

**World Politics  
POLS/ SIS 426  
Spring 2025**

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**Instructor:** Aseem Prakash  
**Class Time:** Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-4:20 p.m.  
**Class:** Sieg Hall 134  
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**Office hours:** On request  
**Teaching Assistant:** Siyu Yin (syyin@uw.edu)

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## **Objectives**

Harold Lasswell, one of the most famous political scientists, described politics as who gets what, when, and how. World Politics is no different. We see conflict and cooperation in every sphere. We signal our politics in elections and conversations. The choices we make as consumers are also political choices. Thus, we need to think of a more expansive notion of politics. Therefore, you will read and explore topics such as the Ukraine crisis, migration, climate change, trade politics, NGOs, foreign aid, and energy politics.

By the end of the course, I hope all of you will develop a more nuanced understanding of world politics and feel empowered to contribute to policy debates. Remember, participation by informed citizens in policy deliberation is essential for sustaining our democracy. Further, I hope this course and the broader UW experience will motivate you to think of politics and public service as your career.

## **Readings**

We do not have any textbooks. I will use articles only. I will either provide their URL in the syllabus or upload these articles on Canvas.

### **This is a Device-Free Class**

Research suggests that the use of electronic devices in class can be distracting for you and your colleagues. Therefore, to enhance your learning experience, during the class, you are not allowed to use phones, tablets, laptops, or any Internet-connectable devices. Please take notes using a pen and a notebook.

## Grades

You will be graded on the following:

### ***Paper #1 (Research Paper)***

(5 pages of text; single-spaced; references on the 6<sup>th</sup> page; Please upload on Canvas by **April 24, 1200 noon PST**).

According to the United Nations, 5.1 million Ukrainians have been displaced since the start of Russia's invasion. The war has led to a refugee influx, an energy crisis in states like Germany and Poland, and debate in the United States over military aid, including what sorts of weapons to send to Ukraine.

Why do actors advocate different policy choices (about whether to provide certain military aid to Ukraine or not) on how to respond to the Ukrainian war? Identify the specific policy options that are advocated by the United States, Hungary, and Poland. What objectives do these actors wish to achieve? How might these actors think of the benefits and costs of their preferred option as well as the options offered by the other two actors? Make sure that you relate how domestic, regional, or international considerations influence the perceptions of benefits and costs of various options.

Your paper should be directed toward an academic audience. You are expected to undertake research on this subject by carefully reading and referencing 7-10 articles that are **not included** in the syllabus; <scholar.google.com> can help you to identify published work on this subject. Newspaper articles and encyclopedia references do not constitute such sources. Wikipedia is not an appropriate source for this either.

### Grading Criteria for Paper 1:

#### **A (3.9-4.0)**

This paper asserts a very clear thesis and supports the central argument with evidence. The paper illustrates a thorough understanding of this policy issue. It can identify the specific policy options advocated by the three actors and the objectives these actors wish to achieve. This paper offers an insightful analysis of the benefits and costs of each policy option from the perspectives of the three actors. All points are relevant and sufficiently developed. This paper exemplifies strong and able writing, with appropriate language, clarity, organization, grammar, and flow. This paper is easy to read yet challenges the reader to think. The paper addresses the academic audience and uses the appropriate number of references (7-10 articles).

#### **A- (3.8-3.5)**

On the whole, this paper presents a clear argument and is able to support it with evidence. This paper is similar to an 'A' paper, but it is missing at least one of the elements found in an 'A' paper. In content, this paper illustrates policy options from the perspectives of three actors and offers a good analysis of these actors' positions on these policies. This paper, however, is weakened by either mechanics (organization, spelling, grammar, syntax, and flow) and/or clarity.

**B+ (3.4-3.2)**

This paper has a central argument that is presented and engages the required number of articles, but at times it is weak in argumentation and/or using supporting evidence. This paper does engage sufficiently with the policy options proposed by these actors. It is sometimes unclear or vague on the position of the three actors' on different policy options. Ideas are slightly muddled, but in general, there is a satisfactory level of understanding. This paper is strong in writing.

**B (3.1-2.9)**

This paper is similar to a B+ paper. It illustrates a similar level of accuracy and understanding of the literature. This paper, however, differs from a B+ paper because it illustrates a weaker display of effective argumentation. Ideas are at times muddled, and argumentation may not always be effective and/or well supported, and the central argument is either unclear or argued inconsistently. This paper also needs some improvement in writing.

