

Global politics teacher support material

First assessment 2026

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Diploma Programme

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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

About the TSM

Welcome to the *Global politics teacher support material* (TSM). This TSM accompanies the *Global politics guide* and is intended to add insight, inspiration and guidance to the student and teacher journey through the course.

Teachers are encouraged to approach the TSM and subject guide with creativity and responsiveness to student interests, current events and new developments. In most cases, included examples are only meant to serve as a starting point for educators to build their own version of the course.

The TSM at a glance

The TSM includes the following sections.

Introduction

- This opening section provides an overview of the course, discussing the nature of the subject and the syllabus model.

Global politics and an IB education

- This section discusses global politics as part of an International Baccalaureate (IB) education, including its relationship to the Diploma Programme (DP) core and links with other subjects.

Planning the global politics course

- This section covers approaches to course design and contexts in global politics.

The global politics course in practice

- This section provides insights into approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in global politics. The “global politics classroom” is a framing that encompasses multiple settings beyond the school, considering both interactions with external stakeholders and virtual environments.

Assessment in the global politics course

- This section provides additional guidance on the course’s examinations, including useful strategies and important considerations. It also provides further guidance on the engagement project, with ways to manage the process and provide better support for students.

Supporting resources

- This section includes a list and links to supporting documents, such as course outlines, sample unit planners and learning activities.

Acknowledgements

The IB thanks the educators, consultants and schools who contributed time and resources to the development of the *Global politics guide* and these supporting materials.

Overview of the course

Nature of the subject

Global politics is an interdisciplinary subject that invites students to examine critically different perspectives and approaches to political issues at local, national, international and global levels. Political issues are broadly understood to encompass any questions related to relationships of power in a society. Within this conceptual course, the examples and case studies that illustrate these relationships will differ, based on where and when global politics is taught.

Students examine the nature and limits of state sovereignty and the legitimacy of state and non-state actors in dealing with questions of human rights, development, and peace and conflict. Students also learn about growing global interdependencies, the role of international organizations, and how social organizations at many levels are exerting new forms of power and influence. In their coursework, students engage experientially with a political issue at a local or community level, thereby increasing their awareness of the complexities and potential of active citizenship.

Syllabus model

The syllabus that is common to both standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) is built around four interconnected components, each with specified prescribed content—the global politics core topics and the three thematic studies (figure 1).

Figure 1
Global politics common SL/HL syllabus



The core encompasses broad topics linked to the nature of the subject and the four key concepts: power, sovereignty, legitimacy, interdependence. These concepts can be understood as elements that are relevant to all the thematic studies and find a particular expression in each of them. The prescribed content from the core topics can be:

- developed within each of the thematic studies
- explored separately to serve as a foundational element of learning and teaching
- used to integrate knowledge and understanding from the thematic studies.

The flexibility of the syllabus allows educators to build the course around their students' contexts and interests as well as contemporary events and developments in global politics. The development of thinking, analytical and research skills is fostered through guided and independent inquiries into political issues and challenges, with a special focus on identifying and engaging with diverse perspectives.

Inquiry-based design

The course integrates concepts, content and contexts through inquiries centred on power and political issues and challenges.

- Concepts such as power, sovereignty, legitimacy and interdependence are explored and examined critically throughout the course.
- Content informs inquiries through a variety of global politics topics, encompassing political systems and actors, power interactions, frameworks, treaties and conventions, relevant terminology and analysis models.
- Contexts diversify, shape and channel inquiries through contemporary real-world examples and cases.

Students taking the course at HL conduct extended inquiries around global political challenges, with an emphasis on the interconnected nature of these, the complexities and tensions inherent in addressing them, and a solutions-oriented focus that highlights possible courses of action. The HL extension does not include any additional prescribed content but comprises a set of guiding questions to structure students' research. Students are expected to conduct research on a variety of cases that reflect diverse contexts and relate to multiple global political challenges.

Engagement and agency

An essential element of the global politics course is the engagement project, during which students identify and explore a political issue of personal interest to them. Through documentary research and engagement with individuals and groups, students familiarize themselves with diverse perspectives and gather a deeper understanding of the complexities of their chosen issue. The engagement project not only provides opportunities to link the course topics through experiential learning but also allows students to develop a sense of agency that goes beyond the classroom.

Global politics within IB programmes

The global politics course draws from a wider set of subjects, topics and approaches to global education present in IB programmes. In addition to the subject guide and this teacher support material (TSM), there are many cross-programme resources that might offer valuable insight into matters deeply linked to global politics, such as engaging with an interdisciplinary course, fostering global citizenship, addressing sensitive topics and promoting community engagement.

Global politics teachers, especially those who are new to the subject, may benefit from reviewing the IB resources listed below. These provide concise and valuable guidance on engaging with local and global contexts.

Global engagement: Teaching and learning about conflict

Global engagement: Teaching and learning about cooperation and governance

Global engagement: Teaching and learning about development

Global engagement: Teaching and learning about rights

Global engagement good practice guide: Civic participation

Global engagement good practice guide: Going “beyond the bake sale”: Becoming more locally, globally engaged

Global engagement good practice guide: Model United Nations

Links with other DP subjects

Due to its flexible syllabus design, global politics can facilitate learning opportunities in conjunction with multiple Diploma Programme (DP) subjects. Power, the central concept of the course, is also a key concept in other subjects, such as geography, social and cultural anthropology, digital society and theory of knowledge (TOK). Therefore, a conceptual thread can be weaved to transfer knowledge between different courses. Teachers could explore links with other subjects informed by students’ experience and invite them to identify how power and political issues are encountered in other classes. Additionally, teachers can collaborate with other teachers to build interdisciplinary projects that foster integrated understanding. Such collaborations might initially be regarded as additional work for teachers and students. However, if structured appropriately, they may help to streamline formative assessments and reduce student workload in both courses, while making learning more meaningful for students.

Here are a few examples to illustrate how links can be established between global politics and other courses.

- **Language A: language and literature:** As part of their individual oral commentary (internal assessment) for language and literature, students explore global issues through literary and non-literary texts. Many of these issues can be linked to political issues of global significance studied in the global politics course.
- **Language B:** One of the five themes of the subject, “sharing the planet” is focused on the principle of “Exploring the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities in the modern world”. It includes, as optional recommended topics, “the environment”, “human rights”, “peace and conflict”, “equality” and “globalization”, all of which are deeply connected with the content of global politics. Shared inquiries could bring together both courses to facilitate student learning.
- **Other courses in the individuals and societies group:** If students are taking a second individuals and societies course (e.g. psychology, economics, business management), there are multiple organic opportunities for collaboration with global politics. These may be thematic, for example, “development”, as seen in the economics and global politics courses, or “conflict”, in social and cultural

anthropology and global politics. Meanwhile, when studying social interactions, for example, they may be related to the scope and methodologies of the different disciplines.

- **The arts:** The role of the arts in social change provides many opportunities for discussion in combination with the global politics course. For instance, students might research how art activism is used as a form of political protest, either as part of one of the cases studied in class or as a separate inquiry for their engagement project.

Global politics and the DP core

Global politics and CAS

Creativity, activity, service (CAS) and global politics can complement each other in several ways. Learning about significant local and global issues in the global politics course may give students new ideas for CAS experiences and CAS projects. As a result of the knowledge and understanding students develop about an issue and its potential solutions in the global politics course, they might be able to investigate, plan, act, reflect on and demonstrate CAS experiences in a richer way. Similarly, CAS experiences can ignite students' passion for addressing a particular issue in global politics. For example, students may decide to examine the political dimension of an issue and its potential solutions in their global politics class, or build an engagement project based on the issue, or utilize it as a case study in their higher level (HL) extension work. This cross-pollination of ideas between CAS and global politics may improve students' grasp of an issue and its political dimensions; it may also stimulate further CAS experiences.

Global politics teachers and CAS coordinators, instructors and facilitators should try to communicate closely and take advantage of collaboration to increase learning opportunities. Most CAS activities and projects will probably serve as potential starting points for students to identify political issues they might want to engage with in depth for the engagement project. While the actual outcomes of CAS and the engagement project are different, the experiential nature of both should help align any initiatives that take place within and beyond the school. This can also help foster closer monitoring for students and identify possible risks and considerations in their planned engagements with external stakeholders.

Global politics and TOK

The conceptual understanding and inquiry-based learning of the global politics course provide excellent linking opportunities with TOK. The contested interpretation of concepts, topics and contexts within the course requires the critical reflection fostered by the TOK frameworks. In general, educators and students are encouraged to analyse critically the power aspects of political constructs, such as "sovereignty", and how power is manifested in epistemological debates—for example, recognition and acceptance of certain knowledge systems, while others are not accepted or widely recognized.

As part of the TOK course, students might explore the optional theme of "knowledge and politics", which would offer multiple connections with the global politics course and complement the interdisciplinary exploration. This optional theme can cover discussions over how technology has affected power relations and asymmetries, as well as around persuasion, manipulation, misinformation and propaganda. Below are some possible knowledge questions included in the *Theory of knowledge guide* that could be particularly useful to address throughout the course.

- In what ways is factual evidence sometimes used, abused, dismissed and ignored in politics?
- How is the practice of politics distinct from the discipline of political science?
- What kinds of knowledge inform our political opinions?
- Given access to the same facts, how is it possible that there can be disagreement between experts on a political issue?
- When exposed to numerous competing ideologies and explanations, what makes an individual settle on a particular framework? Is there ever a neutral position from which to write about politics or from which to judge political opinions?
- What impact has social media had on how we acquire and share political knowledge?

- What role do political authorities and institutions play in knowledge-creation and distribution?
- When the moral codes of individual nations conflict, can political organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), provide universal criteria that transcend them?
- On what criteria could we judge whether an action should be regarded as justifiable civil disobedience?
- On what grounds might an individual believe that they know what is right for others?

Other optional themes have more subtle links to the global politics course but bring forward questions that can be of great value for discussions. For example, this is from the “knowledge and language” theme: “If the categories that we use necessarily empower or marginalize, is it ever possible to produce knowledge that does not either reflect or challenge existing power structures?” Relatively accepted labels such as “universal human rights” or “international community” may evidence power relations when examined more closely.

Global politics and the EE

An extended essay (EE) focused on global politics will allow students to extend their independent inquiries around political issues. Students interested in exploring particular topics further could use the EE as an opportunity for more in-depth, independent research. Their chosen topic may have been encountered as part of the common standard level (SL) or HL syllabus, or as part of their HL extension inquiries.

Alternatively, for many global politics students, an EE in world studies may be an appealing option. This will give students the opportunity to undertake interdisciplinary study of an issue of contemporary global significance. It will require students to:

- identify an issue of global importance
- identify a local manifestation of the issue
- develop a clear rationale for taking an interdisciplinary approach
- use the conceptual framework and vocabulary of two DP subjects.

In most cases, global politics will already cover the first two requirements, while the third might provide an opportunity to explore interdisciplinary links that students could not fully address as part of the global politics course.

There are six areas of study for the world studies EE, many of which can be connected to global politics.

- Conflict, peace and security
- Culture, language and identity
- Environmental and/or economic sustainability
- Equality and inequality
- Health and development
- Science, technology and society

For complementary information, teachers are advised to review the latest version of the [Extended essay guide](#).

Global politics and the CP

In the Career-related Programme (CP), students study at least two DP subjects, a core consisting of four components, and a career-related study. Global politics can assist CP students planning careers in, for example, the hospitality industry, the technology industry or international business. Global politics helps students to understand the underlying mechanisms of the 21st-century world and to engage with current affairs. Students explore different political, social and economic structures and practices, leading to a greater understanding of the world around them. Global politics encourages the development of strong communication skills, critical thinking and ethical approaches that will assist students in the global workplace.

Connections with career-related studies and the reflective project

In particular, the career-related studies (CRS) component of the CP provides an excellent opportunity for authentic learning. Students enrolled in the global politics course can explore how political issues apply in real-life professional contexts. As part of their CP certification, students carry out a reflective project, in which they analyse a specific professional ethical dilemma related to their CRS area. Ethical dilemmas linked to political activity at a community, national or international level could be explored through a critical lens provided by the global politics course. Students interested in pursuing professional pathways related to political activity in general, or related to any of the thematic studies of the global politics course—rights and justice, development and sustainability, peace and conflict—will find that their career-related analytical skills and subject-specific knowledge are enhanced through the global politics course.

