

SOSC 2290: Understanding Globalization

Dong Zhang

Spring Semester, 2025–2026

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Office Hours: Tuesday 14:00–15:00

Class Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:30–11:50

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Course Overview

We live in a deeply integrated and interdependent world. Globalization has boosted the growth of the world economy and raised living standards in many parts of the world. We are also facing great challenges and risks arising from globalization. What are the driving forces behind globalization, and to what extent does it shape the global economic and political order? This course is devoted to understanding the cross-border movement of goods, capital, production, and people from both political and economic perspectives. It aims to expose students to the major debates on globalization and equip students with the frameworks and skills to analyze the causes and consequences of globalization.

Enrolment Requirement

No prerequisite coursework is required.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of the course, the aim is that students will have improved the ability to:

1. Use key concepts and theoretical frameworks to enhance understanding of globalization;
2. Apply critical thinking and analytical writing skills to examine global affairs;
3. Assess the validity of existing arguments based on empirical evidence;
4. Develop a logical argument or theory that can be evaluated using evidence.

Required Texts and Materials

There are no required text books for this course. All readings will be made available in electronic form through the course website.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment Task	Details	Weight (%)	Deadline
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit ONE or TWO discussion questions regarding weekly assigned readings via Canvas. • Make thoughtful contributions to classroom discussions. • Participate in TEN randomly scheduled polls or quizzes throughout the course. 	20%	Submit questions weekly by 8 PM Monday .
Group Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In groups of three to four, analyze and discuss a current news article through the lens of globalization. • Select a recent news piece and apply social science theories and concepts to explore its broader global implications. 	15%	Scheduled during the course
Documentary Film Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically analyze central themes and concepts related to globalization presented in the film. • Assess how effectively the film conveys its message about globalization. • Reflect on insights gained and explain how they shaped your understanding of globalization. • Submit a review (6–8 pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced). • ANY late submissions will incur a one-step grade reduction per day (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+), with each 24-hour period starting from the deadline counting as one day. 	15%	Friday, May 1, 23:59 PM
Final Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers all course materials (lectures and required readings). • Further details will be provided in April. • No make-up exams will be granted except for officially documented illness or family crisis. • All make-up exams will consist of long essay questions and an oral session. 	50%	Exam period (TBA)

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Participation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Participation evaluates students' ability to use key concepts and theoretical frameworks in discussions (ILO1), think critically about weekly readings and global issues (ILO2), and assess the quality of arguments using empirical evidence during class discussions (ILO3).
Group Presentation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO4	The group presentation assesses students' ability to apply theoretical frameworks to analyze real-world news articles (ILO1), demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills in evaluating globalization topics (ILO2), and develop a logical argument (ILO4).
Documentary Film Review	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	The film review assesses students' ability to use theoretical concepts to analyze globalization themes (ILO1), critically assess the film's perspectives (ILO2), and evaluate the validity of the film's messages using relevant evidence (ILO3).
Final Exam	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	The final exam assesses students' comprehensive understanding of key concepts and frameworks (ILO1), their ability to apply critical thinking to course materials (ILO2), evaluate arguments with empirical evidence (ILO3), and develop well-reasoned, evidence-based arguments in essay responses (ILO4).

Final Grade Rubric

Grade	Short Description	Performance Across Assessments
A	Excellent	<p>Participation: Demonstrates consistent and active engagement in discussions with insightful, well-prepared comments and questions that showcase a deep understanding of readings. Engages constructively with peers and fosters meaningful dialogue.</p> <p>Presentation: Exceptional clarity, critical evaluation, and synthesis of arguments. Slides are well-structured and engaging, with confident and professional delivery.</p> <p>Documentary Film Review: Provides a sophisticated critique and analysis of the film. Arguments are well-supported, writing is clear and concise, and the work demonstrates critical thinking and mastery of key concepts related to globalization.</p> <p>Final Exam: Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of course materials through evidence-based answers. Exhibits analytical rigor, critical thinking, and mastery of key concepts. Writing is clear, well-structured, and compelling in essay responses.</p>

