

York University
Department of Politics

Course: POLS 4403 3.0 Fall 2024

Economic Unions and Globalization

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Office: S639
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:45-3:45pm

Date and Time: Fridays, 11:30 am – 2:30 pm.
Place: VH 1154

Course description

This course explores how economic globalization fosters the tendency to form regional sub-global economic and political entities. Topics include an analysis of the trajectories of a number of economic unions like the EU, NAFTA, Mercosur and others.

The worldwide interdependence of economies have intensified over the last decades despite some current attempts to disentangle dependencies. Governments aim to set the framework of 'free trade' through various regulatory frameworks or they try to steer developments in their region with regional organizations hoping to gain a competitive advantage in the world economy. This course will use a wide range of case studies and theoretical approaches (including neo-Gramscian IR and post-colonial approaches) to analyze the global politics of economic unions. At the global level, the World Trade Organization will be analyzed as a contested institution of neoliberalism, which was met with strong resistance by social movements. At the regional level, the development from NAFTA to USMCA will be analyzed. The EU will serve as an example of a complex economic and political integration. Mercosur and the BRICS will serve as examples for economic unions and multilateral collaboration in the so-called Global South. A discussion of multilateral trade agreements such as CETA between Canada and the EU will highlight the intended and actual consequences of the agreement and its opposition by civil society.

The course will provide an insight into the structure, goals and political paradigms of economic unions, the resistance by social movements, and how economic unions affect the economic, social, and political life of citizens.

Course Format

This course is an in-person class. The course format puts the students' participation in the centre. All sessions require an active participation of all students.

Grade breakdown and Assignments:

	Due date	Breakdown
Active participation and attendance	continuously	20%

Reflection paper	Tuesdays before the session topic	15%
Essay proposal with annotated bibliography	October 21	20%
Essay	December 3	45%

All assignments have to be submitted on eClass latest midnight.

Active Participation:

Each week, you will receive a participation grade out of 10 possible points. Your final participation grade will be based on your best 11 weeks. (you have one “freebee”). If you are ill or otherwise excused, I will take this into consideration. In these cases, I may ask you for documentation.

Half of your daily participation grade will be for attendance. This means arriving on time, not leaving early and showing basic respect in class (i.e. no earphones, using social media, texting etc.). Points will be deducted if your attendance does not conform to these expectations. If the session involves a substantial portion of group work, everyone gets 7 points for attendance. The remaining points will be for active participation, including asking questions, contributing to the class discussion and generally showing knowledge of and interest in the material.

Reflection Papers

A reflection paper is a **700-800 words** reflection on one of the academic course readings. It should include a summary of the main points of the text (for example: what is the author’s research question, the theoretical approach, the case study, the argument or hypothesis and the main outcomes?). The student has to critically reflect on the text. For example: In your opinion, is the argument, the approach of the author convincing (explain why or why not)? What are the strength and weaknesses of the text? Provide reasons and/or examples for your assessment. Connect the reading to the session topic and the course topic as a whole.

Refer specifically to the readings whenever possible. **Please do not use any other sources.**

You are responsible for submitting one reflection paper over the course of the semester. The reflection papers will be posted on eClass. Your classmates can use it for class preparation. The reflection papers are due Tuesdays before the respective class.

The essay has to be submitted through Turnitin on the eClass page. I do not accept emailed assignments.

Essay Proposal

You have to submit a **paper proposal** before on the eClass site of the course (deadline see section “Grade breakdown”). The proposal should be **half a page** long plus **an annotated bibliography** with at least 3 academic publications. The proposal should include a thesis statement (a research question and an argument or hypothesis).

The essay has to be submitted on the eClass page. I do not accept emailed assignments.

