

# World Order and Disorder

## Syllabus

Version: 17 April 2024; check OLAT for the most current version.

Wednesdays, 1600–1800 • PEG 1.G 191  
Seminar • Goethe University Frankfurt, Department 03 • Summer Term 2024

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### A. Outline

This seminar examines how the world is and has been organized politically, and whether and how transnational problems can be addressed. A core interest of the seminar will be the conflict, tension, and contestation that often surrounds the emergence, maintenance, and decay of such global orders.

In *block one*, we will cover different eras and instances of global order and disorder, including the Westphalian order, world orders in Asia and Eurasia, the UN and the post-WWII order, and post-Cold War liberalism. In *block two*, we will examine issues and problems past and present, including war and peace, climate change, genocide and mass atrocities, and nuclear proliferation, as well as the domestic underpinnings of international cooperation or disorder. Throughout, we will examine these phases and issues as to their (1) actors, (2) institutions, and (3) norms and rules.

At the midway point and end of the semester, we will apply what we have learned to current global politics. Throughout the seminar, we will also focus on questions of research design and how global political orders and other related phenomena of interest can be analyzed empirically and systematically.

As an advanced undergraduate seminar, we will also cover how to read and summarize different types of English-language academic texts beyond introductory ones, such as journal articles, book chapters, and handbook chapters. We will also explore questions of research design in IR and Political Science, examining the benefits of case study as well as large-N designs for sanctions research.

### B. Course structure

This seminar is largely reading- and discussion-based. Having read and understood each week's reading is key for successfully participating in class and getting the most out of this semester. Most weeks have a single, manageable reading. Each week has a central topic and a “guiding question” (see below), which frame the issue and discussions in class. Where possible, we will also aim to briefly cover and discuss the current developments in global politics, and how they relate to themes of each class.

The semester will be split into two blocks:

- Block 0 (weeks 1–3): Practical and substantive introduction
- Block 1 (weeks 4–10): World orders through the centuries
- Block 2 (weeks 11–14): Issues of global ordering

Classes will be roughly structured as follows:

1. Review of the previous week and overall course, admin
2. Active summary and discussion of the week's text/reading
3. Open questions from the text and the OLAT forum
4. Exercise relating to the text and topic
5. Recap of developments in global politics, where appropriate
6. Preview of the following week

### C. Administrative information

- Email: [peez@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:peez@em.uni-frankfurt.de)
- Office hours: TBD
- All materials will be distributed via OLAT.
- If you have any concerns or challenges regarding the course, please let me know and we will figure out an individual solution to enable your participation in class.

### D. Requirements

- *Participation/Teilnahmeschein*: Two-paragraph reflections on the readings for six classes, uploaded to the OLAT forum before the respective class (see below) **and** a two-page essay (TBD; see below).
- *Graded attendance (Leistungsschein)*: Both participation requirements (see above) **and** a research paper (see below).

More details on the exact formalities and rubrics will be discussed in class and made available to all participants.

#### OLAT forum entries/reflections

The objective of the forum entries is to have students engage with the material, prepare students for class, and give the lecturer an idea of which points might be worth highlighting and clarifying in class. Furthermore, condensing research findings into short, pointed summaries and original reflections is an important skill in most career paths social science students might be interested in.

These reflections may largely summarize the reading(s), but students must also highlight points that were particularly interesting to them (and why), parallels to issues they might be working on in other contexts, open questions, and links to other topics we have covered in class.

*Important*: Type up your thoughts in a word processor (e.g. MS Word) and then copy them to OLAT, both because OLAT is unreliable and, more importantly, for your own records. Please also keep an eye on the number of OLAT forum entries you have submitted, in order to make sure you have (at least) met the minimum number by the end of term.

- *Deadline*: by Tuesday at noon (so that potential questions can still be worked into the lecture)
- *Length*: 200+ words, i.e. 2+ paragraphs
- These reflections must be coherently structured and must contain clear references to and engagements with the week's reading(s).

#### Essay resources and aims

All participants must write a two-page essay on a question chosen from a provided list. This will be around mid-semester. This assignment gives students the opportunity to examine a specific issue from class in greater detail. The aim of the essay is to have students develop and structure their thoughts on a narrow essay question relating to the class.

See the slides from Week 4 for a list of possible resources as well as pointers and structure.

- *Essay formatting*: two pages with 1.5pt spacing, 11pt font size.

