

GVPT409G-22 Seminar in International Relations and World Politics:
Corporations in the Global Political Economy



Syllabus v1.0 Spring 2022
MW2-3:15pm Tydings 1101

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Have questions? Let's meet!
In person or by zoom!

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The expansion in size, number and influence of multinational corporations (MNCs) is one of the most striking features of the modern global economy. Business is at the center of political debates 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. They are key elements of our current political-economic system, often described as "corporate capitalism" in contrast to other forms of capitalism. Most people recognize their power and influence, yet this is not always a core feature of political science courses.

Do corporations have too much power in the global system? What motivates them? How do they shape different areas of policymaking? Are they the cause of global problems—or potential solutions? Is it possible to govern them globally? We explore questions about corporation in both scholarship and popular debates over the nature of capitalism today and the impact of corporate interests and norms in specific issue areas. The readings include different 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 sticker slogans maligning corporations or celebrating unfettered capitalism.

Good to Know:

Course Information: Your main guide to the course is the ELMS-Canvas course platform. This is where you will find the schedule, assignments and due dates, recordings of lectures, lecture slides, and other material. I communicate with you through the Inbox and Announcements. Much of the material is also available on this syllabus but any changes and updates appear first on ELMS-Canvas. The readings for class are available on the Perusall platform which will score your engagement with the material.

Absences: Notify me of any excused absence prior to class or as soon after as possible. Do not come to class if you are feeling ill! Provide documentation if you will miss more than one class due to a medical condition. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, let me know before the end of the schedule adjustment period.

Accommodations: Please let me know by Feb. 4 if you need any accommodations (health, disability, other commitments) to help you succeed in this class.

Pandemic Precautions: I requested to move the class to a larger room in order to give you the ability to distance from others. All of us—me included—must be vaccinated, boosted, and wear high-grade masks (N95, KN95, KN94).

Late Policy: Assignments must be submitted through ELMS-Canvas—except for weekly Perusall assignments. You have a *24-hour grace period for ELMS-Canvas assignments* before I start deducting points for lateness. Talk to me if you encounter problems!

Don't cheat: Just don't. All students should be familiar with University policies on academic integrity—cheating will not be tolerated.

University policies: There are a lot of relevant policies that have been gathered here: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Assignments:

See ELMS-Canvas>Assignments for more details on each assignment. All readings are available on the Perusall platform—you need to register with your UM email address and sign up for this course at **HAUFLER-4ZNAY**

1. Prior Knowledge Survey Questionnaire (5 points)—survey of your familiarity with key concepts and ideas.
2. Perusall (10 points)— We will use the Perusall platform to provide an interactive online discussion of the readings. As you read, highlight passages to ask questions, make comments, or criticize. Add your own perspective and information. Respond to the comments of other

students and even upvote the ones you think are particularly perceptive.

3. Participation (10 points)—Show up for class and demonstrate engagement with the material by contributing relevant comments. Let me know if you will miss a class in advance and provide documentation for long-term illness or absence. If you feel at all unwell, please stay home. I will be flexible in grading participation. NOTE: I will record the class and make lecture slides available on ELMS-Canvas.

4. Two Essays (20 points each for 40)—take-home timed essay assignments.

5. Research Project (35 points)—Research a significant question about the politics of business in a global context. This can be submitted as a research paper, video, or narrated slide presentation. Regardless of format, all require: submission of topic for approval, outline, main project with annotated bibliography, short summary video posted online, and short response essay to someone else's project.

WEEK ONE Can we hold global corporations accountable?	DUE
January 24 How can we hold corporations accountable? Review the syllabus! Sign up for Perusall! January 26 Where do corporations fit in international relations? Walzenbach, "Global Political Economy"	Prior Knowledge Survey Due January 28
WEEK TWO How did we get here?	
January 31 What is a corporation? Micklethwaite and Wooldridge, <i>The Company: A Short History of a Revolutionary Idea</i> Introduction and Chapter 8 February 2 What is the history of corporations and empire? Suwandi and Foster, "Multinational Corporations and the Globalization of Monopoly Capital"	
WEEK THREE Do corporations have a purpose?	
February 7 Are corporations beholden only to owners? Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to increase its Profits" 1970 Henderson, "The Case against Corporate Social Responsibility" Misamore, "Apple & Google Approach...Principal-Agent Problem" February 9 What about stakeholders beyond the owners? Schwab, "What is Stakeholder Capitalism?"	

