UNIVERSITY of ALBERTA

TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY
POL S 462/566 SEM AI
GLOBAL CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

Fall 2016 Wednesdays 900-1150 Room: Tory 10-4

Instructor:
Dr. Rob Aitken
HM Tory Bldg. 10-29
780-492-0539
raitken@ualberta.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1300-1500, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an 'advanced introduction' to issues of global political and cultural economy. Although the field of International Political Economy (IPE) has long been focused on issues of trade, production and finance, it has also recently embraced concerns relating to culture, art, everyday life and the 'longue duree' of historical practice. This course is organized as a glimpse into some of the key debates relating to critical political economy with special emphasis on issues of commodification. How do commodities form? Out of what historical experiences and inequalities did the commodities at the heart of our global economy emerge? What role do we as consumers have in governing, shaping or reshaping the global political and cultural economy? This course addresses these questions by introducing basic concepts in IPE relating to power and resistance, objects and uses, local and global, self and other.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

Students without the course prerequisite should speak with the instructor before registering. At the request of an instructor, the Department may cancel your registration if you do not have the required course prerequisites. Policy about course outlines, grading and related matters can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

CLASS FORMAT:

The course consists of one 3 hour seminar weekly, on Wednesdays between 900-1150. At the heart of each session will be active class discussions. Although I will begin each session with a brief introduction outlining key contextual issues, the main thrust of the sessions revolve around discussions generated by students. It is therefore essential that each student prepare actively and approach each session with some reflections or questions in advance. Class discussion also requires students to engage in active and respectful listening and to respond to other students as well as to key issues raised.
in course readings. In addition, because this course is about art and culture, students are encouraged to relate course themes and readings to forms of art—i.e. Film, fiction, visual art, etc. In short, please be as creative as you can in approaching the themes of each week. Discussion during the second half of each seminar will be animated by one or more students each of which will present their own critical reactions to a theme raised in the readings. A full description of the expectations for the seminar will be presented during the first week of class.

OFFICE HOURS:

Fall Term:
Time: Wednesdays 1300-1500, or by appointment.
Office: 10-29 Tory Building
Phone: 780-492-0539
Email: raitken@ualberta.ca

COURSE READINGS:

The bulk of readings for the course come from articles and some books that are available through the Rutherford Library, often as electronic resources. On some occasions, a copy of reading material will be provided by the instructor in advance of the session in question. Further details on readings and availability will be discussed during the first session of the course.

General Reading and Media Resources:


REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

The course requirements are outlined below. Students should note that in all but exceptional situations, all components of the course must be completed to receive a passing grade. Policy regarding missed term work is outlined in Section 23.4(3) of the University Calendar. Tests and assignments will be
assigned a letter grade. The instructor will not ‘curve’ or adjust final grades according to any preset formula.

Evaluation of the following course requirements will determine students’ grades

- **Seminar Participation** 10%
- **Seminar Assignment** 15%
- **Critical Response Assignment** 20%
- **Mini-conference Presentation** 15%
- **Commodity Assignment Proposal** 5%
- **Commodity Analysis Assignment** 35%

1. **Seminar Participation** (10%) is awarded for active preparation, participation and listening in the seminar sessions. Students are expected to attend each session, prepare in advance by reading all required readings and formulating responses/questions to bring into our discussion, and listening actively and respectfully to all students.

2. **Seminar Assignment** (15%) Each student will be asked to help lead the discussion during one session. Please note, that you are not expected to summarize the readings—this will bore everyone in attendance! Rather, you are expected to provide one or more of your own analytical and critical reflections on a theme raised by the readings and lead a discussion based on those reactions. Note that there will be multiple students presenting each week so you will be expected to talk for no more than 10 minutes.

3. **Critical Response Assignment** (20%) (due 19 October 2016) (15%) A short paper is due on 19 October y 2016. The paper should be approximately 10 pages in length and address one of a series of questions that will be handed out in class in early October. Alternatively, students can also opt to write a short paper/book report on a piece of fiction from a list that will be distributed in class in early October. Details of the assignment and guidelines will be discussed during our first meeting in January.

4. **Mini-conference Presentation** (15%) Each student will be asked to do a short presentation (10 minutes) during the last week (or two!) of the course outlining the commodity analysis assignment they are working on. This is designed as a ‘work in progress’ presentation during which students are expected to provide some context for the topic they have chosen, present tentative conclusions and solicit advice from peers regarding the overall argument. Details of the assignment and guidelines will be discussed in September in class.

5. **Commodity Assignment Proposal** (5%) (due 2 November 2016) Students are required to outline a proposal for the commodity analysis assignment (see below). The proposal will identify the commodity that will be at the heart of the assignment and will demonstrate some preliminary analysis. The proposal can be completed as a written text, a commodity map, or some other form of visual representation. Details of the assignment will be discussed in class in early Sept.

6. **Commodity Analysis Project** (due 12 December 2016) (35%) The major assignment of the course is a commodity analysis. Although the project can be accomplished in a wide range of
ways, students must start by selecting a particular commodity that is important to the global economy and by developing an analysis of the political, social, cultural and historical relationships that animate that commodity. The project can take a variety of forms: commodity chain analysis, cultural history, research paper or personal essay. Details and examples will be discussed both during the first session in September and again during a workshop session on the project in class in early October. The final version of the project is due on 12 December 2016. As a general guideline, for students enrolled in Pol S 566, the length of the project should be 5000 words (including notes but excluding bibliography). For students enrolled in Pol S 462, the project should be 4000 words in length (including notes but excluding bibliography).