Approaches to course design

The Diploma Programme (DP) global politics course consists of a set of core topics and three thematic studies: rights and justice, development and sustainability, peace and conflict. All standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) students study these four syllabus sections and complete an engagement project. HL students additionally carry out self-selected case studies to explore global political challenges: borders, environment, equality, health, identity, poverty, security and technology. The teaching of the HL extension is designed to align with the teaching of the common syllabus for SL and HL students, under various timetable arrangements.

Given the dynamic, interconnected and complex nature of today's world, no two iterations of the global politics course are the same: different political issues have relevance at different times and in different places. While it sets out a clear framework and specifies the topics of study, the global politics course is designed to give teachers and students the flexibility to build up a learning journey that is meaningful for their specific context. Such freedom implies that careful planning is required to ensure a meaningful and comprehensive learning experience. Based on experienced educators' insights, it is expected that teachers of this course will need plenty of time for planning and reflecting on their work.

Fundamentals of the course

A starting point for all teachers planning the two years of the course is familiarization with the following fundamental elements.

- An understanding of the term “political issues” in the context of the DP global politics course
- The inquiry framework that connects concepts, content and contexts
- The key concepts: power, sovereignty, legitimacy, interdependence
- The prescribed content of the core topics and the three thematic studies: rights and justice, peace and conflict, development and sustainability
- Examples of how the prescribed content could be tackled
- The role of theories and constructs in the study of global politics and some examples of potential theoretical perspectives
- The implications of analysing political issues at multiple levels or through a range of different lenses
- The idea that the interpretation of political issues varies based on individual and group perspectives
- The requirements of the engagement project
- The HL extension inquiries and possible ways to tie these to the common SL/HL syllabus

More information on each of the course elements can be found in the “Syllabus content” section of the *Global politics guide*. The “External assessment” and “Internal assessment” sections of the guide explain how the different elements feature in the various global politics assessment tasks.

There are as many ways of setting up the two-year sequence of global politics as there are teachers. Teachers can experiment with different planning anchors at different points of the course, and on different iterations of teaching, depending on which topics and political issues they are covering and what their students' specific needs are. A flexible and iterative approach to planning is necessary for teachers of global politics to address the course syllabus successfully. Preparing a carefully designed course outline beforehand and following it through can help to ensure the comprehensive coverage of all prescribed content and continuity between topics. This approach will certainly be helpful when two teachers or more are responsible for a single cohort. However, a flexible approach that aims to incorporate students' interests and changing world events can lead to more meaningful learning as students gain a sense of agency within

the classroom. This also supports students in identifying and developing their own inquiries for the engagement project and, in the case of HL students, as they explore the extension topic areas.

Planning for the common SL/HL syllabus

Figures 2 and 3 exemplify two different possible sequential approaches to planning, while figure 5 shows an integrated structure based on case studies. Figure 2 includes the core topics as an introductory unit, while figure 3 shows a progression through the thematic studies, with the core topics embedded within each of these. Teachers might decide to follow either one of these approaches, or others, depending on their own teaching practices and familiarity with the topics.

Some examples of structuring learning in the global politics course include the following.

- **Linear, topic-based progression:** This is shown in figures 2 and 3. The course can start with a comprehensive coverage of the core topics and then move to covering the three thematic studies, either in the order presented in the *Global politics guide* or in any chosen order.
 - Advantages of this approach are that students get a good overview of the central actors and interactions of global politics at the beginning of the course, and may feel a sense of security about the syllabus “being covered” fully over the two years.
 - Disadvantages include that learning may become somewhat mechanical, especially in the core topics, which set out the main “building blocks” for the rest of the course.
 - The coverage of terminology and more theoretical content could become quite formulaic, unless examples are used particularly effectively to illustrate these.
- **Non-linear progression, but still topic-based:** It is possible to start with outline coverage of the core topics, focusing on understanding power and global politics, without covering all the prescribed content in detail. This content could then be covered later when working on the thematic studies.
 - For example, a starting point could be the prescribed topic “power in global politics”, an overview of the other key concepts, and an overview of the stakeholders and actors, systems and frameworks. Other details would be left for later, such as the types of actors and interactions to cover when discussing issues around the three themes of rights and justice, development and sustainability, and peace and conflict.
 - A perceived need for strict, line-by-line coverage of the remaining content later in the course should not necessarily be a concern, since many topics across the thematic studies complement one another. For instance, many issues addressed in rights and justice or in development and sustainability can be investigated while examining peace and conflict in global politics.
 - An advantage of this non-linear but still topic-based approach is that learning is anchored in real-world examples and integration of content right from the start of the course, so that students learn to appreciate the interconnected nature of the syllabus. This is shown in figure 4.
- **Progression via large case studies:** This approach is illustrated in figure 5. An approach diverging from the two just described would be to select a few case studies of contemporary global politics as the fundamental starting point. Case studies are often rooted in complex events and situations in a specific place and time, and should be chosen for the richness of their connections to the global politics syllabus.
 - Examine these cases through a combination of well-structured inquiries and conceptual links. With the choice of cases, students should aim to build up an understanding of the specific cases being studied. But they should also extend their understanding by considering what the cases reveal about the wider context of global politics.
 - Advantages of this approach include its emphasis on large, real-world political complexities as the central point of departure for the course, rather than being guided by thematic outlines. Also note the possibility and usefulness of using case studies that tie to the HL extension topic areas.
- **Progression via significant political issues:** Teachers can select a few large and pertinent political issues, themes or phenomena—such as migration, human trafficking, foreign aid and environmental catastrophes—and examine case studies and examples that fit under the umbrella of these issues.

- Integrate the teaching of the key concepts, learning outcomes and prescribed content of the core units within the study of the case studies and examples.
- An advantage of this approach is its in-depth engagement of students in significant real-world issues, as well as the possibility of using the HL global political challenges as issues.
- Compared to the other case studies method, students might find the required theoretical and conceptual connections easier to make here when the real-world case studies and examples they study are themselves thematically connected. A carefully guided path through their inquiries is still necessary.

While any of the latter approaches may conceivably be used as a principle of designing the entire core course and of covering all its key concepts, prescribed topics and prescribed content, it is possible that these more integrated approaches may lend themselves naturally to planning some learning sequences in the course. Even then, when structuring learning around case studies and examples, teachers need to plan carefully so that any examination of how global politics unfolds in the real world supports the development of students' understanding of the key concepts, prescribed topics and prescribed content of the DP global politics course.

All of the planning approaches introduced and exemplified in this teacher support material (TSM) are examples only and can be utilized in a "mix and match" way.

Choosing a starting point

Regardless of the approach chosen, it is important to emphasize that the course will most likely require an iterative dynamic, where students continuously revisit previous topics and make connections as they progress through the syllabus. This is shown in figure 4. Considering this, instead of choosing a particular approach for the whole course, it may be advisable to decide on a starting point and then continuously review and redirect course design, depending on current events, students' interests or connections with other subjects.

Figure 2

Sequential approach with the core topics as an introductory unit



Figure 3

Sequential approaches with the core topics integrated into each thematic study

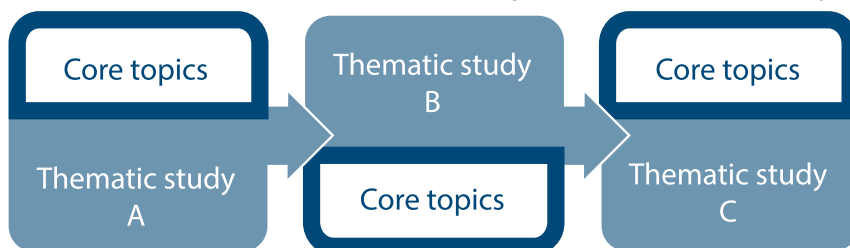


Figure 4

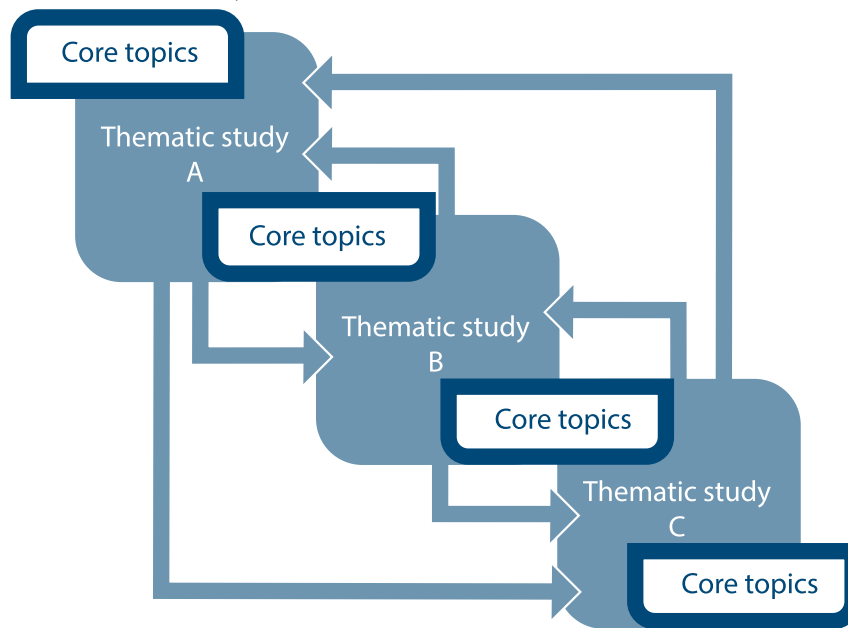
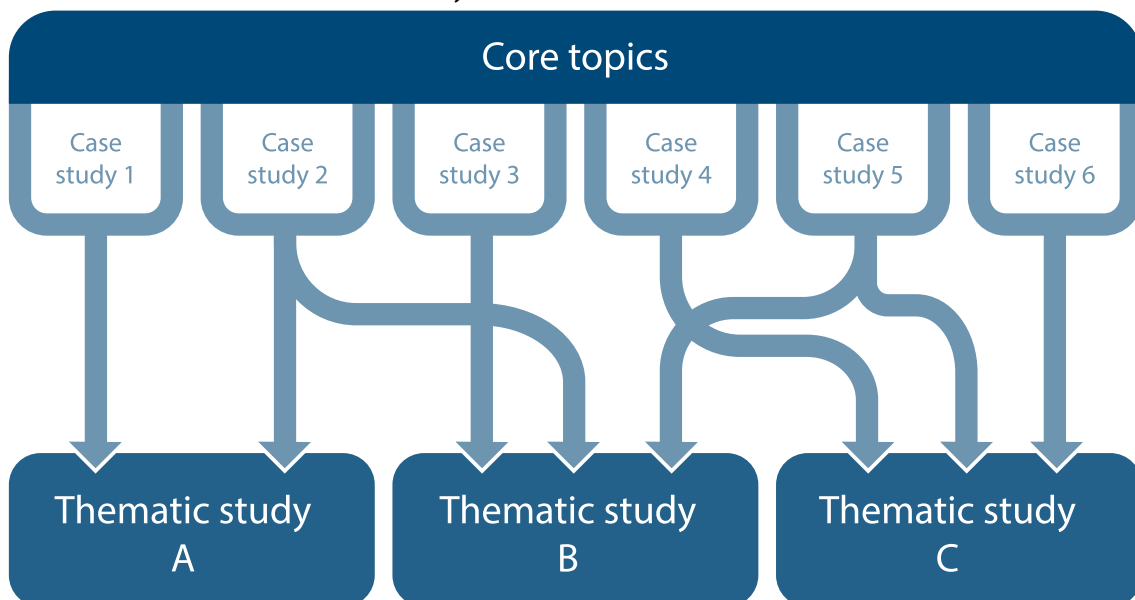
Iterative dynamic to evidence connections across the course

Figure 5

Case study oriented structure for the course

Planning for the HL extension

The planning parameters of the HL extension are affected by schools' differing timetable arrangements for HL students. Consequently, the extension is designed so that teaching can begin straight away and run parallel to the teaching of the core topics and thematic studies. Alternatively, it can be incorporated in designated spaces along the course, through shared or independent inquiries focused discretely on the HL

topic areas. The general nature of the guidance provided here is also influenced by the fact that there is no additional prescribed content for the HL extension, and ideally it is the students who drive the process and progress of this part of the course. Regardless of how it is structured, teachers should allow enough time so that HL students are able to devote 80 hours to exploring the HL extension topics.

Students taking the HL course conduct extended inquiries around global political challenges, with an emphasis on:

- the interconnected nature of these challenges
- the complexities and tensions involved in addressing these challenges
- a solutions-oriented focus that highlights possible courses of action.

