus Nowrasteh)
- Flow (directed by Gints Zilbalodis)
- Bekas (directed by Karzan Kader)
- Karwi Hawa (directed by Nila Madhab Panda)