

**GVPT409G-19 Seminar in International Relations and World Politics: Corporations in the Global Political Economy**

**Syllabus v1.0**

Spring 2019

Tawes 0310

Prof. Virginia Haufler

Office Hours:

Mondays 1-2pm 3117J Chincoteague

Wednesdays 1-2 pm 0118 Dorchester

Other times by appointment

[vhaufler@umd.edu](mailto:vhaufler@umd.edu)

Sean Rao Teaching Assistant

Office Hours: T11-12pm Th2-3pm Tydings

Other times by appointment

[seanrao@umd.edu](mailto:seanrao@umd.edu)

The expansion in size, number and influence of multinational corporations (MNCs) is one of the main forces driving the process of globalization in the modern era. Business is at the center of many political issues, not just economic ones, as they bargain for advantage with governments in both industrialized and developing countries. Increasingly they also negotiate with international organizations and transnational activist groups over issues of policy, values and norms. One of the central questions in international political economy today is how to regulate or govern global corporations across national legal and cultural boundaries.

This course introduces the corporation, and asks: do corporations have too much power in the global system? We explore this through both scholarship and popular debates over the nature of capitalism today, and the impact of corporate interests and norms in specific issue areas. We will focus particular attention on the relative balance of power between governments, corporations, and civil society groups in transnational regulation and global governance. The readings include different perspectives, and present ideas, approaches, and empirical evidence. The course is primarily qualitative in approach, starting with historical developments and different debates about corporate power and accountability. The aim is to help you develop a sophisticated understanding that goes beyond bumper stickers maligning corporations or celebrating unfettered capitalism.

Please let me know within the first two weeks of the course if you have any religious or other accommodations that we need to discuss, so that I can help you succeed in this class. If you miss a class on a day when we have an exam or an assignment due, you will need to document the reason in order to be excused. University policies are collected together here:

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Late Policy: All assignments should be submitted on time as listed on the ELMS Assignment. After a 24 hours grace period, we will start deducting points. So don't be late!

Assignments are designed both to help you learn and to assess whether you have learned. If you don't attend class you won't do well on the assignments; if you don't do well on the assignments, you probably aren't learning. If you cheat on assignments you are most definitely not learning anything. All students should be familiar with University policies on academic integrity—cheating will not be tolerated. The rules state that "Any member of the University community who has witnessed an apparent act of academic dishonesty, or has information that reasonably leads to the conclusion that such an act has occurred or has been attempted, has the responsibility to inform the Office of Judicial Programs promptly."

Readings:

Required books:

John Mikler, *The Political Power of Global Corporations*

John Gerard Ruggie, *Just Business: Multinational Corporations and Human Rights*

The readings are available via ELMS Course Reserves or through UM Libraries.

Requirements:

1. Knowledge Survey #1 and #2 (20 points each)—Survey of your familiarity with key concepts and ideas before and after taking this course.
2. Small Assignments (80 points total)—Small in-class exercises, quizzes and homework.
3. Analytical essays (100 points each)—Write two essays analyzing the main point or argument in the readings for one week (both classes), synthesizing the material, comparing/ contrasting, and raising questions about the what the authors say; one is due before the mid-term and one is due after; be prepared to talk about your essay in class.
4. Research paper (250 points total)—Research a significant question about the politics of business in a global context, develop alternative answers and evidence to assess competing argument. The assignment is broken down into three steps—the topic, the literature review and outline, and the final paper.
5. Midterm and Final exams (450 points total; 200 midterm and 250 final)—The midterm and final exams will include both short answer questions and longer essay questions.