In a similar way to the thematic studies, the HL topic areas can be seen as areas of study in global politics that provide additional tools for analysis, models, frameworks and terminology, to delve deeper into political issues. Additionally, exploring the links between multiple topic areas will most probably evidence the complexities of global political challenges but also highlight the tools available to address them. For example, some students might look into the links between poverty and health, and research their impacts in vulnerable populations. Other students might explore how technology is used to address security concerns or to reduce environmental risks.

Two main approaches to conducting the HL extended inquiries are suggested.

- **Using HL topic areas as entry points:** If a student is interested in one of the HL topic areas, they may begin an in-depth study of this, then select an appropriate case through which to investigate it further.
- **Using cases as entry points:** If a particular case or topic is of special interest to the student, they may explore the case and make links to multiple topic areas that they consider relevant.

Regardless of the approach taken, as part of their extended inquiries HL students must ensure that they conduct **research on at least two different case studies** and on **at least two different topic areas**.

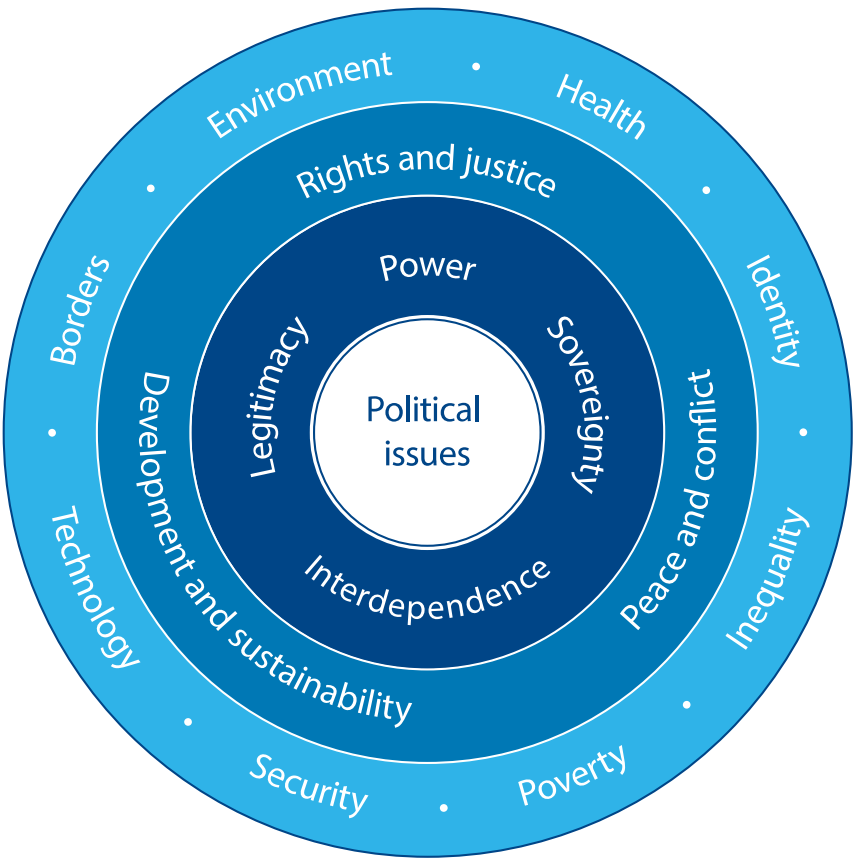
Teachers who have mixed SL and HL cohorts could choose to use the HL extension topics as additional guidance for structuring the course, even though SL students are not required to engage extensively with these topics.

There are many possible ways of engaging with the HL topic areas. Two of these are as follows.

- Carry out an initial exploration of the eight topic areas so that students can identify which are of greater interest to them.
- As students progress through the course and select topic areas or case studies that interest them, they could contribute to the course and expand on the topics of the SL/HL syllabus from their own research.

As shown in figure 6, the HL extension topic areas should be seen as a continuation of the complexity of layers presented by the core topics and thematic studies. They are not completely different topics, nor do they require a distinct set of skills. Therefore, all students are able to engage with them, regardless of whether they will be assessed explicitly on them.

Figure 6
Global politics integrated syllabus model



Contexts in global politics

Examples, cases and case studies

Contexts in global politics are explored through the study of concrete examples, cases and case studies. These three terms have distinct meanings, mainly differing in terms of the depth of study implied and how they are specifically used.

Broadly, an **example** is a brief illustration of a concept or idea. A **case** refers to a specific occurrence or situation analysed to some level of detail. A **case study** is a comprehensive investigation of one or more cases, involving in-depth investigation of complex phenomena or scenarios.

Examples	• An example refers to a specific instance or illustration that demonstrates a particular concept, principle or phenomenon. • An example is used to clarify or support a broader argument or idea. • Examples are concise and serve to highlight a specific point, often in a concise, straightforward manner.	For example, when defining what non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are, mentioning Amnesty International, Greenpeace or Doctors Without Borders would serve as examples to clarify the idea.
Cases	• A case refers to a specific occurrence or situation that is analysed and examined in detail to understand its complexities, causes and implications. • A case involves a deeper study of a certain event, process or individual, which may serve as a basis for broader analysis or theory-building.	For instance, analysing the case of Greenpeace Germany bringing legal proceedings to a regional court against Volkswagen for environmental damages in 2021 would be useful to illustrate one specific mechanism used by NGOs to make transnational companies (TNCs) more accountable for their actions, as well as its limitations.
Case studies	• A case study is an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of a single case or a few selected cases. • A case study involves thorough research and investigation of the chosen subject, using multiple data sources and research methods. • Case studies are commonly used in various fields, including social sciences, business, medicine and education, to gain a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and their real-world implications.	For example, conducting in-depth research into human rights abuses associated with the palm oil industry in Indonesia, as carried out by Amnesty International. This case study would serve to establish links with a wider political issue that extends beyond the studied case, allowing the research and knowledge acquired to be extrapolated and applied to other contexts.

A balanced combination

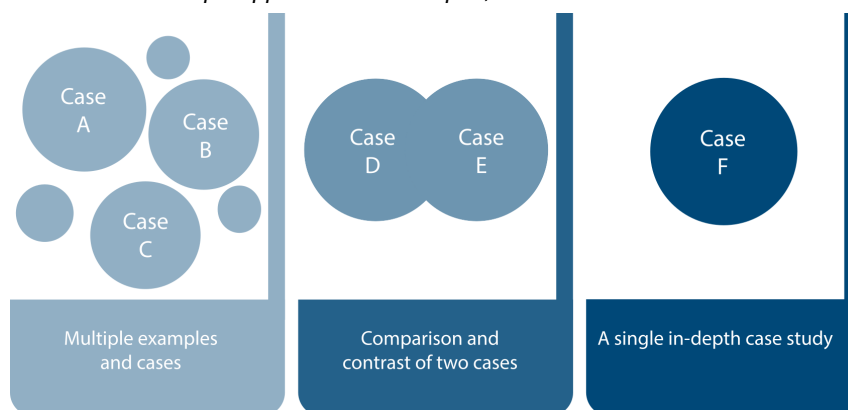
Using a balanced mix of examples, cases and case studies will help to consolidate learning outcomes and provide a meaningful learning experience for students. Note that studying a great number of examples without addressing them in detail is likely to lack the depth required to evidence students' knowledge.

Meanwhile, studying a limited number of cases in depth could make it harder for students to generalize and transfer concepts.

There are multiple approaches that can be taken in covering the prescribed content, depending on the specific aim (figure 7). Listing many examples could be useful for students as they build their initial knowledge about a particular topic. But as they progress through the course, it may be more helpful for them to start integrating prescribed topics and content around selected case studies that they are already familiar with or that they are able to link with their previous learning. This will allow for more in-depth analysis of each case.

Figure 7

Multiple approaches to examples, cases and case studies



Effective use of case studies

While there is no prescribed way of structuring the course, there are multiple benefits to a methodology based on a solid analysis of a smaller number of cases instead of a less in-depth exploration of many more cases.

- Exploring a set of selected case studies will almost certainly allow for a better integration of content from the core topics and the thematic studies.
- Rather than studying cases exclusively as part of one of the syllabus sections, revisiting and nurturing the cases previously studied will evidence connections between these. For example, a case study initially related to “peace and conflict” could then be expanded to explore its implications from the angle of “development and sustainability”. An example might be the 2021 political unrest in Haiti resulting from a failed democratic transition, in combination with an earthquake that occurred shortly afterwards.
- Focusing on a smaller number of case studies makes it easier to address the historical background. While the focus of the course is on contemporary events, most of the time students will require complementary background information to understand properly the causes and complexities of present-day political issues.

Note: A reminder that students should focus on contemporary events when responding in their examinations. In this global politics course, “contemporary” refers to events from approximately the last two decades.

- Building on a set of selected case studies builds student confidence: they encounter multiple opportunities to explore a context they are already familiar with, focusing on different aspects.
- For HL students especially, the previously studied cases could serve as the foundation for their additional inquiries in the HL extension topics. Students might extend their explorations in some of the same cases, delving deeper into particular aspects (e.g. “security” or “poverty”) or having a strong reference of how case studies are built.

Thinking about global politics

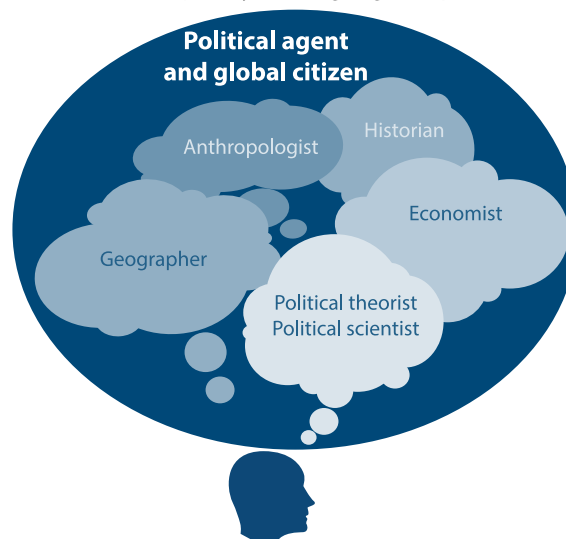
The global politics course intends to promote the development of an open, adaptable and solutions-oriented mindset. This requires, for example, thinking beyond disciplinary limits, embracing complexity and fostering systems thinking, each of which is outlined below. Instead of being primarily driven by content, the syllabus is built around conceptual understanding. Conceptual understanding is a higher-order outcome and process, in which details, events and real-world examples interact with broader, more abstract categories and ideas. This movement between factual, procedural and metacognitive understanding creates powerful new associations that can be transformative.

Cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking

In the social sciences and humanities, conceptual understanding puts the threshold insight that facts are never neutral into the foreground. In these disciplines, facts are always situated within complex and contested layers of interpretation involving social forces larger than any one individual or community. Thinking like a social scientist often comes in different guises according to the distinctive fields of study. In many courses, subject-specific frameworks and analysis tools are used to interpret real-world events. Consequently, students are invited to “think like a” practitioner of a specific discipline: for example, a historian, geographer, economist, psychologist.

While the global politics course provides certain analysis tools that are specific to the subject, the interdisciplinary nature of the course will require students to use a mix of concepts, methods, tools and topics from other disciplines. As figure 8 shows, as well as this interdisciplinary way of thinking, one of the main aims of the course is that students develop a critical mindset that goes beyond any particular subject, and that they recognize themselves as political agents and global citizens.

Figure 8
Cross-disciplinary thinking in global politics



Thinking beyond disciplinary constraints allows students to gain holistic understanding: global politics is a complex field that cannot be fully grasped through a single disciplinary lens. Interdisciplinary thinking lets students integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines, such as history, economics, sociology, anthropology, environmental studies and more, to gain a comprehensive and holistic understanding of political issues at multiple levels.