Essay

The essay should be approximately **3500 – max. 4000 words (including the bibliography)**. Texts are to be double spaced, using a standard 12pt. font such as Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial and 1” margins. You should choose a research question, argument or hypothesis that is connected to the course topic. I expect you to use a collection of **peer-reviewed academic sources** (minimum **four**), use **correct citations** and referencing (Chicago, Harvard or MLA). If you need help with how to format a bibliography or correctly reference citations, please refer to [SPARK](#) at the York University website.

Please use non-academic literature (news articles, blogs, websites etc.) sparsely if at all. Your paper should include more peer-reviewed academic sources than non-academic literature.

The essay has to be submitted through Turnitin on the eClass page. I do not accept emailed assignments.

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

GRADE	GRADE POINT	PERCENT RANGE	DESCRIPTION
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional
A	8	80-89	Excellent
B+	7	75-79	Very Good
B	6	70-74	Good
C+	5	65-69	Competent
C	4	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55-59	Passing
D	2	50-54	Marginally Passing
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

Late Work Policy and Rubrics: I will post rubrics for the reflection papers and essays on eClass. The rubrics include the details about late submission.

Use of GenAI

The use of Chat GPT and other AI generators is developing fast in many areas of society. My aim is to provide a clear guideline about the use of GenAI in this course. I understand that policies of the university, practices of students and the capabilities of the software can change

quickly. For that reason, this guideline may have to be adapted during the course. Any changes to the guideline will be communicated in class.

AI software that use large language models can be helpful for doing research on the course topic and writing papers. However, you need to be aware of their limitations:

1. Errors: AI generators make mistakes and it make things up (called “hallucinations”). Assume the output is incorrect unless you check the claims with reliable sources. I will have to consider it your own error if you reproduce an error in your assignment.

2. Bias: Their output may reflect bias because the data they are trained on may reflect bias or may not include sufficient data from certain groups.

3. Citation: These tools use existing sources without citation. Therefore using their outputs puts you at risk of plagiarism.

Use the table below as a guidance when and how AI is allowed for an assignment in this course.

LEVEL		DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNMENT
1	No AI	The assignment is completed entirely without AI assistance. You have to rely solely on you knowledge, understanding, and skills. AI must not be used at any point during the assignment.	Active participation
2	AI-ASSISTED IDEA GENERATION AND STRUCTURING	AI can be used for the assignment for brainstorming, creating structures, and generating ideas for improving work. No AI content is allowed in the final submission.	-
3	AI-ASSISTED EDITING	AI can be used to make improvements to the clarity or quality of student created work to improve the final output, but no new content can be created using AI. AI can be used, but the use of AI content must be documented in an appendix.	Essay proposal, essay
4	AI TASK COMPLETION, HUMAN	AI is used to complete certain elements of the task, with students providing discussion or commentary on the AI-generated content. This	Reflection paper

	EVALUATION	level requires critical engagement with AI generated content and evaluating its output. You will use AI to complete specified tasks in your assessment. Any AI created content must be cited.	
5	FULL AI	AI should be used as a 'co-pilot' in order to meet the requirements of the assessment, allowing for a collaborative approach with AI and enhancing creativity. You may use AI throughout your assessment to support your own work and do not have to specify which content is AI generated.	-

Based on Perkins, M., Furze, L., Roe, J., & MacVaugh, J. (2024). The Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale (AIAS): A Framework for Ethical Integration of Generative AI in Educational Assessment. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 21(06), Article 06. <https://doi.org/10.53761/q3azde36>

The levels are cumulative. This means that level 3 includes level 1-3; level 4 includes levels 1-4.

For level 3: You cannot use **new** content created by AI in the final submission, **except:**

- the bibliography
- section headlines

For level 4: You can use content created by AI to write the summary of the text that you reflect on in the reflection paper. AI generated content has to be cited appropriately.

At the end of your assignment, add a note indicating which AI tool you used and how you used it. The section should show that you stayed in the limits of the allowed level of AI for the assignment.

Submitting work created through the use of generative AI tools that goes beyond the allowed extend may be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). See the section "Use of GenAI" below for more information.