Grade	Short Description	Performance Across Assessments
B	Good	<p>Participation: Regularly contributes to discussions with thoughtful comments and questions, showing good preparation and understanding of readings. Occasionally engages with peers' ideas but contributions may lack depth.</p> <p>Presentation: Provides a clear summary and critical evaluation of key arguments. Slides are logical and effective, and delivery is clear and mostly confident, though deeper engagement may be lacking.</p> <p>Documentary Film Review: Analyzes the film effectively with clear and well-supported arguments. Writing is strong, though critical analysis could be further developed.</p> <p>Final Exam: Demonstrates a strong understanding of course materials with evidence-based answers. Exhibits good research and analysis skills, though critical depth could be enhanced. Writing is clear and well-organized.</p>
C	Satisfactory	<p>Participation: Participates occasionally, offering basic comments or questions that show a basic understanding of the readings. Contributions are minimal and lack depth or critical engagement.</p> <p>Presentation: Covers key points but lacks critical engagement or depth. Slides are adequate but may lack clarity or organization. Delivery is basic, with limited confidence or audience engagement.</p> <p>Documentary Film Review: Summarizes the film adequately but offers limited critical analysis. Writing may lack focus or depth in argumentation.</p> <p>Final Exam: Addresses the topic with basic evidence and argumentation but lacks significant depth or critical analysis. Writing may lack clarity or focus.</p>
D	Marginal Pass	<p>Participation: Rarely contributes to discussions and shows minimal preparation for class. Comments are often superficial or off-topic, with little evidence of critical engagement.</p> <p>Presentation: Provides a basic summary of the material without critical analysis or synthesis. Slides may be disorganized or unclear. Delivery lacks structure or engagement.</p> <p>Documentary Film Review: Lacks critical engagement with the film, with weak arguments and limited evidence. Writing may be unclear, disorganized, or overly simplistic.</p> <p>Final Exam: Presents a minimal argument with insufficient evidence or analysis. Writing is unclear or disorganized, and the responses fail to fully address the exam questions.</p>

Grade	Short Description	Performance Across Assessments
F	Fail	<p>Participation: Does not participate meaningfully in discussions. Shows no preparation for class and fails to engage with the material or peers.</p> <p>Presentation: Fails to engage with the material or communicate ideas effectively. Slides are poorly prepared, and delivery is unclear or disorganized, showing minimal effort.</p> <p>Documentary Film Review: Demonstrates little understanding of the film, with poorly constructed arguments and insufficient evidence. Writing is unclear, disorganized, or fails to meet basic requirements.</p> <p>Final Exam: Fails to meet the basic requirements of the exam. Shows minimal effort, lack of research, and unclear or unsupported arguments. Writing is poorly organized and lacks coherence.</p>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the University's academic integrity policy. All students must uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance for academic misconduct. For details on what constitutes academic misconduct, including plagiarism, and how to avoid it, please refer to the [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry] (<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-integrity>).

Course AI Policy

- AI tools in this course are restricted to basic editing functions such as grammar checking and proof-reading. Any content beyond basic editing must be entirely your own work. Using AI-generated content without proper attribution constitutes academic misconduct.
- Every submission must include a disclosure statement if AI tools were used, specifying which tools were used and how. Failure to provide this disclosure will be treated as a violation of academic integrity.
- If there is any uncertainty about appropriate AI use for an assignment, students must consult the instructor before proceeding.

Course Schedule and Reading List

Introduction to the Course: Requirements, Objectives, and Scope

Tuesday, February 3

There is no required reading for this lecture.

Topic 1: History of Globalization

Thursday, February 5 & Tuesday, February 10 & Thursday, February 12

- Jeffrey Sachs, *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions* (Columbia University Press, 2020).
 - Chapter 1

Recommended:

- Jeffrey Frieden, *Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2007).
- Kevin O'Rourke and Ronald Findla, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

***** NO Classes on February 17 and February 19 (Chinese New Year) *****

Topic 2: International Trade

Tuesday, February 24 & Thursday, February 26

- Kimberly Clausing, *Open: The Progressive Case For Free Trade, Immigration and Global Capital* (Harvard University Press, 2019).
 - Chapter 4

Recommended:

- Dani Rodrik, *The Globalization Paradox: Why Global Markets, States, and Democracy Can't Coexist* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
 - Chapter 3
- Robert Lighthizer, "How to Make Trade Work for Workers," *Foreign Affairs*, (July / August) 2020.
- Chad P. Bown, "There is Little Dignity in Trump's Trade Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, (July 9) 2020.