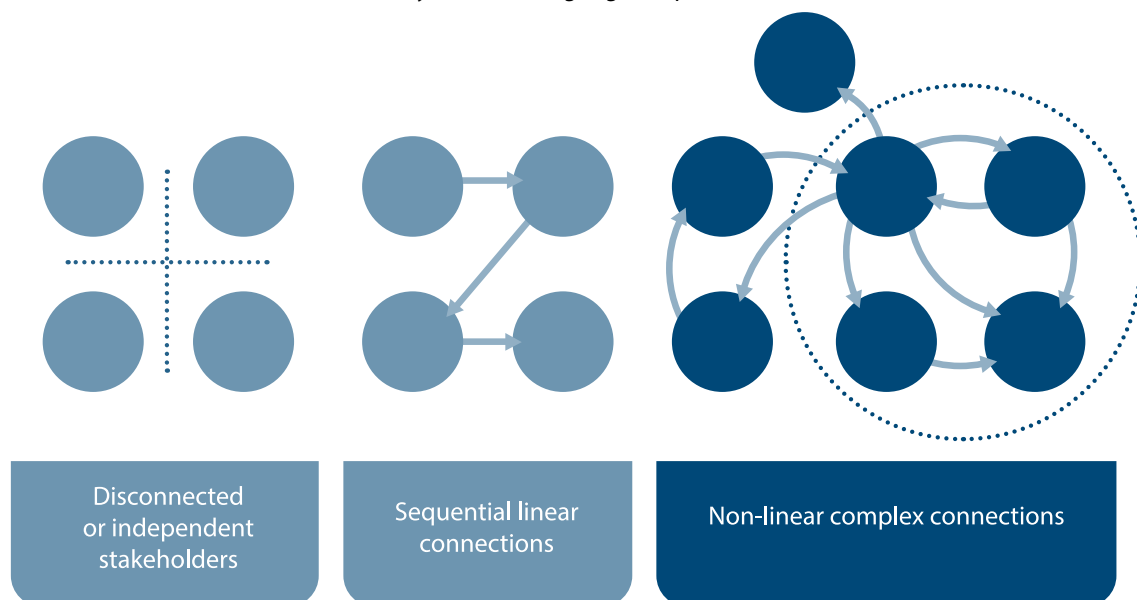
When students engage with different disciplines, they are exposed to a variety of methods, theories and approaches. This exposure can stimulate creativity and innovative thinking, leading to novel insights and solutions to address political issues and challenges.

Systems thinking and complexity

One of the main tenets of the global politics course is the idea that political issues are complex and continuously changing. Correspondingly, another tenet is that the course requires an in-depth analysis of the connections and relations between political actors, stakeholders and systems. While analytical models and categories of analysis tend to isolate variables or components to facilitate understanding, it is also essential to emphasize the importance of holistic approaches. Systems thinking is an approach to understanding and analysing complex phenomena by examining the interactions, relationships and interdependencies among components within a larger system. It recognizes that systems are composed of interconnected elements that function as a whole and that the behaviour and characteristics of the system emerge from these interactions. For global politics, for instance, it is expected that students will not address the study of political actors and stakeholders in isolation but within the system(s) that they are part of or that they interact with.

Systems thinking encourages a holistic perspective, moving beyond isolated parts and focusing on the system as a whole. It considers both the structure and the dynamics of the system, emphasizing feedback loops, causal relationships and the flow of information and resources. By examining the relationships between various components and the system's context, systems thinking seeks to uncover patterns, identify leverage points, and understand how changes in one part of the system can have ripple effects throughout the entire system.

Figure 9
Systems thinking in global politics



Systems thinking is characterized by several key principles, all of which are a strong fit for the study of global politics, as outlined in the table.

Principle	Description	Possible application to global politics
Interconnectedness	Elements within a system are interdependent and interconnected.	Examining the interdependencies, relationships, and feedback loops

Principle	Description	Possible application to global politics
	Changes in one part of the system can have cascading effects on other parts.	among various actors, institutions and issues. Interconnectedness helps to recognize that global politics is a complex system composed of multiple components, such as states, international organizations, non-state actors and transnational networks, all interacting and influencing one another.
Feedback loops	These loops can be reinforcing, leading to growth or amplification of positive and negative change; or balancing, promoting stability or equilibrium within the system.	Feedback loops in political systems could contribute to amplifying positive outcomes, consolidating or reinforcing the status quo, or escalating negative change.
Emergence	The behaviour and properties of a system emerge from the interactions and relationships among its components, rather than being solely determined by individual parts.	The international system is in itself an example of emergence because it can be analysed as a whole that is more than the sum of individual states.
Non-linearity	System behaviour is often non-linear, meaning that small changes can result in disproportionately large or unexpected outcomes. Non-linearity challenges linear cause-and-effect thinking and encourages a consideration of multiple factors and interactions.	Global politics often exhibits non-linear dynamics, where small changes or events can lead to significant and disproportionate effects. Complexity theory helps to grasp the non-linear nature of global political processes, including how conflicts escalate, how policy choices have unintended consequences or how small disruptions can cause large-scale systemic changes.
Boundary spanning	Considers the boundaries of the system and its relationship with the broader environment. Boundary spanning acknowledges that systems are embedded within larger systems, and understanding these interactions is essential for a comprehensive analysis.	Studying the political systems at the community, local, state, regional, international and global level allows students to appreciate the complexities of smaller and larger political systems and understand that all are interconnected.
Adaptability and resilience	Systems adapt and respond to external and internal changes in multiple ways.	Analysis of how global political actors adapt, learn and adjust their strategies and policies in a dynamic and uncertain global landscape.
Context sensitivity	Acknowledges the importance of context in shaping the way a system is structured, functions and is regulated. Considering the contextual dimensions enriches the analysis of global politics.	Recognizing that the behaviour and outcomes of global political systems are context-sensitive and influenced by specific historical, cultural, economic and social factors.

Inquiry in global politics

Inquiry is intended to be the guiding force of the global politics course. The flexible syllabus design allows learning and teaching to be tailored—and adjusted—around students' interests and contexts. Rather than receiving and “accumulating” numerous facts and pieces of information about a prescribed set of topics, students should learn how to ask questions and explore potential answers that are meaningful to them. They will often be motivated by questions that have concrete implications for them and the communities they are part of, from the local group level to the global level.

Concepts, content and contexts

Inquiries in the global politics course can take concepts, content and contexts as their starting point.

- **Concepts** such as power, sovereignty, legitimacy and interdependence are explored and examined critically throughout the course. The “Contested meanings” rows in each of the thematic studies tables in the guide also provide ready opportunities for conceptual discussions.
- **Content** informs inquiries through a variety of global politics topics encompassing, for example, political systems, actors and stakeholders, power interactions, specific treaties and conventions, relevant terminology and analysis models.
- **Contexts** diversify, shape and channel inquiries through contemporary real-world examples and cases.

Navigating complexity through inquiry

Inquiry should not be seen as a “one-size-fits-all” process but instead as a spectrum that goes from directed to open inquiries (figure 10). If students are not familiar with inquiry-based learning, they will most likely benefit from a more directed and structured approach at the beginning before they can successfully build their own independent inquiries.

Figure 10

Approaches to inquiry



Approach to inquiry	Description	Considerations
Directed (teacher-led)	The teacher poses an inquiry question or statement and provides a set of resources for the students to review as they explore the question. Supporting guidelines are presented from the beginning and the teacher directs students' explorations as they advance through the inquiry process.	Although a common framing is provided by the teacher for all students, it is expected and encouraged that multiple, often differing, responses will result from students' directed explorations.

Approach to inquiry	Description	Considerations
Guided (hybrid/shared)	The teacher poses an initial inquiry question or a scenario that prompts possible questions from the group. Optionally, the teacher proposes a set of initial resources that is complemented with resources students find. Additional support is provided depending on requirements and requests, sometimes with additional suggestions from the teacher.	This co-built approach requires some familiarity from students on what meaningful inquiry looks like. During a guided inquiry, bold and creative approaches can be directed to meaningful learning outcomes.
Open (student-led)	The students pose their own independent inquiry questions, either based on a common starting topic or on their own interests. They investigate and identify useful resources to inform their inquiry and refine it as they progress through their own research. Support is offered to discuss possible pathways and options identified by the student.	For an open inquiry to be successful, students should be familiar and confident with research and they should possess the proper tools to develop a self-led process. This is particularly useful for prompting critical responses and questions from students.

Teachers should provide guidance and feedback regardless of the approach taken. Multiple approaches may scaffold inquiry so that one cycle of inquiry combines directed, guided and/or open approaches.

The study of the prescribed content for the core topics and the thematic studies can be undertaken by mixing these approaches. At some point, it can be beneficial to allow more confident students to explore open inquiries while others participate in a hybrid inquiry in collaboration with the teacher or some of the students' peers. This could be especially useful for teachers with combined cohorts of standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) students. For the engagement project, hybrid inquiries can serve as preparation to frame the requirements, expectations and possibilities of the assessment. Meanwhile, the engagement and experiential learning should be conducted as an open inquiry.

Uncertainty and inquiry

Global politics teachers and students will probably benefit from embracing uncertainty as part of their learning journey. In contrast with other academic fields that have relatively agreed sets of principles, theories or methodologies, the object (and subject) of study in global politics is often changing and contestable. There are multiple reasons for this, as follows.

- Drastic and often rapid changes in political events at all levels, from the local to the global.
- Developments and debates in the interdisciplinary academic field(s).
- Context sensitivity, which affects how the same events might be perceived.

Rather than shying away from complexity and uncertainty, inquiry in the global politics classroom can serve as a tool to explore and chart unknown and uncertain territories together. Instead of opting to encapsulate concepts like "legitimacy" with a single standalone definition, inquiry-based learning invites an exploration of how legitimacy is understood, and what it might look like in practice, in diverse contexts. Similarly, rather than attempting to answer complex and contested questions, such as whether a particular political entity should be recognized as a state, students can explore multiple perspectives and arrive at their own conclusions, instead of replicating possibly biased responses. It is likely that global politics teachers will regularly find themselves without a clear answer to questions raised by students. Many answers may depend on the perspectives or approaches taken, or even be affected by political events that are still unfolding. Introducing an inquiry framework as a common element in the classroom will facilitate and enrich learning.

Political issues

Framing political issues

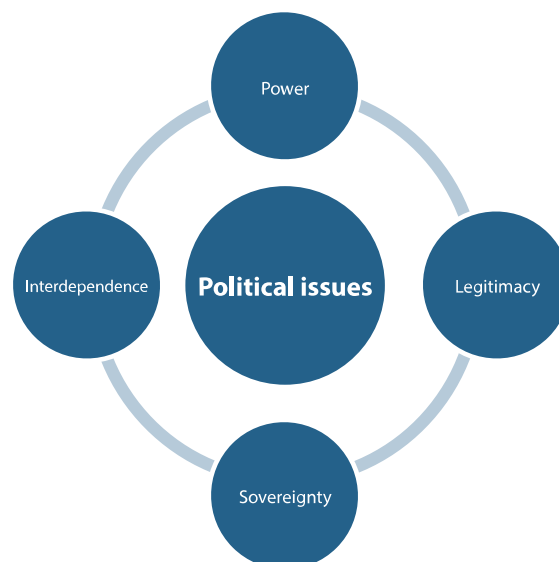
Political issues can be broadly defined as any matter that relates to the distribution of power within a specific political system. These issues deal with who gets what, when and how, or who can (or cannot) make decisions, and the rationale for this. Political issues arise around topics that involve the exercise of power, decision-making and governance within a society or across nations. These issues revolve around the distribution of resources, rights and responsibilities, as well as the conflicts and struggles that arise from competing interests, values and ideologies. Political issues often emerge from societal, economic and cultural dynamics and are characterized by their influence on the distribution of power, public policy and the functioning of political systems.

Political issues are often the subject of public debate, social mobilization and policymaking processes. These issues reflect the complexities, contestations and power dynamics within societies and the international community. Analysing and understanding political issues is crucial for policymakers, scholars and citizens to navigate the challenges and opportunities in contemporary global politics.

As figure 11 shows, the analysis of political issues will often link with the four key concepts: power, sovereignty, legitimacy, interdependence. These issues can be framed in relation to who has the power to achieve certain results or holds power over a specific group. Political issues can be used to assess who are considered legitimate political actors and what that legitimacy depends on. The issues also relate to what some of the limits of sovereignty are or how interdependence can help prevent conflict.

Figure 11

Analysing political issues through the key concepts



Political issues and diverse contexts

As students explore diverse contexts as part of their global politics course, framing political issues will become a common activity. Exposing students to diverse contexts will facilitate identifying these. For instance, something that might be perceived as normal or common (e.g. the right of every citizen to vote in a state) might not be universal and therefore might be encountered as a political issue in a foreign context. Similarly, rules and institutions that might be normalized in the students' contexts and that they might not

perceive as a political issue (e.g. normalized corruption) might become so when they study contexts where political actors, stakeholders and systems work in different ways.

Understanding power

Diverse conceptions of power

Power is the central concept in the global politics course and merits a thorough examination. The table below summarizes some thinkers and theorists whose ideas and conceptualizations may be useful in approaching the contestable concept of power in global politics. This list is not exhaustive and should be viewed as a possible starting point; teachers and students are equally encouraged to explore alternative views.