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DATE	TOPIC/ READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
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PART I	HISTORY AND BACKGROUND	
<b>January 28</b> <b>Introduction</b>	Osnos, "The Investor Seth Klarman, in a Rare Interview, Offers a Warning. Davos Should Listen" <i>The New Yorker</i> January 22, 2019 <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-investor-seth-klarman-in-a-rare-interview-offers-a-warning-davos-should-listen">https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-investor-seth-klarman-in-a-rare-interview-offers-a-warning-davos-should-listen</a>	
<b>January 30</b> <b>Different Perspectives on History</b>	Micklethwaite and Wooldridge, Introduction and Chapter 8, <i>The Company: A Short History of a Revolutionary Idea</i> – ELMS Reserve	<b>Knowledge Survey #1 due Friday Feb 1</b>
<b>February 4</b> <b>Different Perspectives on History</b>	Suwandi and Foster, "Multinational Corporations and the Globalization of Monopoly Capital" <i>Monthly Review</i> July 2016 <a href="https://monthlyreview.org/2016/07/01/multinational-corporations-and-the-globalization-of-monopoly-capital-from-the-1960s-to-the-present/">https://monthlyreview.org/2016/07/01/multinational-corporations-and-the-globalization-of-monopoly-capital-from-the-1960s-to-the-present/</a>	
<b>February 6</b> <b>Current Trends</b>	UNCTAD <i>World Investment Report 2018—Overview</i> (skim this)	
Part II	THE PURPOSE AND POWER OF CORPORATIONS	
<b>February 11</b> <b>Purpose</b>	Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to increase its Profits" <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> September 17, 1970 Porter and Kramer, "The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility" <i>Harvard Business Review</i> December 2006 Wolf, "We must Rethink the Purpose of the Corporation" <i>Financial Times</i> 2018	
<b>February 13</b> <b>International Political Economy</b>	Mikler, Ch. 1 Introduction and Ch. 2 Theorizing, <i>The Political Power of Global Corporations</i>	
<b>February 18</b> <b>Corporate Power</b>	Fuchs, "The Commanding Heights? The Strength and Fragility of Business Power in Global Politics," <i>Millennium</i> 33,3 2005: 771-801	

<b>February 20 Industry Concentration</b>	Compston, "The Network of Corporation Control" <i>Business and Politics</i> 15,3 2013: 357-79 Knight, "The Spectacular Power of Big Lens," <i>The Guardian</i> May 10, 2018	
<b>February 25 National Identity</b>	Mikler, Ch. 3 Geographical Concentration <i>The Political Power of Global Corporations</i>	
<b>February 27 States and Corporations</b>	Mikler, Ch.4 Institutional Embeddedness <i>The Political Power of Global Corporations</i> Strange, "States, Firms and Diplomacy" <i>International Affairs</i> 68,1 1992 1-15	
<b>March 4 Structural Power</b>	Spar and Yoffie, "A Race to the Bottom or Governance from the Top?" Ch. 1 <i>Coping with Globalization</i> eds. Hart and Prakash Farrell, Henry, and Abraham L. Newman, "Structuring power: Business and Authority beyond the Nation State," <i>Business and Politics</i> 2015 17(3): 527-552.	<b>Research Paper Topic</b>
<b>March 6 Discursive Power</b>	Prakash and Sell, "Using Ideas Strategically: The Contest between Business and NGO Networks in Intellectual Property Rights," <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> 48,1 2004: 143-75	
<b>March 11 Accountability</b>	McAteer and Pulver, "The Corporate Boomerang: Shareholder Transnational Advocacy Networks Targeting Oil Companies in the Ecuadorian Amazon," <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> 2009 9,1: 1-32	
<b>March 13 Naming and Shaming</b>	Bartley and Child, "Shaming the Corporation: The Social Production of Targets and the Anti-Sweatshop Movement," <i>American Sociological Review</i> 2014	<b>Review Guide for Mid-term Available</b>
<b>March 18-20</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>March 25 Purpose, Power and Accountability</b>	Reinecke and Ansari, "Taming Wicked Problems: The Role of Framing in the Construction of Corporate Social Responsibility" <i>Journal of Management Studies</i> 2015 53,3	<b>Essay #1</b>
<b>March 27</b>	<b>Mid-term Exam</b>	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>

