
Course duration: 54 hours lecture and class time (Over three weeks)

Summer School Programme Area: International Relations, Government and Society

LSE Teaching Department: Department of International Relations

Lead Faculty: Professor Michael Cox (Dept. of International Relations)

Pre-requisites: At least one introductory course in either social science (e.g. political science, international relations, sociology, economics), history, law or any other cognate subject in the Arts or Humanities.

Course Outline:

At the beginning of the 21st century the world stood on the cusp of what most experts assumed would be a golden age of international peace and global prosperity guaranteed by American power and underwritten by an ever-expanding world market dominated by the West. But 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008 followed, leaving – or so many pundits insisted - the United States in decline, Europe in tatters, and the balance of power rapidly shifting southwards towards the ‘rest’ and eastwards towards Asia and China, or more generally towards the BRICS. A very different kind of world now beckoned – one more balanced and fair perhaps, according to Jim O’Neill of Goldman Sachs, who coined the term BRICs to characterise the emerging order; but less under the control of the West.

Many pundits even began to talk of a new world disorder in the making. Certainly, with tensions increasing between Russia and the West, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, an apparently insoluble crisis in Europe, and new uncertainties arising from BREXIT in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the United States, it did appear as if the international system was fast becoming a much less stable place. Some even wondered whether the liberal order itself was now under threat.

But how have all these major changes come about? What has been their impact on international affairs? And where is the world heading? These are at least three of the big questions we will be seeking to answer in this intensive three-week programme.

The course is designed with several different audiences in mind: undergraduate students looking for an expert guide through contemporary international issues; policy-makers at all levels seeking an in-depth survey of the main challenges facing the world today; those from any of the major social science disciplines who take the ‘global’ seriously; members of international organisations and NGOs; and anybody with a keen interest in international affairs who wishes to deepen his or her understanding of world issues.
Instruction will comprise daily lectures and seminars. There will be five lectures in week one, five lectures in week two, and two lectures in week three. There will be a revision day in the third week. Professor Michael Cox is joined by guest lectures from noted LSE experts, including Professor Margot Light, Dr Nicholas Kitchen, and Dr Luca Tardelli.

Course Overview

- Session 1: Global War and the Crisis of the 20th Century
- Session 2: Revolution in the making of the 20th Century: the rise and fall of the USSR
- Session 3: The New American Empire: from Clinton to Trump
- Session 4: Europe: from superpower to global irrelevance?
- Session 5: Globalisation under threat? After the 2008 Crisis
- Session 6: The West under threat? Towards an Asian Century
- Session 7: The West under threat? Towards a BRIC world?
- Session 8: BRIC I: Will China rule the World?
- Session 9: BRIC II: India: An Emerging Superpower?
- Session 10: BRIC III: A New Cold War? Putin’s Russia and the West (Margot Light)
- Session 11: Zone of Turmoil: The Middle East – From Arab Spring to the Rise of ISIS (Luca Tardelli)
- Session 12: The End of Power? Diffusion, Resistance, and a World Without Superpowers (Nicholas Kitchen)

Course Texts


Course Structure:

Lecture: 36 hours  Classes: 18 hours

Assessment

- Formative Essay-planning exercise (in class Week 1; unassessed)
- Assessed Mid-Session Essay (worth 50% of overall grade). Due Friday of week 2, results returned on Monday of week 3.
- Assessed Final Exam (worth 50% of overall grade). Friday of week 3 (time and location to be confirmed during week 2), final overall results will be reported within a week of the exam. The precise time and location of the exam will be circulated during the programme.
Session 1: Global War and the Crisis of the 20th Century

In his classic study, ‘War and Change in World Politics’, Robert Gilpin drew our attention to the simple but important fact that when states develop the power to change the system according to their interests they will strive to do so – and have more often than not done so through war. This has been especially true in the 20th century when not one, but three, great ‘wars’ have not only led to an enormous loss of life – well over 100 million – but to massive power shifts and changes in the balance of power too.

