The Decline and Fall of Globalisation: The Waning of America’s Global Order?

Lecturer: Philip Leech-Ngo
Email: phil.leech@gmail.com, pleech@uottawa.ca

How do we understand the world in the age of Donald Trump? What’s behind the populist backlash to globalisation? This course looks at six different perspectives that seek to explain the current ‘populist moment’ and challenges participants to reconsider their own assumptions and engage with cutting edge research in International Relations?

Please note that while the following is provisional list of topics which may be subject to change based on what I determine in the preparation of the course (i.e. if I conclude that another book captures these ideas in a more effective way).

Schedule of topics:

Week 1

Mainstream thinking 1 - The Neoliberal: In many ways Robert Kagan’s ideas embody the thinking that has dominated US Foreign Policy under both Democrat and Republican administrations for decades. In his book *The Jungle Grows Back* he suggests that the US has allowed the current populist moment to develop by taking its foot off the gas. In short, for Kagan – the more America exercises its authority – the safer and more civilized it can make a dangerous world.

Reading: *The Jungle Grows Back* by Robert Kagan

Week 2

Mainstream thinking 2 - The Realists: this week looks at two similar (but not identical) explanations from two of the most prominent scholars of US International Relations, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. Presenting the flip side of Kagan’s ideas, they contend that, since 1945, the US has overstretched itself and mishandled its role on the world stage. In order to restore order, at least for itself, the US should downsize its priorities and role back its global footprint.

Reading:

*The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* by John Mearsheimer
*The Hell of Good Intentions: America’s Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy* by Stephen Walt

Did you know? Your registration in the LinR program allows you to borrow materials from Carleton University’s MacOdrum Library. To receive a temporary borrowing card, visit the circulation desk and identify yourself as a participant of LinR.
Week 3

The insider account: How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon by Rosa Brooks offers an extraordinary, sometimes humorous, insider’s account of working inside the US military- bureaucratic complex. This week we look at what happened to American power from this perspective.

Reading: How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon by Rosa Brooks

Week 4

Identity: In 1992 Francis Fukuyama famously argued that end of the Cold War meant “The end of History” – or in other words – that there would be no more ideological struggles to win. Since then he has re-thought many of his ideas and in Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment – Fukuyama suggests a different perspective on our current moment.

Reading: Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment by Francis Fukuyama

Week 5

Empire: Nikhil Pal Singh argues that in order to properly grasp the current moment in political history, we have to put it in the appropriate context of a history of American empire and its goal of maintaining white supremacy. In Race and America's Long War, Singh presents a compelling, critical and disturbing view of where western dominance came from and where the international system is going.

Reading: Race and America's Long War by Nikhil Pal Singh

Week 6

Gender and Sexuality: Cynthia Weber argues that the best way to understand our current moment is to tackle the fact that our traditional approach to the International Relations is based on faulty premises. Which are rooted in our fundamental assumptions about sexuality, gender and identity. In Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge offers a radically alternative approach.

Reading: Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge by Cynthia Weber

Other interesting resources:
There will be lots!!