In addition, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

Course Schedule

Session 1: Introductory session and course organization

Topic: What is this course about? What are the requirements? What are our (the lecturer's and your) expectations? How is the course structured?

Session 2: What is (economic) globalization?

Topic: Globalization is a word that is often used in academia and the public discourse. Everyone seems to know what it means and it is seldom defined. However, there are different definitions of globalization and it has different aspects (economic, political, cultural), there is disagreement when globalization started and how to study it. This sessions serves as an introduction into globalization and as an exchange about our prior knowledge about globalization.

Guiding Questions: How is globalization defined and which definition is most suitable for our course? How did economic globalization develop over time? What are the parameter of the globalization debate? What does it mean to study globalization from a critical perspective?

Literature/Media:

Jones, Andrew. "Introduction: Thinking about Globalization." In *Globalization: Key Thinkers*, edited by Andrew Jones, 1–18. Cambridge, UK; Malden, Mass.: Polity, 2010.

Steger, Manfred B. 2020. *Globalization*. 5th ed., 38-63. New York: Oxford University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198849452.003.0003> or

https://ocul-yor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_YOR/26r5oc/alma991036368609605164

Steger, Manfred B. "De-Globalization or Re-Globalization? Unmasking the Populist Paradox." In *Re-Globalization*, 35–43. London: Routledge, 2022. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003123804-4/de-globalization-re-globalization-unmasking-populist-paradox-manfred-steger?context=ubx&refId=4d5811e4-6561-4667-b9cc-2deefabe1f7c>.

Session 3: Managing the global economy: The World Trade Organization and its critics

Topic: The World Trade Organization (WTO) is a controversial organization that promotes free trade in the world that was envisioned after World War II but only established in 1994. During the presidency of Donald Trump, The US administration blocked the internal elections of positions at the WTO, which rendered the WTO dysfunctional. During the pandemic discussions rose about patent waivers for vaccine production in low-income countries. How did the WTO develop and which impact does it have on the global economy? Which role does, should and can have the WTO today in economic globalization?

The WTO (and other organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank) have been criticized for being instruments through which the hegemony of the system of global capitalism is maintained. These institutions, so the critic from the Global South, serve the promotion of the primacy of the states and economic interests that mainly benefit from global capitalism. While looking into how Bello justifies this claim, we can get an insight into the power dynamics between the Global North and the Global South.

Literature/Media:

Baldwin, Richard. "The World Trade Organization and the Future of Multilateralism." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 30, no. 1 (February 1, 2016): 95–116. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.30.1.95>.

Bello, Walden. *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy*. London: Zed Books, 2004. Chapter 3: Sidestepping democracy at the multilateral agencies. https://books-scholarsportal-info.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks0/gibson_crkn/2009-12-01/5/412855#page=86

Bello, Walden. *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy*. London: Zed Books, 2004. Chapter 4: The crisis of legitimacy. https://books-scholarsportal-info.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks0/gibson_crkn/2009-12-01/5/412855#page=93

Session 4: The European Union and regionalization: Aspects of European economic and political integration

Topic: The European Union is a highly integrated political and economic union. We will look into how global capitalism fosters Europe's economic integration. How do political and economic integration go hand in hand? We will discuss different developments within the EU in terms of differentiated economic integration.

Literature:

Ryner, Magnus, and Alan W. Cafruny. *The European Union and Global Capitalism: Origins, Development, Crisis*. London: Palgrave, 2017.
chapter 3: The single market: Consolidating Neo-liberalism.

Ryner, Magnus, and Alan W. Cafruny. *The European Union and Global Capitalism: Origins, Development, Crisis*. London: Palgrave, 2017.
chapter 6: Core and Periphery in an enlarged European Union.

Session 5: NAFTA/USMCA

Topic: The renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement created a lot of interest and sparked debate about the future of trade and economic relations in North America. In 2020 the new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (in Canada abbreviated CUSMA, in Mexico T-MEC) came into force. We will look into the changes and developments of NAFTA and USMCA. One of the focal point of public debate was the car industry. We will analyze this sector more closely in this session.

