

IR 305: Managing Global Problems

Instructor: Brett L. Carter
Office: Von KleinSmid 355A
Email: blcarter@usc.edu

Course meetings: Monday/Wednesday, 3.30p-4.50p
Location: VKC 150
Course website: See Blackboard
Office hours: Wednesday, 6.20p-8p

Revised: January 6, 2019

Course Motivation and Requirements

The modern world is unprecedented in human history. Living standards have never been higher. Rates of violence have never been lower. More people live under democratic governments than ever before. The first part of this course documents these trends and, drawing from disciplines across the social science, attempts to explain them. The second part of the course surveys the challenges to this historical moment. We focus on the global implications of climate change, the resurgence of autocratic governments, the dynamics of civil resistance, the causes and consequences of income inequality in Western democracies, and the future of the post-World War II international order, among other topics.

The course has three requirements, which constitute the basis for grades. First, students are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to class and contribute substantially to class discussions. Weekly reading assignments will average roughly 100 pages. This will constitute 20% of final grades. Second, students will complete a midterm and final exam, which will constitute 25% and 35%, respectively, of final grades. The exams will require students to skillfully synthesize the course's themes and draw on relevant scholarship. The midterm will be administered in class on Thursday, March 8; the final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar.

The course will feature two writing assignments, which, together, will constitute 20% of final grades. For the first assignment, due Friday, March 1, students will describe a global problem that they believe is either particularly urgent or particularly neglected. The essay should read as an argument for international attention, and so should be carefully substantiated with empirical evidence. For the second assignment, due Friday, April 28, students will propose a policy solution for the major global problem they described in the first essay. Again, this policy solution should be rooted in evidence; it should also anticipate and respond to counterarguments. Ideally, the two essays together will provide a foundation for an op-ed, which could be submitted to the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, or some other major outlet. There is no minimum length requirement, though neither essay should exceed 2,000 words.

The course is reading intensive, and many of the readings employ statistical techniques to adjudicate among possible answers to substantively important questions. Accordingly, the course is particularly well suited to students who have introductory training in basic statistics. Such training, however, is not required, and students without it are encouraged to enroll as well. To

that end, each class lecture will both summarize the weekly readings and thoroughly explain any quantitative methods they employ. The course is designed to give students an appreciation for quantitative approaches to social science.

All readings will be made available on the course website, save one: *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet*, by Mark Lynas.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards.¹ Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct.² If you engage in plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, you will fail the course. If you aid someone else's misconduct, you will fail the course.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity³ or to the Department of Public Safety.⁴ This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men⁵ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage⁶ describes reporting options and other resources.

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute,⁷ which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs⁸ provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information⁹ will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is 213.740.0776.

¹<https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>

²<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>

³<http://equity.usc.edu>

⁴<http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety>

⁵<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/>

⁶<http://sarc.usc.edu>

⁷<http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>

⁸http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

⁹<http://emergency.usc.edu>

Part 1: This Moment in Human History

Lecture 1: Introduction and Course Overview

Date: Monday, January 7

The introductory lecture provides an overview of the course. It outlines current political and economic trends across the world and situates them in historical context.

Lecture 2: The Politics of the Global Wealth Distribution

Date: Wednesday, January 9, and Monday, January 14

What is the global income distribution? How did it get this way? Why? This lecture focuses on why some countries are rich and others are not.

Elhanan Helpman. 2010. *The Mystery of Economic Growth*. Cambridge: Harvard University.

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development." *The American Economic Review* 91(5):1369-1401.

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2002. "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 91(5):1369-1401.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*. New York: Crown. Chapter 3.

No Class

Date: Wednesday, January 16

University Holiday

Date: Monday, January 21

Lecture 3: Political Institutions and the Asian Take-Off

Date: Wednesday, January 23, and Monday, January 28

The global economic landscape has shifted dramatically since 2000. Most significantly, the share of the world's population living on less than \$2 per day has declined from roughly 45% to 22%. This change was largely driven by an economic take-off in South and East Asia. Why did this take-off occur? And what are its prospects for the future?

Yasheng Huang. 2012. “How Did China Take Off?”. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 26(4):147-170.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*. New York: Crown. Chapter 5.