Required reading


Videos

- The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century. BBC. 2013. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bb-xWX0qlk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bb-xWX0qlk)

Session 2: Revolution in the making of the 20th Century: the rise and fall of the USSR

In his book ‘Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power’, Fred Halliday makes the important point that IR as a discipline has been less interested in the subject of revolutions than either history or sociology. But if we are to understand the twentieth century it is not only war we have to look at. We also have to examine the extraordinary impact which revolutions have had – most notably the Russian revolution and the Soviet state which emerged as a result of that upheaval in 1917. Regarded as a major threat to the West for seventy years, in the late 1980s the Soviet system of power began to crumble, finally collapsing completely in 1991. And with its unexpected collapse a very new kind of world order beckoned. But what caused this massive change to happen? Why did we not predict it? Which IR theory explains it best?

Required reading

The collapse of the only remaining superpower competitor to the United States by 1991 created structural unipolarity which many assumed would be temporary, though others saw as representing the consolidation of a new global ‘empire’. But what did the overwhelming dominance of the United States mean for the rest of the world; has this dominance endured into the 21st Century; why do many writers today claim the US is in decline?

Required reading
Videos

- Fareed Zakaria: The Post-American World. 2009. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG8Fmi1Ys3I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG8Fmi1Ys3I)
- The Post-American World and the Rise of the Rest. (1 hour 28 minutes). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs4zw1O_MYE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs4zw1O_MYE)
- American Decline: Global Power in the 21st Century. LSE (6 minutes). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_Eh_QXuw3A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_Eh_QXuw3A)
- The Myth of American Decline. You Tube (7 minutes). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwHY962ol-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwHY962ol-o)
- Joseph Nye on global power shifts. Ted Talk. 2010. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=796LfXwzIUK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=796LfXwzIUK)

Session 4: Europe: from superpower to global irrelevance?

The end of the Cold War opened up an exciting new phase in the history of Europe, so much so that by the turn of the millennium a number of writers were beginning to talk confidently of Europe becoming the dominant actor in the 21st century. However, a series of events exposed the European ‘miracle’ to the ultimate stress test. Once lauded as the model for regional economic and political integration, and feted as a new superpower, today the Eurozone, and the European project more widely, seems to be teetering on the verge of collapse. Why did we not foresee this? How did the crisis come about? And can the EU be saved?

Required reading

- Varoufakis, Yanis (April 2016), ‘Why We Must Save the EU’, The Guardian Long Read. [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/05/yannis-varoufakis-why-we-must-save-the-eu](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/05/yannis-varoufakis-why-we-must-save-the-eu)

Videos

- Imperfect Union: The Eurozone in Crisis - Full Episode. Foreign Policy Association. 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpwpIiU-5n0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpwpIiU-5n0)
Session 5: Globalisation under threat? After the 2008 Crisis

The collapse of the old bipolar order between 1989 and 1991 created the conditions for a massive surge of activity across borders, which drew once closed and protected economies into a single integrated global economy. The term used to describe this new economic order was ‘globalisation’. But what was globalisation? Was it new? Who benefitted and who lost out from the new economic order? What impact did the 2008 financial crisis have on globalisation? And is globalisation now in retreat?

Required reading


Videos

- Bernie Sanders Grills Alan Greenspan on Globalization and Inequality (5/20/1999). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAL4f0jBJQ0
- Donald Trump on Globalization & Free Trade. 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PS1ph7Z5LU
Session 6: The West under Threat: Towards an Asian Century?

The notion that the future belonged to Asia is by no means a new one. Indeed, through the 1980s and early 1990s some writers even talked of an Asian ‘miracle’ – until that is the 1997 Asian crisis undermined these claims almost overnight. But Asia recovered and over the past 15 years it has once again become the focus of a new optimism, with many now insisting that the 21st century is bound to be Asian. But are we being too optimistic about Asia? Can it keep developing? And if it were to do so, would this pose a challenge to the West?

Required reading


Videos


Session 7: The West under Threat? Towards a BRIC world?

In November 2001 the Goldman Sachs economist Jim O’Neill coined the acronym BRICs to identify those four big economies which would, in his view, become the key drivers of economic growth into the 21st century. The argument caught on, especially in the four countries themselves. Indeed, the four BRICs – Brazil, Russia, India and China – decided to assume the name and create structures of annual meetings as of 2009, in order to transform their emerging economic strength into geopolitical power. The tone of their successive collective statements was to assert the place of the South against that of the North, and especially that of the United States in the world-system. But do the BRICs represent the voice of the South? Are they united by common principles? And how far do they collectively represent a serious challenge to the West?
**Required reading**


**Videos**

- Empire - BRIC: The new world order. Al Jazeera, English. 2010. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjR1GGP_Vns](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjR1GGP_Vns)