Part III	Issues—The Challenge of Governing Global Corporations	
<b>April 1 Protecting Investors</b>	Wouters and Chané, “Multinational Corporations in International Law” Working Paper No. 129 December 2013 KU Leuven	
<b>April 3 Private Governance</b>	Mikler, Ch. 5 Private Authority and the Potential for Private Governance, <i>The Political Power of Global Corporations</i>	
<b>April 8 Human Rights</b>	Ruggie, Ch. 1 “The Challenge” and Ch.2 “No Silver Bullet” in <i>Just Business</i> Goñi, “Argentina: Two Ex-Ford Executives Convicted in Torture Case” <i>The Guardian</i> December 11, 2018	
<b>April 10 Human Rights</b>	Ruggie, Ch. 3 “Protect, Respect, and Remedy” and Ch. 5 “Next Steps” <i>Just Business</i>	<b>Research Paper Literature Review/ Outline</b>
<b>April 15 Labor Standards</b>	Maike J. Drebes “Impediments to the implementation of voluntary codes of conduct in production factories of the Global South: so much to do, so little done,” <i>Third World Quarterly</i> , 35:7, 1256-1272 O’Keefe, “Inside Big Chocolate’s Labor Problem” <i>Fortune</i> March 1, 2016 <a href="http://fortune.com/big-chocolate-child-labor/">http://fortune.com/big-chocolate-child-labor/</a>	
<b>April 17 Environment</b>	Dauvergne and Lister, “Big Brand Sustainability: Governance Prospects and Environmental Limits,” <i>Global Environmental Change</i> 22,1 2012: 36-45 Beer, “Exclusive: Patagonia is in Business to Save our Home Planet” <i>Fast Company</i> December 13, 2018 Peters, “A Coalition of Giant Brands...” <i>Fast Company</i> January 26, 2019	
<b>April 22 Climate</b>	Bommier and Renouard, “Corporate Responsibility in the Climate Crisis” <i>Public Books</i> January 21, 2019 <a href="https://www.publicbooks.org/corporate-responsibility-in-the-climate-crisis/">https://www.publicbooks.org/corporate-responsibility-in-the-climate-crisis/</a> Green, “Private Standards in the Climate Regime: The Greenhouse Gas Protocol” <i>Business and Politics</i> 12,3 2010: 1-37 Hall, “Exxon Knew about Climate Change almost 40 Years Ago,” <i>Scientific American</i> October 26, 2015	

<b>April 24 Natural Resources</b>	Augenstein, "Paradise Lost: Sovereign State Interest, Global Resource Exploration and the Politics of Human Rights," <i>The European Journal of International Law</i> 27,3 2016	
<b>April 29 Food</b>	Clapp, "Mega-Mergers on the Menu: Corporate Concentration and the Politics of Sustainability in the Global Food System," <i>Global Environmental Politics</i> 2018 18,2: 12-33 Pfister, "Leaked: Coca-Cola's Worldwide Political Strategy to Kill Soda Taxes," Medium October 14, 2016 <a href="https://medium.com/cokeleak/leaked-coca-colas-worldwide-political-strategy-to-kill-soda-taxes-9717f361fb04">https://medium.com/cokeleak/leaked-coca-colas-worldwide-political-strategy-to-kill-soda-taxes-9717f361fb04</a> Lambert, "Study: Coca-Cola Shaped China's Efforts to Fight Obesity," <i>NPR Goats and Soda</i> January 10, 2019	
<b>May 1 Global Health</b>	McDaniel, Intinarelli and Malone, "Tobacco Industry Issues Management Organizations: Creating a Global Corporate Network to Undermine Public Health," <i>Globalization and Health</i> 4,2: 1-18	<b>Research Paper Due Friday May 3</b>
<b>May 6 Information Technology</b>	Kenney and Zysman, "The Rise of the Platform Economy," <i>Issues in Science and Technology</i> 32,3 2016 <a href="https://issues.org/the-rise-of-the-platform-economy/">https://issues.org/the-rise-of-the-platform-economy/</a>	
<b>May 8 Conflict</b>	Haufler, "Governing Conflict through Transnational Corporations: The Case of Conflict Minerals," in <i>Transnational Actors in War and Peace</i> , eds. Malet and Anderson	<b>Essay #2  Review Guide for Final Exam Available</b>
<b>May 13 The Future of Global Corporations</b>	Mikler, Ch. 6 "Conclusion: Three Implications," <i>The Political Power of Global Corporations</i> Visser, "CSR 2.0"	<b>Knowledge Survey #2</b>
<b>May ?</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>