Topic 3: Multinational Corporations and Global Supply Chains

Tuesday, March 3 & Thursday, March 5

- Patrick McGee, *Apple in China: The Capture of the World's Greatest Company* (Scribner, 2025)
 - Chapters 38–40

Recommended:

- Daniel W. Drezner, "The Outsourcing Bogeyman," *Foreign Affairs* 83, (May/June) 2004: 22–34.
- Shah M. Tarzi, "Third World Governments and Multinational Corporations: Dynamics of Host Bargaining Power," *International Relations* 10, (3) 1991: 237–249.
- Suzanne Berger, *How We Compete: What Companies Around the World Are Doing to Make It in Today's Global Economy* (Doubleday, 2005).

Topic 4: International Migration

Tuesday, March 10 & Thursday, March 12

- Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).
 - Chapter 6

Recommended:

- Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Global Migration and the World Economy: Two Centuries of Policy and Performance* (The MIT Press, 2005).
- Margaret E. Peters, *Trading Barriers: Immigration, and the Remaking of Globalization* (Princeton University Press, 2017).
- Kimberly Clausing, *Open: The Progressive Case for Free Trade, Immigration and Global Capital* (Harvard University Press, 2019).
 - Chapter 8

Tuesday, March 17 & Thursday, March 19

- **Watching a documentary**

Topic 5: Globalization and Peace

Tuesday, March 24 & Thursday, March 26

- Erik Gartzke and Yonatan Lupu, "Trading on Preconceptions: Why World War I Was Not a Failure of Economic Interdependence," *International Security* 36, (4) 2012: 115–150.

Recommended:

- Erik Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace," *American Journal of Political Science* 51, (1) 2007: 166–91.
- Dale Copeland, *Economic Interdependence and War* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

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- Stephen G. Brooks, "Economic Actors' Lobbying Influence on the Prospects for War and Peace," *International Organization* 66, (4) 2013: 863–88.

Topic 6: International Development

Part I: Prosperity and Poverty

Tuesday, March 31 & Thursday, April 2 & Tuesday, April 9

- Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (Crown Publishing Group, 2012).
 - Read pages 46–87

Recommended:

- William Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics* (The MIT Press, 2002).
- Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1997).
- Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

******* Mid-Term Break: April 3–April 7 *******

Part I Globalization and Economic Inequality

Tuesday, April 14 & Thursday, April 16

- Francois Bourguignon, *The Globalization of Inequality* (Princeton University Press 2015).
 - Chapter 3

Recommended:

- Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Harvard University Press, 2014).
- Branko Milanovic, *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization* (Harvard University Press, 2016).
- Olivier Blanchard and Dani Rodrik, eds, *Combating Inequality: Rethinking Government's Role* (The MIT Press, 2021).

Topic 7: Globalization and Democracy

Tuesday, April 21 & Thursday, April 23

- J. Lawrence Broz, Jeffry Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth, "Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash," *International Organization* 75, (S2) 2021: 464–494.

Recommended:

- Sheri Berman, "The Causes of Populism in the West," *Annual Review of Political Science* 24, 2021: 71–88.

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- Italo Colantone and Piero Stanig, "The Surge of Economic Nationalism in Western Europe," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33, (4) 2019: 128–151.
 - Dani Rodrik, "Why Does Globalization Fuel Populism? Economics, Culture, and the Rise of Right-Wing Populism," *Annual Review of Economics* 13, 2021: 133–170.

Topic 8: Globalization and the Coronavirus Pandemic

Tuesday, April 28 & Thursday, April 30

- David Stasavage, "Democracy, Autocracy, and Emergency Threats: Lessons for COVID-19 From the Last Thousand Years," *International Organization* 74, (S1) 2020: E1–E17.

Recommended:

- Kathleen R. McNamara and Abraham L. Newman, "The Big Reveal: COVID-19 and Globalization's Great Transformations," *International Organization* 74, (S1) 2020: E59–E77.
- Tana Johnson, "Ordinary Patterns in an Extraordinary Crisis: How International Relations Makes Sense of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Organization* 74, (S1) 2020: E148–E168.
- Francis Fukuyama, "The Pandemic and Political Order," *Foreign Affairs* 99, (July / August) 2020: 26–32.

In-Class Debate

Tuesday, May 5

Topic: TBD

Review Session

Thursday, May 7