GRADING SCHEME:

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<th>Descriptor</th>
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LATE PENALTIES, PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC HONESTY:

*Late assignments:* It is your responsibility to inform the instructor as soon as it becomes clear that your work will be late. If you do not communicate in advance, and your reason for being late does not also explain this lack of communication, then you should be prepared to be penalized 10% per day.

*Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty:* The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University. An important excerpt from the Code of Student Behaviour is appended at the end of this syllabus. Additional information and resources are available through the UofA’s Truth in Education project: http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES:

Students with disabilities or special needs that might interfere with their performance should contact the professor at the beginning of the course with the appropriate documentation. Every effort will be
made to accommodate such students, but in all cases prior arrangements must be made to ensure that any special needs can be met in a timely fashion and in such a way that the rest of the class is not put at an unfair disadvantage. Students requiring special support or services should be registered with the office of Specialized Support & Disability Services (SSDS): http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/SSDS/. This is particularly important for students requiring special exam arrangements. Once you have registered with SSDS, it is your responsibility to provide the instructor with a "Letter of Introduction" and, if necessary, an "Exam Instruction & Authorization" form.

FEELING OVERWHELMED? (In need of student, social, financial or security services?):

The Student Distress Centre is there to listen, offer support, supply information and provide services:

- Call: 492-HELP (492-4357)
- Drop in: 030-N in the S.U.B.
- Visit: www.su.ualberta.ca/sdc
- Chat: http://www.campuscrisischat.com/

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Part 1—Conceptual Foundations of Critical Political Economy

Week 1—7 September 2016
Introduction and Organization

No Readings scheduled for this session.

Week 2—14 September 2016
IPE as Power or Resistance?

Required Readings:


Week 3—21 September 2016
Time and Political Economy: The 'event', the 'conjuncture' or the 'longue duree'?
Required Readings:


Selective Reading: (please read one of the following three readings)


Recommending Reading:


Part 2—Commodities, Circulations, Global Crossings

Week 4—28 September 2016
Commodification: Fictitious Commodities and Commodity Fetishism in IPE

Required Readings:


Selective Readings (Read one of the following readings):


**Week 5—5 October 2016**  
**Property Redux: The Politics of the Global Land Grab**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended/Background Reading:**


**Week 6—12 October 2016**  
**Sugar: 'Sweetness and Power'**

**Required Readingas:**


**Week 7—19 October 2016**  
**The (Dubious) Foundations of Global Finance**
Required Readings:


Selective Readings: (read one of the following two readings)


*Week 8—26 October 2016*

*Finance, Crisis and the 'Casino Economy'*

Required Readings:


Recommended Reading:


*Week 9—2 November 2016*

*Coffee and the Global Cultural Economy*

Required Readings:


Steven Topik. “Trade History: From the Tree to the Futures Market, the Historical Process of Coffee Commodification, 1500–today.” *Beyond Free Trade: Alternative Approaches to Trade, Politics and Power.* Eds. Kate Ervone and Gavin Fridell. London: Spring, 2014: 17-36. This is available as an electronic resource via the library website.

Recommended Reading:


*Note: November 7-11 is Fall Term Reading Break, no scheduled class for 9 November.*

**Week 10—16 November 2016**

*Fair Trade and the Possibility of Ethical Consumption?*

Required Readings:


**Week 11—23 November 2016**

*Cultural Commodities in the long-twentieth Century*

Selective Readings: (Read a selection of the following)


**Week 12—30 November 2016**

*Cultural Consumption: Otherness, Appropriation, Resistance*
Selective Readings: (Read a selection of the following)


Week 13—7 December 2016
Mini-conference for Commodity Analysis Assignments

No readings this week—class will be organized around student presentations of commodity analysis assignments.

EXcerpts FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR
(UPDATED EFFECTIVE MAY 12, 2006)
30.3.2(1) **Plagiarism**

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) **Cheating**

30.3.2(2) a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2) b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6 (4).

30.3.2(2) c No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.

30.3.2(2) d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2) e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) **Misrepresentation of Facts**

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. See also 30.3.2(2) b, c, d and e.

30.3.6(5) **Participation in an Offence**

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

The Truth In Education (T*E) project is a campus wide educational campaign on Academic Honesty. This program was created to let people know the limits and consequences of inappropriate academic behavior. There are helpful tips for Instructors and Students.

Please take the time to visit the website at: [http://www.ualberta.ca/tie](http://www.ualberta.ca/tie)
AND PARTICIPATION IN AN OFFENSE

NOTICE TO INSTRUCTORS REGARDING PLAIGIARISM, CHEATING, MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS

Amendments to the Code of Student Behavior occur throughout the year. For the most recent version of the Code, visit

Help://WWW.GOVERNANCE.UBC.CA
The Committee Law Review Committee is a standing committee of General Council Council (GFC) responsible for the review of the Code of Student Behaviour and of student discipline.

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<td>DR STEVEN DEW</td>
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<th>30.4.1) Allegation of an Alleged Violation of the Code of Student Behaviour</th>
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<tr>
<td>30.4.3) Resolution of a Degree of Agreement Already Reached</td>
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<td>30.4.3) Suspension of a Degree of Agreement Already Reached</td>
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Possible Sanctions

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<th>30.4.2) Expulsion</th>
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<td>30.4.3) B Chronically Indifferent Academic Behaviour, in Addition to 30.4.2)</td>
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Cases Rulings

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<th>30.4.2) B Procedure for Alleged Violation of the Code of Student Behaviour</th>
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**FOR REVIEW WITH EACH CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY TERM**

**EXCERPTS FROM THE CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR**

*The agenda of the committee includes the agenda of the previous meeting.*

**Meetings:**

The following proceedings are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC.

**Procedures for Instructor Rejection**