- Is the New BRICS Bank a Challenge to US Global Financial Power? Youtube (27 Minutes). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tNOekslUYg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tNOekslUYg)

- 'West scared of BRICS as it has no control over it' - Ex-Indian Foreign Secretary Youtube (25 minutes). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfB8Fbn-TEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfB8Fbn-TEE)


**Session 8: BRIC I: Will China rule the World?**

*The key BRIC country is the PRC (China) where state-led economic growth combined with Communist Party rule and deeper integration into the world economy has transformed one of the world’s most populous countries and lifted millions out of poverty. But how did China achieve this success? What are the implications for the balance of power, peace and security of China’s rise? Can China offer a real alternative to the Western order? And can its rise remain peaceful?*

**Required reading**


Session 9: BRIC II: India: An Emerging Superpower?

*Rapid economic growth has not been confined to China. India, the world’s largest democracy, has seen economic liberalisation generate sustained growth and an expanding middle class, leading some to see India as a new global power. But deep and pervasive fault-lines within Indian society call into doubt India’s superpower aspirations. Is India ready to lead?*

**Required reading**

- Guha, Ramachandra (2012), ‘Will India Become a Superpower?’, in India, the Next Superpower? LSE IDEAS Special Report. [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43442/1/India_will%20india%20become%20a%20superpower(1sero).pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43442/1/India_will%20india%20become%20a%20superpower(1sero).pdf)

Videos

- China's economic transformation and its global implications - 中国的经济转型 及其在全球格局中的意义 2014. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGXiZs1gJl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGXiZs1gJl)
- Why China Will Not Become the Dominant Power in Asia. 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AvNT3vyzr0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AvNT3vyzr0)
- Crouching Tiger: John Mearsheimer on Strangling China & the Inevitability of War. 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXSkY4QKdia](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXSkY4QKdia)
- Are China and the US doomed to conflict? Kevin Rudd. Ted Talk. 2015. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XQ1onjXJK0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XQ1onjXJK0)

Rapid economic growth has not been confined to China. India, the world’s largest democracy, has seen economic liberalisation generate sustained growth and an expanding middle class, leading some to see India as a new global power. But deep and pervasive fault-lines within Indian society call into doubt India’s superpower aspirations. Is India ready to lead?
Vladimir Putin rose to power with a determination to reverse the humiliation Russia suffered in the 1990s. Fuelled by high oil prices, an increasingly assertive Russia has vigorously sought to defend Russia’s power over its neighbours and push back against Western influence. But although Russia’s renewed claim to great-power status might mask a deeper internal malaise, might it still imply a rekindling of conflict with the West? Are we indeed at the beginning of a new cold war?

Required reading

Videos
- Marvin Kalb on Russia, Ukraine, and the New Cold War. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJalJ45ehiw
- Return to Cold War. Youtube. (1 hour 24 minutes). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-imyocUDM0

Session 11: Zone of Turmoil: The Middle East – From Arab Spring to the Rise of ISIS (Luca Tardelli)

Liberal hopes for a democratic revolution in the Middle East precipitated by the Arab Spring have been dashed by the ongoing brutality of the Syrian civil war and the rise of Islamic State. What are the roots of conflict in the region, and are there any prospects for peace?

Required reading
Session 12: The End of Power? Diffusion, Resistance, and a World without Superpowers (Nicholas Kitchen)

Amid all the talk of power, American decline, and the rise of the rest, ongoing processes driven by globalisation have increasingly diffused power away from states. Can major states still create and sustain order in a world that’s increasingly resistant to authority, or is the age of the superpowers at an end?

Required reading

- Naim, Moises (2014), ‘The end of power: from boardrooms to battlefields and churches to states, why being in charge isn’t what it used to be’, *Basic Books*, Chapter 1.
Credit Transfer: If you are hoping to earn credit by taking this course, please ensure that you confirm it is eligible for credit transfer well in advance of the start date. Please discuss this directly with your home institution or Study Abroad Advisor.

As a guide, our LSE Summer School courses are typically eligible for three or four credits within the US system and 7.5 ECTS in Europe. Different institutions and countries can, and will, vary. You will receive a digital transcript and a printed certificate following your successful completion of the course in order to make arrangements for transfer of credit.

If you have any queries, please direct them to summer.school@lse.ac.uk