## Research paper

The objective is to have students comprehensively apply the concepts and principles covered in class to a substantive research interest of theirs. Students might find this useful for later thesis work (i.e., BA or MA theses).

- *Deadline*: 30 September 2024
- *Length*: 6.000–7.000 words, including an abstract, keywords, and the bibliography
- *Format*: The research paper can be (1) a review essay of three journal articles or an in-depth book review of a book drawn from a provided list and applied to the seminar’s topic *or* (2) a research paper asking and answering an empirical research question.
- *Office hours*: Research paper ideas, design, and progress should be discussed in about 2–3 office hour slots (see above).
- *General grading criteria*: 10% clarity of title, abstract, and keywords; 20% clarity of structure, research design, research question/interest/purpose; 35% execution of the analysis and interpretation of the results; 35% application of concepts and materials from the seminar.

## E. Topics and readings

### Block 0: Practical and substantive introduction

Week 1 (17 April): Introduction, admin details, initial scoping

Week 2 (24 April): Thinking about world order

- *Reading*: Chapter 1, Zarakol (2022).
- *Guiding question*: What is world order and which world order does the author describe? What is sovereignty?

Week 3 (01 May): ~~Labor Day~~

### Block 1: World orders through the centuries

Week 4 (08 May): The United Nations and the decay and emergence of world orders

- *Reading*: Morris (2018).
- *Optional extra reading*: Weiss and Daws (2018).
- *Guiding question*: What are the key ‘rules, understandings, and institutions’ discussed here? Who are the key actors?

Week 5 (15 May): The Westphalian system

- *Reading*: Chapter 1, Teschke (2009).
- *Guiding question*: What is the Westphalian system? What is the author’s key argument about it?
- More details on the essay mandatory for the *Teilnahmeschein*.

Week 6 (22 May): Slavery, empires, and international order

- *Reading*: Sharman and Zarakol (2023).
- *Optional extra reading*: Zvobgo and Loken (2020).
- *Guiding question*: In what ways did slavery and the slave trade shape international orders?

Week 7 (29 May): The Liberal International Order, Pt. I

- *Reading*: Lake, Martin, and Risse (2021).

- *Guiding question:* What are the main characteristics of the ‘Liberal International Order’ described in the article? What challenges do the authors outline?

Week 8 (05 June): The Liberal International Order, Pt. II

- *Reading:* Tourinho (2021).
- *Guiding question:* Contrast this argument with the introductory article from Week 7.
- Brief mid-semester round of class evaluation and feedback

Week 9 (12 June): The Liberal International Order, Pt. III

- *Reading:* One article from the 2021 special issue of *International Organization* (see Weeks 7 and 8) – to be voted on.
- *Guiding question:* TBD

Week 10 (19 June): World order in 2024 + essay

## Block 2: Issues and problems past and present

Week 10 (26 June): War and peace

- *Reading:* TBD
- *Guiding question:* TBD

Week 11 (03 July): Environmental issues

- *Reading:* Buzan and Falkner (2022).
- *Guiding question:* TBD
- If you like, you can watch the Peace Report/Friedensgutachten launch in the Federal Press Conference/Bundespressekonferenz on Tuesday morning, 25 June (TBC; in German, usually on Phoenix).

Week 12 (10 July): Nuclear proliferation

- *Reading:* TBD
- *Guiding question:* TBD

Week 14 (17 July): Recap and outlook, final class and wrap-up

- No readings or OLAT forum entries
- *Reading:*
- *Guiding question:* Which aspects of world order remain under-examined, where might future research go? Which questions still puzzle you?

## F. Bibliography

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- Morris, Justin. 2018. “Origins of the United Nations.” In *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, edited by Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws, 40–58. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803164.013.2>.
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- Tourinho, Marcos. 2021. "The Co-Constitution of Order." *International Organization* 75 (2): 258–81. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000466>.
- Weiss, Thomas G., and Sam Daws. 2018. "The United Nations: Continuity and Change." In *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, edited by Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws, 2–40. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198803164.013.1>.
- Zarakol, Ayşe. 2022. "What Is the East?: Theorising Sovereignty and World Orders in Asia and Eurasia." In *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders*, 1–44. LSE International Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zvobgo, Kelebogile, and Meredith Loken. 2020. "Race Is Critical to the Field of International Relations." *Foreign Policy* 237: 11–13. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/19/why-race-matters-international-relations-ir/>.