**B- (2.8-2.5)**

This paper lacks a clear central argument. While it attempts to identify policy options and the actors' positions on them, it is overly simplistic in its explanation. This paper demands attention to writing mechanics.

**C (2.4-1.9)**

This paper has a strikingly vague argument. This paper is not able to identify policy options or the actors' positions on them. The paper minimally engages with the relevant literature. Writing mechanics are poor.

**Below C**

This paper does not respond to the question. It lacks a central argument. Ideas are strikingly muddled and vague. It does not engage with the literature. Writing mechanics are poor.

**Late policy:**

Late papers will be penalized by 1/2 point (on a 4.0 scale) for each day late. For example, a paper that otherwise would have been a 3.5 becomes a 3.0 if it is one day late. The clock for lateness begins at the time of submission, with a ten-minute grace period to account for potential connectivity problems.

***Paper #2 (Research Paper)***

(5 pages of text, single-spaced; References on the 6<sup>th</sup> page; Please upload on Canvas by **May 20, 1200 noon PST.**)

Many commentators have employed the Vietnam analogy to describe America's predicament in Afghanistan. Did Afghanistan turn out to be America's Vietnam? Examine the validity of the Vietnam analogy to Afghanistan in terms of three dimensions: **entry, commitment, and exit**. Given the above assessments, what insights from the Vietnam War can be applied to the Afghanistan situation? How have

America's domestic politics and international commitments influenced America's policy choices in both wars? Your paper should be directed toward an academic audience.

You are expected to conduct research on this subject (carefully read and reference five articles **each** on both wars (that is, ten articles in total); again, <scholar.google.com> will help you identify the published work. Also, these articles should not be included in the syllabus. Newspaper articles and encyclopedia references do not constitute such sources. Wikipedia is not an appropriate source for this either.

### Grading Criteria for Paper 2:

#### **A (3.9-4.0)**

This paper answers the question by asserting a very clear thesis and supporting the central argument with evidence. This paper considers how others might respond to this assessment. All points are relevant and sufficiently developed. This paper exemplifies strong and able writing, with appropriate language, clarity, organization, grammar, and flow. This paper is easy to read yet challenges the reader to think. The paper addresses the academic audience and uses the appropriate number of references (minimum 10).

#### **A- (3.8-3.5)**

On the whole, this paper presents a clear argument and can support it with evidence. This paper is similar to an A paper, but it is missing at least one of the elements found in an A paper. This paper, however, is weakened by either mechanics (organization, spelling, grammar, syntax, and flow) and/or clarity.

#### **B+ (3.4-3.2)**

This paper has a central argument that is presented and presents the evidence, but at times it is weak in argumentation and/or using supporting evidence. Ideas are slightly muddled, but in general, there is a satisfactory level of understanding. This paper is strong in writing mechanics.

#### **B (3.1-2.9)**

This paper is similar to a B+ paper. It illustrates a similar level of accuracy and the use of evidence. This paper, however, differs from a B+ because it illustrates a weaker display of effective argumentation and/or use of supporting evidence. Ideas are at times muddled, and evidence may not always be effective and/or well supported, and the central argument either lacks clarity or is argued inconsistently. This paper also needs some improvement in writing mechanics.

#### **B- (2.8-2.5)**

This paper lacks a clear central argument and argumentation. It demands attention to writing mechanics.

#### **C (2.4-1.9)**

This paper has a strikingly vague argument. The paper only minimally provides supporting evidence. Writing mechanics are poor.

## **Below C**

This paper does not respond to the question. It lacks a central argument. Ideas are strikingly muddled and vague. It does not provide evidence to support the argument. Writing mechanics are poor.

**Late policy:** Late papers will be penalized by 1/2 point (on a 4.0 scale) for each day late. For example, a paper that otherwise would have been a 3.5 becomes a 3.0 if it is one day late. The clock for lateness begins at the time of submission, with a ten-minute grace period to account for potential connectivity problems.

## **Group project paper and presentation**

(A single, **jointly authored**, 5-page report; single-spaced; references on the 6<sup>th</sup> page **Please upload on Canvas by June 5, 1200 noon PST**).

**Late policy:** Late papers will be penalized by 1/2 point (on a 4.0 scale) for each day late. For example, a paper that otherwise would have been a 3.5 becomes a 3.0 if it is one day late. The clock for lateness begins at the time of submission, with a ten-minute grace period to account for potential connectivity problems.

You will participate in a group project (3 or 4 students per group) that will examine issues such as democracy recession, the rise of China, and climate change. Siyu will assign you to specific groups.