Goodman, "Stakeholder Capitalism Gets a Report Card. It's Not Good."	
WEEK FOUR What are the sources of corporate power?	
Feb 14 What are sources of corporate power? Fuchs, "The Commanding Heights? The Strength and Fragility of Business Power in Global Politics," <i>Millennium</i> 33,3 2005: 771-801	
Feb 16 Are corporations independent or embedded in society? Ruggie, "Multinationals as Global Institution: Power, Authority, and Relative Autonomy," <i>Regulation and Governance</i> 2018 Babic, et al, "Who is More Powerful—States or Corporations?" <i>The Conversation</i> July 10, 2018	
WEEK FIVE How are corporations governed globally?	
Feb 21 What are existing rules and organizations governing MNCs? Bartley, "Transnational Corporations and Global Governance"	Project topic ideas due Feb 25
Feb 23 What are new forms of global governance? Kell, "12 Years Later: Reflections on the UN Global Compact" Galvão Ferreira, "The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative"	
WEEK SIX What is the structural power of corporations?	
Feb 28 Do global corporate ties create political leverage? Farrell and Newman, "Chokepoints," <i>Harvard Business Review</i> Jan-Feb 2020 Mosley, "Racing to the Bottom"	
March 2 How does corporate concentration affect power? Knight, "The Spectacular Power of Big Lens," <i>The Guardian</i> May 10, 2018 <i>Land of the Giants</i> Podcast Season 1: "Amazon" August 27, 2019 Interview with Michelle Meagher, "Competition is Killing Us" for LabourBusiness.org	
WEEK SEVEN What is the relationship between corporations and foreign policy?	
March 7 How do states pursue foreign policy via investment policy? McCauley, et al "Chinese FDI in Africa" Bauerle-Danzman, "Is the US going to screen outbound investment?" Atlantic Council	Essay #1 will be available on March
March 9 How does corporate influence affect foreign policy?	

Kim and Milner, "Multinational Corporations and their Influence through Lobbying on Foreign Policy"	11 due March 18
WEEK EIGHT How do corporations exercise discursive power?	
<p>March 14 How do companies and NGOs frame a global health issue? 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</p> <p>March 16 How do corporations shape public debate? Cunningham, "Oil Industry's Public Climate Denial Campaign..." <i>DesmogUK</i> Jan 15, 2021 Mufson, "More than 450 Scientists call on PR and Ad Agencies..." <i>Washington Post</i> 2022</p>	
March SPRING BREAK March 20-27	
WEEK NINE Why is it so hard to control transnational corruption?	
<p>March 28 What is the character and extent of offshore finance? IJCJ, "The Panama Papers" Lind, "The New Class War" <i>American Affairs</i> Summer 2017</p> <p>March 30 What facilitated new commitments to global corporate taxation? Mason, "The Fine Print on the Global Tax Deal," <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 2021</p>	
WEEK TEN What is the situation of workers today?	
<p>April 4 What is the true cost of fast fashion? Bartley and Child, "Shaming the Corporation: The Social Production of Targets and the Anti-Sweatshop Movement," <i>American Sociological Review</i> 2014 Heywood, "Child Trafficking—Profiting from Vulnerability" <i>Global Policy Journal</i> 2020</p> <p>April 6 What is the situation of workers in the US? Legum, "A Tale of Two Thefts" <i>Popular Information</i> 2021</p>	Project Outline/ sources due April 4
WEEK ELEVEN Are businesses responsible for human rights?	
<p>April 11 What is the business and human rights agenda? Deva, "From 'business or human rights' to business and human rights" <i>Research Handbook on Human Rights and Business</i> 2021</p>	

<p>April 13 How are extractive companies addressing human rights? Olsen, et al, "Human Rights in the Oil and Gas Industry" <i>Business and Society</i> 2021</p>	
<p>WEEK TWELVE What are limits to corporate sustainability efforts?</p>	
<p>April 18 Which companies can adapt to the energy transition? Colgan, et al, "Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change"</p> <p>April 20 What is the role of consumers? Dauvergne and Lister, "Big Brand Sustainability: Governance Prospects and Environmental Limits," <i>Global Environmental Change</i> 22,1 2012: 36-45</p>	<p>Project is due April 22, video due April 27</p>
<p>WEEK THIRTEEN How have companies influenced public health?</p>	
<p>April 25 How did the tobacco industry influence global regulation? 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</p> <p>April 27 How has Big Pharma benefited from the pandemic? Sell, "What COVID-19 Reveals about 21st century capitalism" <i>Development</i> 2020 Boland, "Why Big Pharma had a Responsibility to profit from the pandemic," <i>The Conversation</i> 2021</p>	<p>Essay #2 will be available on April 29 due May 6</p>
<p>WEEK FOURTEEN What has been the impact of Big Tech?</p>	
<p>May 2 How is AI changing international politics? Srivastava, "Algorithmic Governance and the International Politics of Big Tech," <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 2021</p> <p>May 4 Can Big Tech Save Democracy? Farrel and Weyl, "Can Big Tech Serve Democracy?" <i>Boston Review</i> 2021</p>	
<p>WEEK FIFTEEN What is the future of global corporate capitalism?</p>	
<p>May 9 Where do we go from here? Interview with R. Henderson, Reimagining Capitalism in a World on Fire https://youtu.be/GHAL639OFFE Milanovic, "Transcending Capitalism," <i>Global Policy Opinion</i> 2020</p>	<p>Response due May 9</p>