Literature:

Gagné, Gilbert, and Michèle Rioux, eds. "Introduction." In *NAFTA 2.0: From the First NAFTA to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*, 1–10. Canada and International Affairs. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. http://ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=3122082&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_1.

Arès, Mathieu, and Charles Bernard. "Make America Great Again: A New Auto Pact for the North American Car Industry?" In *NAFTA 2.0: From the First NAFTA to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*, edited by Gilbert Gagné and Michèle Rioux, 65–80. Canada and International Affairs. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.
http://ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=3122082&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_65.

Rioux, Michèle, Sandra Polaski, and Gilbert Gagné. "Conclusion-NAFTA's Impacts: Can the USMCA Do Better?" In *NAFTA 2.0: From the First NAFTA to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*, edited by Gilbert Gagné and Michèle Rioux, 261–76. Canada and International Affairs. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. http://ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=3122082&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_261.

Session 6: Mercosur

Topic: The Southern Common Market (Mercado Común del Sur – Mercosur) was created in 1991 as a response to economic globalization and the wish of further economic and political cooperation among the participating countries. We will be looking into the development of Mercosur over time and analyze the political dimension of the agreement: what are the political aspects of Mercosur, how have they changed and how has the legitimacy of the agreement be perceived over time?

Literature:

Desiderá Neto, Walter Antonio. "Mercosur." In *Handbook of International Trade Agreements*, edited by Robert E. Looney, 218–29. Routledge, 2019. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781351046954-19/mercotur-walter-antonio-desider%C3%A1-neto>.

Chodor, Tom. "The Changing Face of Mercosur: Legitimacy and the Politics of Scale in South American Regionalism." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 59, no. 2 (2021): 417–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13200>.

READING WEEK

Session 7: "Sub-imperialism": How to make sense of BRICS in economic globalization?

Topic: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are (or were?) considered as a potential trading bloc that could challenge the US and EU hegemony in economic globalization. What can we expect and how to analyze the BRICS? Would be a rising BRICS result in a more just economic world or will it just complicate a neo-imperialist world?

Literature

Bond, Patrick. "BRICS within Critical International Political Economy." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical International Political Economy*, edited by Alan Cafruny, Leila Simona Talani, and Gonzalo Pozo Martin, 351–68. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-50018-2>.

Robinson, William I. "The Transnational State and the BRICS: A Global Capitalism Perspective." *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2015): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.976012> or https://ocul-yor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_YOR/j50f41/cdi_proquest_journals_1652188691

Session 8: The negotiations of African states – EU trade relations

Topic: The European Union is currently negotiating with African states about new trade relations. Due to the colonial past, the relationship is complicated to say at least. Past agreements (the Lome and COTONU agreements) provide former colonies with a preferential access to the European market. However, they were also criticized for a neo-colonial character and for continuing a subordination of African countries to European priorities and exploitation of African resources. Among the bones of contention is the inclusion of political conditionality in trade agreements, which means that African countries have to implement human rights and democratic reforms.

Literature/Media:

Adetula, Victor, and Chike Osegbue. "Trade and the Economic Partnership Agreements in EU-Africa Relations." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU-Africa Relations*, 211–23. London: Routledge, 2020. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315170916-20/trade-economic-partnership-agreements-eu-africa-relations-victor-adetula-chike-osegbue?context=ubx&refId=d6447463-622e-4332-ab0f-5ea21acdd202>.