Please examine questions such as: how did the problem emerge, and how has the country/industry been affected by it? What specific steps has it taken to respond to it? Has the response been perceived as being successful? From the industry perspective, ask similar questions: how is this problem affecting the industry in the short run, and how might it affect it in the long run?

Each team will present its perspective in the class and also turn in a written report. We expect each team to survey the relevant literature (including newspaper articles) on the subject. Your group will present to the class for 10 minutes, possibly followed by a brief Q&A. You can use PowerPoint. Here are some ideas:

- Be specific on how the problem in question affected your country.
- What are the short-term consequences for say public health and the economy?
- What might be the long-term consequences?
- Ensure that you have a maximum of 5 slides and not more than 5 bullet points per slide.

## **Logistics**

Make sure that you are checking your uw email; typically, students use @uw email address to coordinate activities with their group members. In previous classes, some group members have also shared phone numbers to facilitate texting – but given the privacy issue, this is something you need to decide for yourself.

If you are having “issues” with your group members, please contact Siyu at least a week prior to your presentation date.

### **Class discussions**

I want students to actively participate in class discussions, including discussions following guest lectures, student presentations, and documentaries. Feel free to connect these discussions with the issues/topics/readings from other courses you might have enrolled in at UW. World Politics is complicated and we need the ability to process different arguments, evaluate evidence, and develop a perspective. I welcome comments, questions and different perspectives.

In addition, Siyu has created an online discussion board on Canvas. The reasons are threefold. Often, I am not able to call on everybody to share their views. But I (and others as well) want to hear what you have to say. The discussion board will provide a platform to share your thoughts. Second, some students mull over the class discussion and have additional thoughts. In addition to chatting with me during in-person or virtual office hours, you are welcome to share your thoughts on the discussion board.

Finally, while it is critical that you speak up in class, we will also consider your contributions to the discussion board when grading class participation.

Online comments are subject to the same rules and norms as in-class discussions. Be respectful, learn to disagree without being disagreeable. Engage in good faith. Civility is essential to have meaningful conversations.

### **Extension Policy**

In cases of illness and other extenuating circumstances, Siyu will consider requests for a paper deadline extension, so long as a student makes the request ahead of time. In cases where a student encounters an emergency within four hours of a deadline and needs to ask for an extension, the student’s request will include (as an attachment) the work they have completed so far, which could include notes, an outline, and/or a draft.

### **Evaluation**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Points</b>
Paper 1	April 24	25
Paper 2	May 20	25
Group Project	June 5	30
Class Participation		20
Total		100

### **Please Note:**

- This course qualifies for the W (writing) credit.
- I reserve the right to change or modify the syllabus without prior notice.
- I will follow UW’s policy on plagiarism:

<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm#plagiarism>

### **Religious Accommodation**

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for the accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Session 1**

**Tuesday, April 1**

*Introduction*

- FULL EXCHANGE: Zelenskyy and Trump's heated argument at the White House:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdOPrHI4Byg>
- Liu, The Speech That Stunned Europe. Foreign Policy, 2025.  
[https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/02/18/vance-speech-munich-full-text-read-transcript-europe/?tpcc=recirc\\_latest062921](https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/02/18/vance-speech-munich-full-text-read-transcript-europe/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921)
- Mounck. The Zero-Sum Presidency, 2025.  
[https://yaschamounk.substack.com/p/the-zero-sum-presidency?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://yaschamounk.substack.com/p/the-zero-sum-presidency?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)
- Madhubani. It's Time for Europe to Do the Unthinkable. 2025.  
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/02/18/europe-eu-nato-us-russia-ukraine/>
- Yergin, Orszag, and Arya, The Troubled Energy Transition, 2025,  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/troubled-energy-transition-yergin-orszag-arya>
- The Houthis' Red Sea missile and drone attack: Drivers and implications  
<https://www.mei.edu/publications/houthis-red-sea-missile-and-drone-attack-drivers-and-implications>



**Session 2**  
**Thursday, April 3**  
*World Politics*

- CNN Cold War documentary, The Wall, Episode 9  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVX-iOKty9k&list=PLmFpuLsumHidmOqHk37Pfb4NCR7G7mtbd&index=8>
- Walt. International Relations: One World, Many Theories. 1998. Spring, 29-44.
- Munck. They Really Just Might Invade Greenland. 2025.
- Diamond. Facing Up to the Democratic Recession. Journal of Democracy. 2015, 26 (1): 141-155.
- Douthat. Vladimir Putin's Clash of Civilizations. 2022.
- Stockman. This Is the Russia-China Friendship that Nixon Feared. 2022.
- Trump takes America's trade policies back to the 19th century, 2025.