Rather than taking these definitions as a standalone list for students to memorize and repeat in examinations, they can be used to inform students' understandings of the complex nature of power. The definitions could initially be introduced, then discussed in depth as and when they become relevant to the cases being explored.

Thinker	Conceptualization of power
Hannah Arendt	Arendt's conception of power is deeply rooted in the public sphere and political action. She distinguishes power from violence, emphasizing that power arises from collective action and the ability to influence and shape the course of events. Arendt argues that power is most effectively exercised in the realm of politics, where individuals come together to deliberate and participate in public life. She emphasizes the importance of public space as a site for the exercise of power and the formation of democratic communities. Arendt's framework highlights the significance of civic engagement, public discourse and the ability of citizens to participate actively in decision-making processes.
Michel Foucault	Foucault's understanding of power is characterized by its pervasive and disciplinary nature. He challenges conventional notions of power being solely held by a few individuals or institutions, instead arguing that power operates at multiple levels, permeating societal structures and practices. Foucault focuses on the relationship between power and knowledge, highlighting how power operates through systems of surveillance, discipline and control. He introduces the concept of "biopower", which refers to the ways power is exercised over populations, regulating their bodies, behaviours and identities. Foucault's framework encourages an analysis of power relations in various social institutions and discursive practices, questioning the traditional binary between the powerful and the powerless.
Antonio Gramsci	Gramsci's conceptualization of power revolves around the notion of hegemony. He argues that power is not solely based on coercion but also on the cultural and ideological dominance of ruling groups. Gramsci highlights how ruling classes maintain their power by shaping the values, beliefs and norms of society, thereby securing the consent of the governed. His framework emphasizes the role of cultural institutions, such as education and media, in reproducing and legitimizing power structures. Gramsci's analysis offers a way to understand power relations beyond explicit control, drawing attention to the ways in which power operates through consent and the construction of hegemonic ideologies.

Thinker	Conceptualization of power
bell hooks	hooks examines power through an intersectional lens, emphasizing the interconnectedness of power dynamics with race, gender and socio-economic status. She critiques traditional analyses of power that overlook the experiences of marginalized groups. hooks argues for an understanding of power as linked to systems of oppression, and advocates for transformative politics that challenge and dismantle these systems. Her framework emphasizes the importance of intersectionality in analysing power relations, and calls for inclusive, intersectional approaches to social and political change. hooks provides tools for examining power through an intersectional lens and encourages a more comprehensive understanding of power dynamics in relation to various forms of identity and inequality.
Eric Liu	Liu's conception of power centres around civic engagement and the agency of ordinary citizens. He emphasizes the importance of individuals coming together to exercise their collective power in shaping the public sphere. Liu argues for a revitalization of democratic participation, urging people to recognize their power and take action to effect change. His framework provides tools for analysing power through the lens of civic engagement and encourages individuals to participate actively in shaping the political landscape.
Steven Lukes	Lukes developed a three-dimensional model of power. He identified three types of power: the ability to make decisions and enforce them (visible power); the power to shape the preferences and perceptions of others (hidden power); and the power to shape the very framework of what is considered possible (radical power). Lukes highlighted the importance of understanding power beyond its overt manifestations, but also its ability to shape agendas and control decision-making processes.
John Mearsheimer	Mearsheimer's conception of power is rooted in offensive realism, a theory of international relations. He sees power as a means of survival in an anarchic international system. Mearsheimer argues that states seek to maximize their relative power and engage in competitive behaviour to maintain their security. He emphasizes the role of military capabilities and geopolitical positioning in the balance of power among states. Mearsheimer's framework provides a realist perspective on power politics, highlighting the centrality of power dynamics in shaping international relations and the potential for conflict in the pursuit of power.
Walter Mignolo	Mignolo's analysis of power focuses on the dynamics of colonialism and Eurocentrism. He examines how power is embedded in knowledge production, language and epistemological frameworks that reinforce Western dominance. Mignolo calls for decolonial approaches that challenge the Eurocentric foundations of knowledge and power. His framework provides tools for understanding power in the context of colonial legacies and it offers perspectives that centre on marginalized voices and non-Western knowledge systems, fostering a more inclusive and diverse understanding of power dynamics in global politics. Mignolo's work invites critical reflection on the historical and structural power imbalances perpetuated by colonialism and it offers avenues for transformative change.
Joseph Nye	Nye introduces the concept of "soft power", which he argues is the ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. He emphasizes the importance of culture, values and diplomacy in shaping international relations.

Thinker	Conceptualization of power
	Nye's framework offers a nuanced understanding of power that goes beyond military or economic might, recognizing the significance of intangible factors in global politics. He provides tools for analysing the ways in which states project their soft power and gain influence in the international arena.
Hannah Pitkin	Pitkin's conception of power centres on the distinction between power as a resource and power as a relationship. She argues that power is not solely about the ability to achieve one's goals but is also about the ability to shape collective action and political legitimacy. Pitkin's framework highlights the importance of analysing power dynamics in terms of authority, representation and consent. She provides tools for examining the ways in which power is exercised, negotiated and legitimized within political systems, offering insights into the complexities of power relations in democratic societies.
Yaqing Qin	Qin argues that, along with structural constraints, power also comes from relations. In his view, the intersubjective level has been neglected in Western literature when studying the concept. Relational power has three distinct features. The first is shareability, characterized by either shared ownership or shared accessibility. The second is exchangeability, meaning that power reflects an exchange relationship through the mechanism of <i>bao</i> (roughly translated as "reciprocity"). The third is that power is not reduced by its use but increases as relations and connections are fostered. Relational power is understood as "power to" and especially "power with" (as it is co-built) instead of "power over". Political actors empower each other through cooperation and complementarity. In this view, power is not the ability to control others but the ability to create relations for maintaining the process of co-empowerment.

Theoretical perspectives in global politics

Theories and analytical models provide important tools for building understanding in global politics. Their inclusion in the global politics course is not for dogmatic reasons, for example, that students “must” use them. The intention is that they are used when and where they provide insights into political issues and to better understand the behaviour of political stakeholders and actors.

As part of the prescribed content of the global politics course, students are expected to have covered the following.

- Theories, models and analytical frameworks in global politics
- Use and applicability of theories and models to political issues
- Bias and limitations of theories and models

Rather than focusing on the finer, often complex, details of each theoretical perspective, explore how (and when) they are useful to the study of global politics. Depending on the specific political issues addressed or the topic or content being covered, some theoretical perspectives will contribute more than others, and each will probably have its limitations. Instead of studying theories in opposition to one another, students can appreciate them as tools that amplify their overall understanding of global politics.

A useful guideline could be that theories should be regarded as maps, not blueprints. A commonly used sense of “theory” is the notion that theories are disconnected from how the world operates. This is frequently heard in separating “theory” from “practice”, as if theory was not part and parcel of the world around us. By contrast, the global politics course should emphasize that theories, and the concepts they comprise, are better understood as maps we use to navigate the world around us.

Different concepts highlight different aspects of the world as more or less important, just as different maps of a city highlight different aspects as more or less important to specific tasks, for example, taking public transport or finding a good restaurant. As we come to learn about some of the basic theoretical frameworks used to make sense of global politics—for example, realism, liberalism, Marxism, constructivism, feminism—it is important to emphasize that they are abstractions from concrete events and interactions, and are designed to help us make sense of these, just as maps abstract from the world around us to guide us more effectively.

We can also compare different maps of the same thing—for example, public transport—to determine whether one is better or worse than another. Introducing “theories as maps” will help convey this to students and is a metaphor worth returning to throughout the course. This is not to overemphasize theoretical ideas over the empirical content of the course, but it is intended to link the two parts together more easily.

An initial overview

The table below provides a general overview of the main proposals or assumptions that characterize some of the many possible theoretical perspectives that can be considered during the course. The list of theoretical approaches, as well as the guidance provided, are not meant to be exhaustive or authoritative but serve as initial guidelines for educators and students who may not be acquainted with them. Teachers are encouraged to complement this guidance with their own research and to consider alternative approaches not listed.

Most of the theoretical approaches listed will have multiple conceptions and even diverging branches. Students are not expected to engage with all listed perspectives, and it is better for students to explore fewer theoretical perspectives and have a relatively good understanding of them than to have an extended repertoire that they only know superficially or are merely able to mention. One guiding principle for teachers can be to make sure students explore diverse perspectives as part of the course; for instance, to

engage with theories that present differing views of global politics or some that question the main assumptions for power relations that others hold as evident.

Theoretical perspectives	Initial guidance
Realism	Realism emphasizes the competitive and conflictual nature of relations among political actors. It proposes that the nation state is the primary actor in the international system, that decision-makers are rational actors pursuing their own self-interest (national interest), and that states exist in an anarchic system. It is often argued that balance of power can only be achieved through competition among states. The realist approach is criticized for its focus on power politics and its pessimistic view of human nature and international relations. Some critics argue that it perpetuates a confrontational world and legitimizes war and aggression. Realism's state-centric nature seems to overlook other actors within the state, or events driven by citizens or even international organizations.
Neorealism	Neorealism shares some of the core propositions of realism but with key differences in what these imply for the interactions between political actors. While realism focuses on individual states as the unit of analysis, neorealism has a wider scope and argues that the international system's structure has a great influence on shaping state behaviour. With a shared conception of anarchy as a condition of the international system, neorealism focuses more on the distribution of power and the relative power position of states. It suggests that states are primarily concerned with maintaining a favourable balance of power in comparison with other states, rather than seeking an accumulation of absolute power. Although primarily state-centric, neorealism acknowledges the potential influence of non-state actors, such as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and transnational companies (TNCs), in shaping the international system.
Liberalism	Liberalism focuses on the importance of individual rights, institutions and cooperation in mitigating the power of states and promoting peace. Liberalism argues for the conformation of institutions that protect individual freedom by limiting political power and opposing coercion and expansionist foreign policies. At the international level, it emphasizes the need for cooperation among states to overcome common obstacles and reduce conflict.
Neoliberalism	Neoliberalism acknowledges the importance of non-state actors and particularly emphasizes the role of markets and economic factors. While it takes the view that states can cooperate for mutual benefit through institutions, norms and diplomacy, neoliberalism places a strong emphasis on the rational pursuit of self-interest by states and non-state actors.
Constructivism	Constructivism focuses on the socially constructed nature of the world and the agency of individuals and groups in shaping politics. It emphasizes the role of ideas and beliefs in shaping reality and argues that the meaning given to material structures (such as military aggression or weapons themselves) is more important. Actors continually shape politics through their actions and interactions; reality is continuously under construction, which allows for change to occur. Constructivism highlights the mutual constitution of agency and structure, where actors and the system(s) they interact with influence each other.
Critical theory	Critical theory aims to critique repressive social practices and institutions and promote ideas and practices that align with universal principles of justice. Influenced by Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx in its development, it emphasizes the

Theoretical perspectives	Initial guidance
	interconnectedness of the world and the potential for supranational political communities. Some of critical theory's propositions are the paradigms of redistribution and recognition, addressing socio-economic status struggles and social emancipation as well as pressure for freedom and justice related to identity. Critical theory aims to advance emancipation and freedom by critiquing exclusionary practices, promoting inclusive communities and challenging dominant paradigms.
Feminism	Feminism challenges the marginalization of women in traditional theory and practice. Feminist scholars have exposed and criticized the absence of women in decision-making processes and have evidenced how women's everyday lives are intertwined with global politics. They have deconstructed gender roles and norms, revealing how these expectations shape global politics. Feminist theorists argue that gender identities are imbued with power, often maintaining the subordination dynamic. By questioning these constructions, they reveal the diversity of women's engagements with global politics. Feminist theories have emphasized the importance of intersectionality, recognizing that gender intersects with other identities related to power, such as socio-economic status, race and ethnicity.
Marxism	Marxism in global politics is rooted in historical materialism, which claims that human beings and their relations are determined by the material conditions in which they exist. Marxism argues that capitalism and the modern sovereign states system are not natural or inevitable but are products of specific conditions and social relations (and can therefore be changed). Marxism challenges the separation of the political and economic sphere, highlighting how states and their foreign policies are shaped by the global economy and capitalist dynamics.
Postcolonialism	Postcolonialism examines the impact of colonial rule and imperial histories on the societies, governments and peoples of formerly colonized regions. It argues that the effects of colonialism are still present in shaping global power dynamics and perpetuating dominance over marginalized groups at multiple levels. This approach focuses on disparities in power among states and groups, and argues that Western perceptions of the non-Western are constructed through discourse that depicts the non-Western as inferior, justifying colonial domination. According to this idea, traditional theories normalize asymmetrical power relations and shape understanding of global issues. For example, postcolonialism highlights how concepts like state sovereignty were imposed by European powers on the colonial world. It sees the international system as a hierarchy rather than anarchy, where colonialism and imperialism have perpetuated Western domination. Postcolonialism challenges dominant narratives in international relations, highlighting the ongoing influence of colonial legacies, the intersections of power, and extreme marginalization. It calls for alternative perspectives on global issues and a more inclusive and just world order.