Sebhatu, Rahel Weldeab. "Applying Postcolonial Approaches to Studies of Africa-EU Relations." In *The Routledge Handbook of EU-Africa Relations*, edited by Toni Haastrup, Luís Mah, and Niall Duggan, 38–50. London: Routledge, 2020. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315170916-6/applying-postcolonial-approaches-studies-africa-eu-relations-rahel-weldeab-sebhatu?context=ubx&refId=14e69d84-f0ad-4e65-bd2f-5579e736a182>

Session 9: The Global Justice movement confronts neoliberal globalization and global elites

Topic: Neoliberal globalization and international organizations such as the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have become the target of protests. Labour unions, environmental groups and anti-corporate globalization movements mobilize against an economic globalization that prioritizes the profits of transnational corporations over citizen participation and the protection of the environment. We will look into the confrontation between social movements and international organizations about the course of globalization. How do social movements organize at the transnational level? Who are the main actors and what were the main protest events? What are some of the tensions within the movements?

Questions:

What can we learn about globalization processes by studying social movements? How do transnational coalitions attempt to overcome ideological, social and economic barriers and unequal North-South relations?

Literature:

Flesher Fominaya, Cristina. *Social Movements and Globalization. How Protests, Occupations and Up-risings Are Changing the World*. Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Chapter 4: The Global Justice Movement, pp51-80.

Smith, Jackie, Basak Gemicci, Samantha Plummer, and Melanie M. Hughes. "Transnational Social Movement Organizations and Counter-Hegemonic Struggles Today." *Journal of World-Systems Research* 24, no. 2 (August 14, 2018): 372–403. <https://jwsr.pitt.edu/ojs/jwsr/article/view/850/1176>

Session 10: CETA

Topic: CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) entered into force provisionally on 21 September 2017, meaning most of the agreement now applies. How are the Canadian government and the EU presenting the trade agreement to their citizens? What are the effects of the agreement? What are the critics saying? What are the likely outcomes for Canadians and Europeans?

Literature/Media:

Government/ Business perspective:

Export Development Canada. "CETA Trade Deal: Three Years On," October 13, 2020.

<https://www.edc.ca/en/article/ceta-trade-in-eu.html>.

Canada, Global Affairs. "CETA Explained." GAC, September 24, 2020.

https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/ceta-aecg/ceta_explained-aecg_apercu.aspx?lang=eng.

Critical NGOs, Think Tanks Perspective:

Corporate Europe Observatory. "The Great CETA Swindle," 2016.

<https://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/attachments/great-ceta-swindle.pdf>.

Sinclair, Scott, and Stuart Trew. *Taking Stock of CETA: Early Impacts of the EU – Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019.

<https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/taking-stock-ceta>

Trew, Stuart. "Correcting the Democratic Deficit in the CETA Negotiations: Civil Society Engagement in the Provinces, Municipalities, and Europe." *International Journal* 68, no. 4 (December 1, 2013): 568–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702013509313>.

Session 11: Building Megaregions: China, the New Silk Road and the Muslim world

Topic: China is advancing its economic and political cooperation in the world with the One Belt One Road Initiative (or the New Silk Road). With the transregional connection China engages more closely with the Islamic world. How is China building regional networks and how are countries responding to it? We will be looking at three cases to understand the challenges that China is facing and the countries' responses to an internationally more active China that asserts its global political economic power.

Literature:

Bianchi, Robert R. "What Is New about the New Silk Road?" In *China and the Islamic World: How the New Silk Road Is Transforming Global Politics*, 5–17. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190915285.003.0002>.

Bianchi, Robert R. "Pakistan: Deep Democracy and Shallow Strategy." In *China and the Islamic World: How the New Silk Road Is Transforming Global Politics*, 29–48. Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190915285.003.0004>.

Bianchi, Robert R. "Turkey: A Competing Partner." In *China and the Islamic World: How the New Silk Road Is Transforming Global Politics*, 49–62. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190915285.003.0005>.

Bianchi, Robert R. "Indonesia: Inherent Weakness and Increasing Leverage." In *China and the Islamic World: How the New Silk Road Is Transforming Global Politics*, 63–79. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190915285.003.0006>.

Session 12: Final Week

Topic: Review of the course, consultation about the final assignment.

Literature: No assigned readings this week.