**Session 3**  
**Tuesday, April 8**  
*State Building and Institutional Change*

- President Clinton and VP Al Gore on cutting the federal workforce & slashing wasteful spending. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOKL4YFJOVU>
- Prakash and Potoski. Dysfunctional institutions? Toward a New Agenda in Governance Studies. Regulation and Governance, 2016.
- Fukuyama, 2004. The Imperatives of State Building. Journal of Democracy. 5(2).
- Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Adjusts Imports of Automobiles and Automobile Parts into the United States: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/03/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-adjusts-imports-of-automobiles-and-automobile-parts-into-the-united-states/>
- Ahmad. 2014. The Security Bazaar. International Security. 39, 3, 89-4.



**Session 4**  
**Thursday, April 10**  
*Refugees and Statelessness*

- Haiti: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZkKR\\_wunUE&t=40s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZkKR_wunUE&t=40s)
- South Africa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdky8rTAhak>
- South Korea: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO3dHEY2Zoc>
- McKenna and Hoban. 2017. Problems and solutions to the international migrant crisis. Brookings Now.  
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/problems-and-solutions-to-the-international-migrant-crisis/>
- Polgreen. Sweden has a big problem. 2025.
- Andonova et al. 2025. International climate adaptation assistance: Assessing public support in Switzerland, PLOS ONE,  
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0317344>

**Session 5**  
**Tuesday, April 15**  
*Climate Change*

- Yergin. Why the Energy Transition Will Be So Complicated. 2021.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/11/energy-shock-transition/620813/>
- Palm Oil Was Supposed to Help Save the Planet. Instead It Unleashed a Catastrophe. The New York Times, November 20, 2018.
- Campanella and Lawrence. Populist opposition is threatening progress on climate change. Foreign Affairs, 2024.
- Dolsak and Prakash. Taylor Swift and other Jet-setters can send a climate message. 2024.  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/prakashdolsak/?sh=594722e129ee>

**Session 6**  
**Thursday, April 17**  
*Nuclear Energy and Climate Change*  
Guest Speaker, Dr. Jim Conca

- U.S. CO2 Emissions Rise As Nuclear Power Plants Close, Forbes.com, January 16.

- Any Green New Deal Is Dead Without Nuclear Power, Forbes.com, January 21
- Why Are We So Afraid of Nuclear? Forbes.com, Jan 16
- Nuclear Waste Disposal -- Isn't Science Supposed To Reduce The Uncertainty?, Forbes.com, May 14

**Session 7**  
**Tuesday, April 22**  
*State of Democracy*

G1: South Korea  
 G2: Thailand  
 G3: Iraq  
 G4: Indonesia  
 G5: Singapore  
 G6: Nigeria

**Session 8**  
**Thursday, April 24 (Paper 1 is due)**

*Populism*

- Gethin, Martínez-Toledano and Piketty. Brahmin Left Versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948–2020. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 137 (1), 2022, 1–48,
- Weinstock. Confronting Populism. *Social & Legal Studies*, 2023, 32(6), 877-892. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09646639221143509>
- Friedman. What Is a Populist? And is Donald Trump one?, February 27, 2017
- Serhan. Populism Is Meaningless. By reducing the term to a political pejorative, we risk rendering it worthless. January 14, 2020.

**Session 9**  
**Tuesday, April 29**  
**Online class: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/91299894724>**

*Panel on Global Entrepreneurship*

- Isenberg, 2008, *The Global Entrepreneur*, Harvard Business Review
- Bennet, *Entrepreneurship, Public Policy, and Public Choice*
- Looze and Sameeksha Desai, 2020. *Challenges Along the Entrepreneurial Journey: Considerations for Entrepreneurship Supporters*, Kaufman Foundation

Panel Moderator: Shek Jain, Founder Pura Terra

Panelists:

Eddie Mandhry, Managing Director, The Columbia-Dream Sports AI Innovation Center

Alven Ye, Co Founder, BlockCarbon

Kaley McGrane, Founder and Executive Director of A Moment of Magic,

The panel will focus on the following questions:

1. What does it take to be a successful entrepreneur?
2. How much influence does culture and country have on entrepreneurship?
3. Should governments or universities become involved in fostering entrepreneurship, or are market forces best?
4. How is entrepreneurship different in nonprofit enterprises vs commercial enterprises?
5. How will entrepreneurship change in the future because of AI?