Traditional and critical theories

There are many possible classifications for theoretical perspectives. One of the most common is to list "traditional" or "mainstream" theories apart from "critical" theories. Each of these labels can certainly be challenged or some of the theories might be included in either classification. However, it is important to recognize and understand important distinctions, as these might influence how teachers decide to approach them.

The distinction between traditional and critical theories lies in their underlying assumptions, perspectives and methodologies in analysing global politics.

Traditional theories, such as realism or liberalism, generally operate within the existing framework of international relations as established disciplines. They often focus on state-centric analysis, prioritize the study of power, institutions and the behaviour of states, and seek to explain and understand the existing international order. Traditional theories tend to take the prevailing structures, norms and assumptions of global politics for granted and aim to provide descriptive and explanatory accounts of how the world works.

On the other hand, critical theories challenge the status quo and interrogate the underlying power dynamics, structures and assumptions of global politics. They adopt a more critical and transformative approach, seeking to uncover hidden power relations, injustices and forms of oppression. Critical theories question dominant narratives, identities and knowledge production, aiming to expose the limitations and biases of traditional theories.

Critical theories emphasize the role of social, cultural and historical contexts in shaping global politics. They explore the intersectionality of various forms of power, such as gender, race, socio-economic status and colonial legacies. Critical theories also analyse the impact of global capitalism, imperialism and other structures of domination in social, economic and political relations.

Methodologically, critical theories often employ interdisciplinary approaches and draw on insights from fields such as postcolonial studies, feminism, sociology, philosophy and cultural studies. They aim to generate new knowledge, challenge existing hierarchies and contribute to broader emancipatory goals.

While traditional theories may focus on maintaining and understanding the existing global order, critical theories aim to deconstruct, challenge and transform it towards more equitable and just outcomes. Critical theories seek to illuminate alternative possibilities, question dominant power relations and promote social change.

It is important to note that these categories are not mutually exclusive, and there is often overlap and interaction between traditional and critical theories. Many scholars employ a combination of approaches, integrating critical perspectives within traditional theories or challenging traditional theories from a critical standpoint. The boundaries between the two can be fluid, and different scholars may interpret and apply these theories in various ways.

Critical approaches in global politics

In the global politics course, critical approaches are associated with theoretical perspectives that question the status quo and the traditional assumptions of established theories. Nevertheless, critical approaches also refer to active reflection and recognition of biases in all activities related to the study of global politics—in the sources analysed, in media reporting of political events, in engagements with stakeholders and in our own perceptions.

Critical reflection

Critical reflection refers to the process of examining and analysing one's own beliefs, assumptions and biases, as well as the broader social, political and economic structures that shape our understanding of the world. It involves questioning preconceived ideas, considering multiple perspectives and evaluating the evidence and arguments supporting different viewpoints. The goal of critical reflection is to develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of complex issues and to foster critical thinking skills that allow individuals to engage in informed and constructive discussions.

Promoting critical reflection as a common practice for teachers and students contributes to the course aims in multiple ways, particularly when considering that global politics is a multifaceted, contentious, relatively new and constantly evolving field. By developing critical reflection, students can learn to analyse and evaluate information and claims about political issues critically, rather than accepting them at face value. This will help them develop their own informed judgements and understand the biases in communication. This in turn prompts students to consider diverse perspectives and world views, fostering empathy and allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of different cultures.

Some ways in which critical reflection can be incorporated into the course are as follows.

- Encourage open and respectful discussions where students can express their authentic opinions while also being exposed to alternative viewpoints.
- Engage students with diverse sources, including differing ideological perspectives, and guide students in critically analysing the content and contexts of the sources.
- Organize debates and role-play simulations where students take on different positions. This allows students to understand better the perspectives, interests and possible limitations of various actors.
- Incorporate reflective writing assignments that require students to assess their own biases and questions and how their perspectives evolve over the course. This practice can prove especially beneficial for the engagement project, as students document their experiential learning.

Positionality

A key element in meaningful critical reflection is positionality. The concept is rooted in the social sciences and refers to the understanding that our perspectives, beliefs and knowledge are shaped by our social, cultural and historical positions or locations within society. These positions include aspects such as race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, religion and other social identities. Positionality recognizes that people's experiences, perceptions and interpretations of the world are influenced by their unique social locations.

Some key points about positionality include the following.

- Recognizing that individuals are situated in specific social locations that influence their world view and how they perceive and interact with the world. These social locations are not just personal characteristics but are deeply intertwined with broader social structures and power dynamics.

- Challenging the idea of absolute objectivity in research and analysis. This acknowledges that researchers and scholars bring their subjectivities and biases to the study, and these can shape the way they approach and interpret data and information. This is particularly important to consider when studying theories, models, tools of analysis or most academic sources in global politics.
- Encouraging researchers and scholars to engage in reflexivity, which means being self-aware and critically examining their own backgrounds, assumptions and biases. This involves reflecting on how their position within society may influence their research questions, methods and interpretations. In research, acknowledging and considering positionality is crucial for ensuring ethical practices. It involves being mindful of potential biases, power dynamics and the impact of research on the communities or individuals being studied.
- Positionality also intersects with the concept of intersectionality, which recognizes that individuals hold multiple social identities simultaneously. These intersections create unique experiences and challenges that cannot be fully understood by analysing each identity in isolation.

When exploring global politics, both teachers and students can benefit from carrying out critical reflection and trying to position themselves with respect to the issues discussed. Instead of studying political issues as something that is strange and independent from them, students can reflect on “where they stand” or “where they are located” in relation to the issue. This is not only a matter of their personal opinion, but also a matter of the place and position that their opinion comes from. For instance, when discussing whether a political system should have basic requirements for the right to vote (other than age), such as level of formal education, many students who would favour this view might tend to speak from a position of privilege or from a position that would allow them to keep their voting rights.

As the topics of the course are explored, teachers and students should attempt to consider positionality regularly to inform better understanding. This is particularly important for the engagement project, as students will interact with external stakeholders, in many cases from different contexts.

International-mindedness in global politics

Fostering a truly diverse, pluralistic, balanced curriculum that neither emphasizes nor privileges certain real-world examples or world views over others, is a key element of the course’s approach to international-mindedness. It is also vital to recognize that global politics can be a distressing subject that can run the risk of “emotional hijack” in both students and educators, leading to unintended consequences, such as feelings of hopelessness, apathy and doom.

Issues that can undermine international-mindedness

- **Issue 1: Decontextualized treatment of theory and content**—A major dilemma in teaching global politics is related to the treatment of theory. Every global politics teacher has faced the challenge of getting students to go beyond the “two theories pitted against one another” (e.g. universalism vs cultural relativism) in an effort to include multiple perspectives. Unfortunately, many fail to do so due to time constraints, the complexity of other theories, or pressures of examination preparation and “ticking the boxes” of assessment criteria. While there is nothing wrong with teaching conventional or dominant international relations theories, it is important to recognize the often historical context of how they have become dominant, and the implications of said dominance in cementing hierarchies between the “West and the rest”, and their role in constructing “the other” non-Western subject, usually as unknowable, underdeveloped, undemocratic, lacking in human rights, and so on. Though teachers worldwide have clearly incorporated a plethora of “non-Western” real-world examples in their teaching (and this is commendable at the content level), the larger problem lies in epistemology rather than in geography.
- **Issue 2: A singular ideal of political, social or economic “progress”**—An issue that arises in this regard is when educators, knowingly or unknowingly, present certain ideals of political, social or economic “progress” as fixed ideals to be aspired to by all peoples or nations globally. It is common to see students’ written work reflecting such notions. For example, the European Union might be given as an example of exceptionalism for its political progress, democracy and respect for human rights.

Meanwhile, Nordic exceptionalism might come to mind when discussing sustainable development. Whereas the Middle East (or Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA)) may be seen as an example of exceptionalism for being “conflict-prone”. Similarly, many countries in Africa and Latin America may be seen as examples of exceptionalism for their “poverty” and perceived “lack” of development.

- **Issue 3: Emotional hijack**—This issue can be another focal point, especially when considering the complexity and global scale of certain existential problems (e.g. the climate crisis) facing both existing and future generations. This is particularly true for global politics, where students are frequently confronted with these issues. One emerging proposition is that by incorporating compassion and “feelings” within teaching across the continuum, international-mindedness is cultivated in a more meaningful way.

Teachers interested in exploring these topics further can review the [Compassionate systems approach](#) resource, available on the Programme Resource Centre. The resource offers an overview of compassionate systems and provides tools and sample activities of how compassionate systems can be implemented.

Global politics and student well-being

The Diploma Programme (DP) aims to provide a well-rounded and integral experience for students, part of which is ensuring their physical, emotional, mental and social well-being. Student well-being should be understood not simply as “feeling good”, but as a wider concept that encompasses a sense of meaning and purpose, connection, accomplishment and functioning well. As part of this experience, the global politics course intends to increase the students’ sense of agency through engagement with political issues in a diversity of contexts. Regrettably, this can also result in frustration from realizing the many limitations that exist within political systems.

The subject matter of the course can, in comparison with other courses, sometimes appear overwhelming to students. One of the main aims of the global politics course as described in the guide is to equip students to “develop a lifelong commitment to active global citizenship through collaboration and agency”. To achieve this, it is important to maintain a balance between helping students to become aware of political issues around them, and supporting them in acquiring and developing the appropriate tools and skills to process and address those issues adequately. Considering elements that could influence students’ well-being, at a community level there are both political participation and voice, while at national and global levels the political context will play a great role.

Teachers interested in examining the topic of well-being and exploring ways in which it can be fostered in the global politics course can review the following IB policy research paper: [What is well-being?](#) The paper offers a comprehensive definition of well-being, as well as an examination of influencers at multiple levels, which can be useful for class or whole-school initiatives.

Engagement in global politics

Communication

Developing communication skills is of particular importance in the global politics course. In this regard, many educators tend to focus on written communication, especially the ability of students to convey messages in an academic format (e.g. structurally, citations) and present arguments effectively. Those skills are certainly important, but it is also essential to foster both receptive and productive communication skills, regardless of whether they are formally assessed in the summative examinations.

The table below outlines four aspects of communication skills that can be addressed throughout the course.

Promote active listening	Active listening is a crucial communication skill for understanding different perspectives and engaging in meaningful discussions. By promoting active listening, teachers can create an inclusive and respectful classroom environment. Active listening enhances comprehension, empathy and critical thinking. It encourages students to consider diverse viewpoints, analyse information critically and respond thoughtfully.
Develop writing skills	Effective writing skills are essential for articulating ideas, expressing arguments and communicating complex concepts in global politics. Developing writing skills empowers students to convey their thoughts clearly and persuasively. Strong writing skills also enhance critical thinking and analytical abilities, as students must organize their thoughts and construct coherent arguments.
Argumentation and discussion	Teaching students how to construct and present well-reasoned arguments is crucial in the global politics course. It encourages students to think critically, analyse evidence and engage in productive discussions. Argumentation and discussion foster respectful debate, broaden perspectives and strengthen students' ability to articulate their viewpoints. Argumentation and discussion also promote active engagement and participation in the subject matter.
Communicating according to the audience	The global politics course involves addressing diverse audiences, such as academics, the public or NGOs. Teaching students how to adapt their communication style according to the audience helps them become effective global communicators. By understanding different cultural, social and professional contexts, students can tailor their messages to facilitate communication and convey their ideas in a compelling and culturally sensitive manner.

Some approaches to developing these communication skills include the following.

- **Organize debates** on current global issues or controversial topics, allowing students to carry out research, develop arguments and engage in respectful exchanges. Encourage students to support their positions with evidence and to consider opposing viewpoints. This promotes critical thinking, communication skills and understanding of diverse perspectives.
- **Assign writing tasks** that require students to analyse political issues of their choice but that also bring in new stimuli and sources. Students can be encouraged to write persuasive essays or prepare research summaries or updates. Provide constructive feedback to help students improve their writing skills. Consider integrating technology tools that facilitate collaborative writing or peer editing to enhance student engagement and collaboration.
- **Engage students in simulations**, such as the "Model United Nations" or other mock engagements, where they can practise communication, negotiation and public speaking skills. This interactive

approach encourages students to develop effective communication strategies while immersing themselves in political scenarios.