Lecture 4: The African Take-Off

Date: Wednesday, January 30, and Monday, February 4

Though it has received substantially less attention, Sub-Saharan Africa has enjoyed an economic take-off as well. This lecture attempts to understand the origins of this economic take-off. Why did it emerge? Is foreign aid responsible, and can it help?

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*. New York: Crown. Chapters 12-14.

Xavier Sala-i-Martin and Maxim Pinkovskiy. 2010. “African Poverty is Falling ... Much Faster Than You Think!” *NBER Working Paper Series* 15775.

William Easterly. 2009. “Can the West Save Africa?” *Journal of Economic Literature* 47(2): 373-44.

Njuguna Ndung’u. 2018. “New Frontiers in Africa’s Digital Potential.” In *Foresight Africa*, Brahim S. Coulibaly ed. Washington: Brookings. Chapter 5.

Lecture 5: The Origins, Evolution, and Implications of Political Freedom

Date: Wednesday, February 6, and Monday, February 11

Liberal democracy is now the world’s most common form of government, and the only deemed legitimate by the international community. How did this happen? When? Does economic growth foster democracy? This lecture attempts to answer these questions. This lecture also focuses on what we know about the welfare effects of democracy. Do democratic governments provide better health care? Do they provide better education? Do they better protect fundamental human rights?

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2001. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge. Chapters 2 and 3.

Timothy Besley and Masayuki Kudamatsu. 2006. “Health and Democracy.” *American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings* 96(2):313-318.

Matthew Baum and David Lake. 2003. “The Political Economy of Growth: Democracy and Human Capital.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2):333-47.

Lecture 6: Human Violence in Historical Perspective

Date: Wednesday, February 13, and Wednesday, February 20

Much recent political discourse would have us believe that the modern world is a uniquely dangerous place. Is this true? This lecture documents a secular decline in the rate of interstate and intrastate violence around the world, and attempts to understand why.

Steven Pinker. 2012. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. New York: Penguin Books. Chapter 4.

Bruce Russett. 1994. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*. New York: Princeton. Chapters 1-2.

Erik Gartzke. 2007. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1):156-191.

Andrew Francis. 2009. "The Human Capital Peace: Development and International Conflict." *Defence and Peace Economics* 20(5):395-411.

Lecture 7: The Rise of Income Inequality in the West

Date: Monday, February 25; Wednesday, February 27; and Monday, March 4

Lecture 2 made clear that the Western world has experienced exponential economic growth since the Industrial Revolution. This lecture focuses on a more recent economic change in the West: the rise of income inequality. This lecture places that rise in historical perspective, attempts to explain its origins, and probes its political and social effects.

Branko Milanovic. 2013. "Global Income Inequality in Numbers" *Global Policy* 4(2):198-208.

David Autor *et al.* 2017. "Importing Polarization." Unpublished Working Paper.

Cameron Ballard-Rosa *et al.* 2018. "Economic Decline, Social Identity, and Authoritarian Values in the United States." Unpublished.

Miles Corak. 2013. "Income Inequality, Equality of Opportunity, and Intergenerational Mobility." IZA Discussion Paper 7520.

Jonathan Parker *et al.* 2011. "Consumer Spending and the Economic Stimulus Payments of 2008." NBER Working Paper 16684.

Thomas L. Hungerford. 2012. "Taxes and the Economy: An Economic Analysis of the Top Tax Rates Since 1945." NBER Working Paper 16684.

J. Alexander Branham *et al.* 2016. "When Do the Rich Win?" Unpublished.

Markus Brueckner and Daniel Lederman. 2015. "Effects of Income Inequality on Aggregate Output." World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 7317. (Recommended)

Jongmook Choe. 2008. "Income Inequality and Crime in the United States." *Economics Letters* 101:31-33. (Recommended)

Pablo Fajnzylber *et al.* 2002. "Inequality and Violent Crime." *Journal of Law and Economics*. (Recommended)

Midterm Exam

Date: Wednesday, March 6

Part 2: Gun Violence in Comparative Perspective

Lecture 8: Gun Violence in Comparative Perspective

Date: Monday, March 18, and Wednesday, March 20

Violence is declining around the world. How, then, do we make sense of gun violence in America? What are the trends? Are trends in the United States so different than those elsewhere?

Peruse the Harvard School of Public Health's Resource on Gun Violence: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hirc/firearm-research/guns-and-death/>

Steven D. Levitt. 2004. "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s: Four Factors that Explain the Decline and Six that Do Not." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18(1):163-190.