### **Session 10**

**Thursday, May 1**

*State of Democracy*

G7: Hungary

G8: Peru

G9: Mexico

G10: France

G11: Zimbabwe

G12: Egypt

### **Session 11**

**Tuesday, May 6**

*Foreign Aid*

- Afghan Money Pit. Season 2, Episode 11, VICE  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_CvWJVtEkUE&t=1012s&has\\_verified=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CvWJVtEkUE&t=1012s&has_verified=1)
- Easterly and Pfutze. 2008. Where Does the Money Go? Best and Worst Practices in Foreign Aid. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 22(2).
- Kuziemko, Ilyana, and Eric Werker. 2006. How much is a seat on the Security Council worth? Foreign aid and bribery at the United Nations." *Journal of Political Economy* 114(5): 905-930.
- Johnston. 2025. Where Does the Money Go? A Look at USAID Spending in Haiti  
<https://cepr.net/publications/a-look-at-usaid-spending-in-haiti/>

### **Session 12**

**Thursday, May 8**

*Lessons from Afghanistan: What Worked and What Did Not From the Perspective of a Contracting Officer*

*Guest Speaker: Colonel Robert Miceli*

- Washington Losing Patience with Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/06/washington-losing-patience-with-counterinsurgency-in-afghanistan/240982/2011>
- Peace-building and COIN in Afghanistan: The view of NGOs: What is really needed?  
<https://www-jstor-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/stable/24232767?sid=primo&seq=1>
- "The Strategic Framework for U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan"; Chapter 7: Measuring the Effectiveness of Stabilization (pages 125-142)  
<https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo93321/SIGAR-18-48-LL.pdf>

### **Session 13**

**Tuesday, May 13**

*Food Politics*

- Meathooked & End of Water, Season 4, Episode 5, VICE.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkPBam3qO34&t=637s>
- Zerbe. Feeding the famine? American food aid and the GMO debate in Southern Africa. *Food Policy*, 2004, 29(6), 593-608.
- Fuchs & Kalfagianni. The causes and consequences of private food governance. *Business and Politics*, 2010, 12(3).
- How Much Food Do We Waste? Probably More Than You Think, *The New York Times*, 2017

### **Session 14**

**Thursday, May 15, Online class, zoom link will be provided**

*Global Health and Well Being*

*Guest Speaker: Dr. Anita Jain*

### **Session 15**

**Tuesday, May 20 (Paper 2 is due)**

*Trade Politics*

- Fashion Victims,  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Dku\\_VWCsMY&has\\_verified=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Dku_VWCsMY&has_verified=1)
- Lim and Prakash. Do Economic Problems at Home Undermine Worker Safety Abroad?: A Panel Study, 1980-2009, *World Development*, 2016.
- Riofrancos. The Security–Sustainability Nexus: Lithium Onshoring in the Global North. *Global Environmental Politics* 2022

- McBride and Siripurapu. What's Next for the WTO? 2022

**Session 16**  
**Thursday, May 22**  
*Climate Change*

G13: Malaysia  
G14: Fiji  
G15: Bangladesh  
G16: Pakistan  
G17: Jordan  
G18: Vietnam

**Session 17**  
**Tuesday, May 27**  
*Climate Change*

G19: Uganda  
G20: Brazil  
G21: Poland  
G22: Congo (DRC)  
G23: South Africa  
G24: Colombia

**Session 18**  
**Tuesday, June 3**

*Rise of China*  
G23: Philippines  
G24: Turkey  
G25: Australia  
G26: India  
G27: Sri Lanka  
G28: Germany

**Session 19**  
**Thursday, June 5 (Group Report is due)**  
*Future of World Politics*

- CNN Cold War, The Wall Comes Down, Episode 23.
- Mounk, 2025. The World Happiness Report Is a Sham  
[https://yaschamounk.substack.com/p/the-world-happiness-report-is-a-sham?utm\\_source=post-email-title&publication\\_id=2709399&post\\_id=159447473&utm\\_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=885fk&triedRedirect=true&utm\\_medium=email](https://yaschamounk.substack.com/p/the-world-happiness-report-is-a-sham?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=2709399&post_id=159447473&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=885fk&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email)

- Fukuyama. 2022. More Proof That This Really Is the End of History. The Atlantic, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/10/francis-fukuyama-still-end-history/671761/>
- Mead. 2021. The End of the Wilsonian Era: Why Liberal Internationalism Failed. Foreign Affairs.