- **Incorporate multimedia resources**, such as videos, podcasts and documentaries, to expose students to different communication styles and to enhance their understanding of global politics. Discuss how different forms of media influence public opinion and shape narratives, promoting media literacy and critical analysis.

Collaboration

When discussing collaboration in a classroom setting, it is common to think of peer-to-peer collaboration on assignments, or working on pair or group assignments. However, the global politics course offers multiple opportunities to expand this notion into a multifaceted collaborative ecosystem (figure 12), which extends well beyond the classroom and even the school.

The table below outlines different types of collaboration that can be fostered and promoted as part of the global politics course. Ideally, these would be integrated and coordinated to model collaborative practices throughout the course.

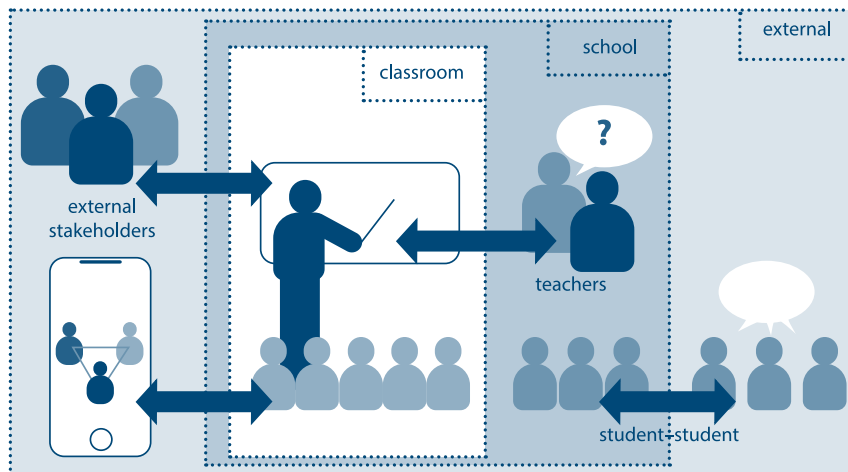
Collaboration between students	Encouraging collaboration among students in the study of global politics can lead to enhanced learning outcomes. By working together, students can engage in diverse perspectives, share ideas and develop critical thinking skills. Collaboration fosters teamwork, promotes empathy and allows students to learn from one another's strengths.
Collaboration between teachers and students	When teachers actively involve students in the learning process, it creates a sense of ownership and empowerment. Students become active rather than passive programme participants and develop a deeper understanding of global politics. Collaborating with teachers allows students to seek guidance, ask questions and receive feedback, enhancing their learning experience.
Collaboration with other global politics teachers	When teachers plan and design collaboratively, they tend to produce more well-rounded learning engagements. Sharing experiences, resources and planned activities can contribute to better teaching practices and improving the overall student experience. In many cases, a single teacher will be responsible for global politics at their school; however, they can still collaborate with others through regional associations, at professional development events or through dedicated online communities.
Collaboration with teachers of other subjects	Collaboration among teachers from different subjects provides an interdisciplinary approach to global politics. It allows for a broader perspective and helps students make connections between various fields of study. For the DP and Career-related Programme (CP) in particular, this helps provide a more integrated programme experience. Collaborative planning and discussions enable teachers to incorporate different teaching methodologies, resources and perspectives, enriching the learning environment.
Collaboration with external stakeholders	Involving external stakeholders such as academics, NGOs, businesses and government representatives in the teaching of global politics exposes students to real-world applications of theoretical concepts. It brings authenticity to their learning experience and helps them understand the practical implications of political issues. Collaboration with external stakeholders also provides opportunities for guest speakers, field trips and project-based learning, making the subject more engaging.

Some recommendations for successful collaboration are as follows.

- **Encourage group projects:** Design learning tasks that require students to work collaboratively, allowing them to exchange ideas, delegate responsibilities and learn from each other's expertise. This can be done through group discussions, presentations, debates or simulations. This is not restricted to class activities and can be linked to preparation for assessment. For example, students can benefit from peer feedback when practising for the external examinations or while producing their engagement project report. Students can also act as "experts" in certain topics within the global politics classroom as they explore areas of inquiry of interest to them, then share their findings with the group.
- **Use technology for virtual collaboration:** Use online platforms, such as discussion forums or collaborative documents, to facilitate communication and collaboration beyond the classroom walls. Use of technology allows for asynchronous collaboration and accommodates diverse learning styles. This can easily be extended to open collaboration with the wider global politics community and, for example, arranging virtual sessions with other students and communities from different contexts.
- **Organize interdisciplinary projects:** Coordinate with teachers from other subjects to design interdisciplinary projects that explore global politics from multiple angles. This promotes collaboration and helps students develop a holistic understanding of the subject. Considering workloads in the DP, this may also help to better coordinate projects and activities that also save time.
- **Foster partnerships with external stakeholders:** Establish connections with NGOs, local governments and businesses. Invite guest speakers, or arrange field trips to provide students with first-hand experiences and insights. Collaborate on projects that address real-world issues and encourage students to engage with the external community. This may prove particularly beneficial to students when they are working on their engagement project, facilitating connections for them.

Figure 12

Collaborative learning ecosystem



Assessment alignment

Assessment as part of an IB education

Additional resources

Teachers are encouraged to review the IB publication *Teaching and learning informed by assessment in the Diploma Programme*. This resource offers valuable insights and supporting guidance around the following questions.

1. What is learning and teaching informed by assessment and why is it important?
2. What makes feedback effective and how can meaningful feedback be delivered?
3. How can meaningful assessments be designed that support formative feedback?
4. What are common types of formative assessments in Diploma Programme (DP) classrooms and what do they aim to measure?
5. How can conceptual understanding be assessed in IB classrooms?
6. What do classroom assessments look like in a skills-based curriculum?
7. How can assessments be made fairer and inclusive for all students?
8. How can IB students be supported in becoming assessment capable?
9. How can assessments be used to support students' development of their approaches to learning skills and the learner profile attributes?
10. How can digital technology be used to enhance and transform formative assessments?
11. How can a positive learning environment that promotes formative assessment be cultivated?

The global politics assessment model

There is a distinct focus and format for each assessment component.

Assessment component	About the assessment task
Paper 1 (SL/HL)	This is a source-based paper focused on analytical skills. The content is the global politics core topics, and the paper comprises four sources and four structured questions. The sources may be text, images, diagrams and infographics. Candidates must answer all questions, referring to the sources and their own knowledge.
Paper 2 (SL/HL)	Paper 2 is the same for standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) and is an extended response paper. The paper has two sections; candidates answer one question from each. Section A includes questions from each of the thematic studies. Section B includes integrating questions, which both allows and requires candidates to make connections across the three thematic studies as well as the core topics.
Paper 3 (HL only)	Paper 3 is a stimulus-based paper and is focused on the HL extension covering global political challenges. Knowledge of course concepts, content and contexts, as well as additional research of multiple case studies, is required to address the

Assessment component	About the assessment task
	questions properly. The stimulus may include text, data, diagrams and infographics.
Engagement project	Engagement with a political issue chosen by the candidate—this requires background research, planning, active engagement and complementary research and reflection. Candidates must submit for assessment a written report that includes a justification, a discussion of methodology, an explanation of the links between the political issue and the course content, a discussion of the engagement activities carried out, and an analysis and synthesis of the political issue and the perspectives of the stakeholders involved. Additionally, HL candidates also formulate a recommendation for addressing the political issue.

Guidance on external assessment

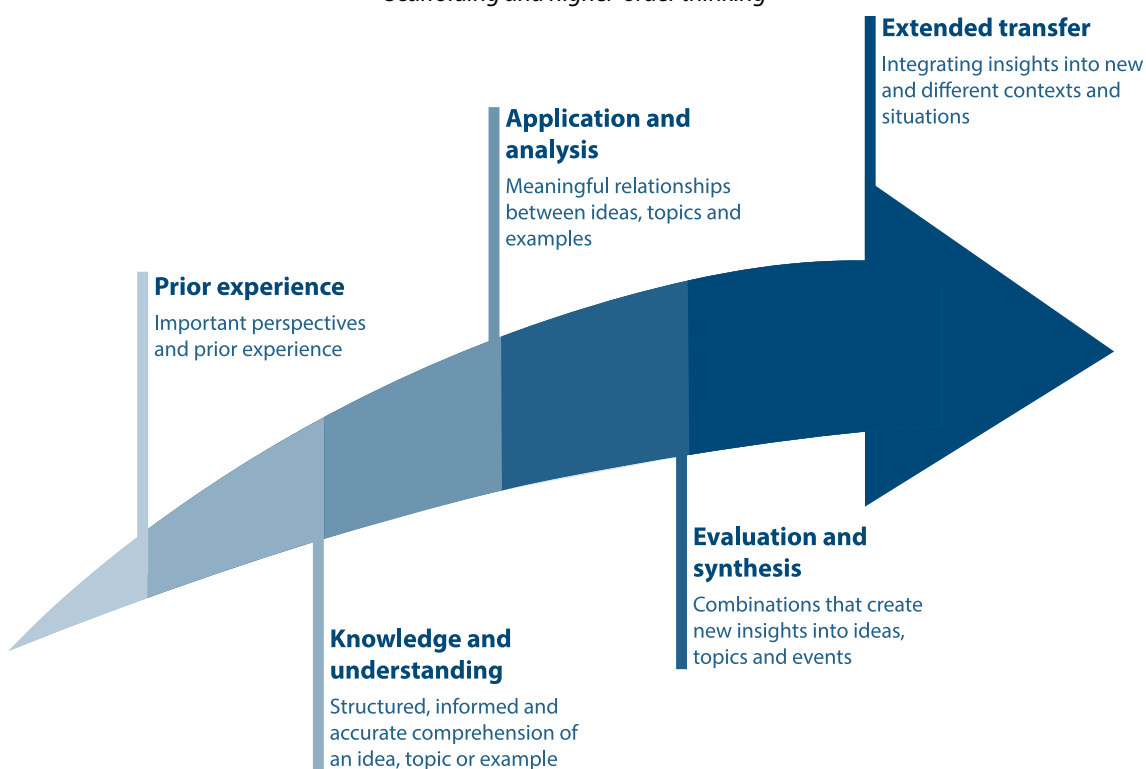
Note: The *Global politics guide* outlines all the detailed requirements of the assessment components. Guidance in the teacher support material (TSM) is intended to serve as supporting material and is not a replacement for the information contained in the guide. For clarification on assessment formats and criteria, educators and students should refer to the guide.

Examination design

Examinations are delivered at the end of the two-year course of study and are externally assessed. Question structures and markschemes are described in the guide, in the “Assessment” section.

Figure 13

Scaffolding and higher-order thinking



Supporting higher-order thinking

Examinations focus on evidence of higher-order thinking that integrates argumentation, accurate and relevant knowledge, and real-world examples. Global politics examinations are mostly focused on higher-order thinking questions that can be further scaffolded. Scaffolding refers to a step-by-step process during which questions of increasing complexity build from prior experience towards higher-order thinking (figure 13). Further guidance on this can be found below in the “Command terms in practice” section.

Typically, higher-order thinking is evidenced in an examination through longer responses. This is also the case in the global politics course, where each examination includes opportunities for students to construct longer responses to questions about course topics. Relevant longer response questions are present in SL/HL paper 1 (question 4), SL/HL paper 2 (all questions) and HL paper 3 (question 3).

Command terms in practice

Command terms direct students to demonstrate learning across multiple levels of increasing complexity. This section describes how these terms work and how teachers might integrate their use into the global politics classroom.

What are the command terms?

The IB defines command terms as key words and phrases used in subject guides and assessment components to indicate what is required in a response to a particular question or prompt. IB command terms broadly follow established frameworks, such as Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Command terms share a common purpose across programmes. However, within subject groups and/or subjects, the specific definition and/or performance level associated with a command term may differ based on specialized approaches appropriate to different subjects.

Command terms appear in a standardized format at the end of most subject guides in the DP and the Career-related Programme (CP). Comparable terms are used by other educational organizations, where they are sometimes called "task verbs", "action verbs" or "power words".

Command terms are part of the life cycle of teaching, learning and assessment. They are frequently integrated into formative assessment by teachers and are used to develop examination materials and assess student responses.