Shamena Anwar *et al.* 2012. "The Impact of Jury Race in Criminal Trials." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127:1017-1055.

Michael Mueller-Smith. 2015. "The Criminal and Labor Market Impacts of Mass Incarceration." Unpublished.

Sonja B. Start and M. Marit Rehavi. 2014. "Racial Disparity in Federal Criminal Sentences." *Journal of Political Economy* 122(6):1320-1354.

Part 3: The Crisis of the Post-World War II Order

Lecture 9: How the End of History was Announced

Date: Monday, March 25

To understand whether the post-World War II international order is in crisis – and, if so, to understand the stakes – this lecture returns to its creation: the moment when Francis Fukuyama announced “the end of history” in 1989.

Francis Fukuyama. 1989. “The End of History?” *The National Interest*.

Francis Fukuyama. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press. Chapters TBD.

Lecture 10: European Unification and the Origins of the Eurozone Crisis

Date: Wednesday, March 27, and Monday, April 1

This lecture probes the origins of the European Union: why and how it was constructed. It then probes the European Union’s economic decline, which may give way to its political decline as well. We focus particular attention on the European debt crisis, which economists predicted at the creation of the European Monetary Union.

Please listen to the “This American Life” podcast available on the course website.

Mark Copelovitch *et al.* 2016. “The Political Economy of the Euro Crisis” *Comparative Political Studies* 49(7).

Lecture 11: The Future of Europe

Date: Wednesday, April 3

This lecture focuses on the implications of the Eurozone crisis for the future of Europe, and of the European idea.

Yann Algan *et al.* 2017. “The European Trust Crisis and the Rise of Populism.” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*.

Part 4: New Contours in the Struggle for Freedom

Lecture 12: Authoritarian Resurgence and the Politics of Information

Date: Monday, April 8

As Europe and the United States have turned inwards, scholars and policy makers increasingly ask if the world is experiencing a democratic recession. This lecture asks why. In so doing, it also probes whether *information* is a force for democratic change.

Larry Diamond. 2015. "Facing Up to the Democratic Recession." *Journal of Democracy* 26(1):141-155.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 2(107):1-18.

Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2016. "How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument." Unpublished.

Andrew Weisburd *et al.* 2016. "Trolling for Trump: How Russia is Trying to Destroy our Democracy." *War on the Rocks*.

Darin Christensen and Francisco Garfias. 2018. "Can You Hear Me Now? How Communication Technology Affects Protest and Repression." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 13:89-117.

Lecture 13: Civil Resistance, Violent and Non-Violent

Date: Wednesday, April 10, and Monday, April 15

The Colored Revolutions of the early 2000s and the Arab Spring of 2011 suggest the potency of "people power": the capacity of non-violent civil resistance to force political change in closed regimes. Scholars have proposed a variety of reasons that non-violent resistance may be more effective than violent resistance. How persuasive is this evidence?

William J. Dobson. 2012. *The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy*. New York: Knopf Doubleday. Chapters TBD.

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: Columbia University. Chapters 2-3.

Ryan D. Enos *et al.* 2016. "Can Violent Protest Change Local Policy Support? Evidence from the Aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles Riot." Unpublished.

Bernd Beber *et al.* 2014. "Intergroup Violence and Political Attitudes: Evidence from a Dividing Sudan." *Journal of Politics*.

Brett L. Carter. 2018. "Autocrats Versus Activists in Africa." *Journal of Democracy* 29(1).

Part 5: Climate Change and Our Human Future

Lecture 14: Climate Change and Our Human Future

Date: Wednesday, April 17; Monday, April 22; and Wednesday, April 24

The course's final lecture provides an overview of the scientific consensus on global climate change and explores its consequences. It focuses, in particular, on the effects of global climate change on food production and political violence.

Mark Lynas. 2007. *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet*. New York: Fourth Estate.

Solomon M. Hsiang, Kyle C. Meng, and Mark A. Cane. 2011. "Civil Conflicts are Associated with the Global Climate." *Nature* 476: 438-441. (Recommended)

Marshall Burke, Solomon M. Hsiang, and Edward Miguel. 2015. "Global Non-Linear Effect of Temperature on Economic Production." *Nature* 527: 235-239. (Recommended)