When used in examinations, command terms indicate the type and depth of response that is expected to a given question. They are usually an explicit component of the question itself. Command terms often signal the relative weighting or mark allocation for a given question or item.

Command terms are featured in the markschemes and marking guidance associated with examinations. Subject reports published after each assessment session frequently mention the need for candidates to be familiar with command terms.

In the global politics course, command terms are scaffolded according to levels of increasing complexity. Examination questions use command terms as defined in the *Global politics guide*. Assessment criteria also reference command terms in a manner consistent with the definitions provided in the TSM and the guide.

Command terms in the classroom

Command terms are most often addressed in written responses. The varied levels and types of questions that command terms support may also be explored through other modes and media. This section explores how learning associated with command terms might be evidenced in ways others than formal student writing.

While some of the summative examinations for global politics do not exhibit a wide array of command terms, it is advised that educators and students become familiar with them as part of the learning journey. This will help scaffold assessment requirements and build from simpler tasks to more complex ones. For instance, when looking at questions from the SL/HL paper 2, some teachers might overlook the many tasks that are implied in responding to a question that uses command terms like "discuss", "examine" or "to what extent". As figure 14 shows, when responding to more complex command terms, students are likely to be required to conduct a series of simpler tasks, even if they are not explicitly instructed to do so. Breaking down the more complex command terms will usually help students address the demands of the question.

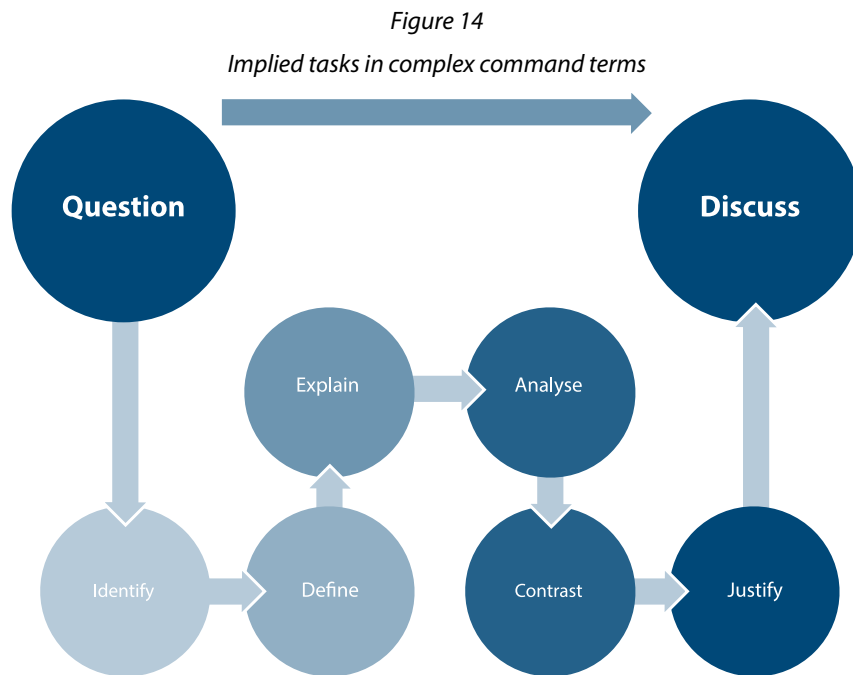
For example, the following question could be broken down.

"The most significant cause of human rights violations in global politics is structural violence." Discuss this claim.

"Discuss", as a command term as described in the guide, requires a "balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence". Responding successfully to this would require:

- defining "human rights" and "structural violence"
- outlining what constitutes human rights violations

- explaining how structural violence contributes to human rights violations
- justifying the claim—providing arguments and evidence that support the claim
- justifying alternative considerations—supporting counterclaims
- evaluating the significance of structural violence as a cause of human rights violations in comparison with other causes.



Preparing for the examinations

The following guidance highlights transferable skills that extend beyond test-taking to enrich student learning. Assessment preparation involves strategies that students can implement before and during examinations.

Before the examination

- Students should **understand** the distinct focus and purpose of the examination.
Examinations have a logic that is like a code to be deciphered. Understanding this code will help students prepare far more effectively than (over-) cramming for factual knowledge.
- Students should **know** the structure of the examination.
Ensure students are familiar with the nature of stimuli or sources that might be used, as well as details such as question types and markschemes.
- Students should **practise** with sample questions and mock examinations.
Provide opportunities for students to build their confidence through lower-stakes formative assessment. This should include comparable experiences to those encountered in a real examination, such as practice with timed examinations as well as topics in multiple combinations.
- Students should **reflect** on feedback.
Model the use of targeted and actionable feedback. Provide students with opportunities to peer review and self-assess. Students are encouraged to use a journal to document and collect feedback for further revision.

Working with a well-practised process can help students respond with boldness and clarity during the examination.

During the examination

- Students should **unpack** examination stimuli, sources and questions.
Students should note the demands of the question, including the command term as well as question requirements.
They should carefully review stimuli and sources and underline and/or document significant phrases and ideas. They should note the cues in stimuli, sources and questions that relate to course topics.
- Students should **plan** the response.
If needed, students should quickly sketch a list of requirements for a successful response to the given question.
As appropriate, students should outline a clear claim or argument along with items of supporting evidence; the response should be logically organized.
- Students should **construct** the response.
Students should avoid irrelevant, extraneous or overly scripted responses. They should address the question asked, not the question that they would like to have been asked.
For longer responses, students should consider an introduction that states the central claim or argument. This should be threaded through the response in a logical way that is supported by evidence.
Students should integrate accurate knowledge, information and terminology throughout their response.

During the examination

They should briefly define important terms that appear in the question and point out any implications or possible differing interpretations in the question (without necessarily repeating the question itself).

Students should start a new paragraph for each new point. Each separate explanation deserves its own paragraph with related supporting evidence. Sentences should be kept short.

Students should consider register and audience. They should avoid colloquial language and acronyms or abbreviations (when using well-known acronyms, they should make sure to write them in full at least once). They should keep in mind that examiners are academic experts in the area, but the examiners may not be familiar with the specific examples provided.

- Students should **review** the response.

Students should read the question again once the response is written to ensure that the demands of the question are fully addressed.

Paper 1: Working with sources

Paper 1 invites students to consider claims and perspectives of diverse real-world sources. This examination is common to SL and HL.

SL and HL paper 1				
Description	Four source-based questions that address syllabus topics in an integrated way. Sources may include text, visuals, data, diagrams and/or infographics.			
Duration	1 hour 15 minutes			
Weighting and marks	SL students 30% 25 marks		HL students 20% 25 marks	
Question structure	Question 1 (3 marks) Tests understanding of a source by identifying specific elements or information.	Question 2 (4 marks) Tests the application of knowledge for the analysis of a source.	Question 3 (6 marks) Tests the comparison and/or contrast of the views, ideas, claims and information presented in two of the sources.	Question 4 (12 marks) Tests the evaluation of sources and synthesis of source material and previous knowledge.
Student instruction	Students answer all four questions.			

Preparing for paper 1

Familiarizing students with the format and expectations of the paper is essential to prepare them for their external assessment.

Markschemes and marking notes

The examination's markscheme can be integrated into classroom activities so that, by the end of the course, students fully understand the demands of marking instruments for short and extended response questions.

Skills practice

Providing multiple opportunities for students to practise the skills assessed in the examinations is crucial to their success. As part of ongoing classroom activities, teachers can help students to become familiar with different types of sources and with the types of tasks they will be expected to complete in paper 1.

Mock examinations

Many schools conduct mock examinations during the course. In addition to gauging student performance, mock examinations help students identify areas for improvement within the context of lower-stakes assessment.

Student strategies

Strategy 1: Prepare and focus

Paper 1 involves understanding, analysing, evaluating and synthesizing the claims and perspectives presented in diverse sources, as well as their relevance for specific course topics presented in the examination. Students should be well acquainted with the established format of the questions and the types of sources they might encounter.

Strategy 2: Timing

The time allocated for paper 1 includes source review time. Effective time management is a skill of particular importance for this examination as students will be required to allocate their time to engage with unseen sources and respond to multiple questions.

Strategy 3: Making effective use of sources

The first three questions in the paper point to particular elements of specific sources. All the information required for these is contained in the source. For the last question, rather than just listing all the sources along with a mention of its content, students should consider what evidence each of the sources provides to answer the question and which sources are more relevant or useful.

Strategy 4: Plan, then respond

For longer response questions, planning will help students organize a more effective response that includes a claim or argument along with supporting evidence from their inquiries. Longer responses are not intended to be perfect reflections of formal academic writing but should indicate logical organization, purposeful use of evidence and substantiated claims, as well as accurate and relevant knowledge and terminology.

Given that the first three questions of the paper may not require significant planning, students might take advantage of this as they build up their response to the last (extended) response.

Strategy 5: Remember the markscheme

Longer response questions are scored using markschemes as well as marking guidance specific to a session. The markscheme is a powerful tool to share with students. Familiarity with this markscheme will ensure that students understand what their responses must demonstrate to be successful.

Paper 2: Making connections

This is a common paper for SL and HL students.

Paper 2 invites students to showcase their conceptual understanding and knowledge of specific parts of the course as well as the integration and connections across the global politics syllabus. The ability to synthesize elements from the course's prescribed content, key concepts and diverse contexts in an integrated way is particularly important in this paper. Even where the key concepts are not explicitly mentioned in a question, students should demonstrate a conceptual understanding of global politics. In their responses, candidates are invited to draw on the complexities of any relevant political concepts, depending on the arguments they put forward.

SL and HL paper 2		
Description	This is an extended response paper. The paper has two sections, and candidates answer one question from each. Section A includes questions from each of the thematic studies. Section B includes integrating questions, which allows and requires candidates to make connections across the three thematic studies as well as the core topics.	
Duration	1 hour 45 minutes	
Weighting and marks	SL students 40% 30 marks	HL students 30% 30 marks
Question structure	Section A (15 marks) Three questions, each focused on one of the thematic studies.	Section B (15 marks) Three integrating questions that may include content from all the SL/HL syllabus.
Student instruction	Students answer one question from section A and one question from section B.	

Preparing for paper 2

Familiarizing students with the format and expectations of the paper is essential to prepare them for their external assessment.

Markschemes and marking notes

The examination's markscheme can be integrated into classroom activities so that, by the end of the course, students fully understand the demands of marking instruments for extended response questions.

Skills practice

Providing multiple opportunities for students to practise the skills assessed in the examinations is crucial to their success. As part of ongoing classroom activities, teachers can help students to become familiar with different types of questions and with possible ways to structure their responses. The skill of constructing well-supported arguments will be of particular importance to the paper.

Mock examinations

Many schools conduct mock examinations during the course. In addition to gauging student performance, mock examinations help students identify areas for improvement within the context of lower-stakes assessment.

Student strategies

Strategy 1: Prepare and focus

Students should be well acquainted with essay writing and making connections across the syllabus before the examination. While the students will face previously unseen questions, they should be familiar with the format and structure of the paper, the type of questions and what the questions are looking for in a response. This will allow them to channel their most relevant knowledge in responding to the particular questions.

Strategy 2: Timing

Paper 2 requires that students allocate significant time to selecting questions and planning and writing their responses. It is important to manage time effectively and in a balanced way so that enough time is devoted to each of the questions, rather than leaving too little time for the second response, for example.

Strategy 3: Selecting questions

In most cases, students will be more familiar or confident with certain syllabus sections or topics. This could be a useful criterion for selecting which question to answer from section A (thematic studies) and, in general, section B (integrating questions). Pay close attention to the command term and any key words included to understand fully the demands of the questions.

Strategy 4: Plan, then respond

For longer response questions, planning will help students organize a more effective response that includes a claim or argument along with supporting evidence from their inquiries. Longer responses are not intended to be perfect reflections of formal academic writing but should indicate logical organization, purposeful use of evidence and substantiated claims, as well as accurate and relevant knowledge and terminology. Depending on time management, it might be advisable to do at least an initial planning for both questions to facilitate writing under time pressure.

For section B, students may need to devote additional time to thinking about the explicit or implicit syllabus connections and how best to approach them.

Strategy 5: Remember the markscheme

Longer response questions are scored using markschemes as well as marking guidance specific to a session. The markscheme is a powerful tool to share with students. Familiarity with this markscheme will ensure that students understand what their responses must demonstrate to be successful.

Paper 3 (HL only): Global political challenges

Paper 3 is focused on the global political challenges. It builds on the skills assessed in the previous papers (source analysis, analysis and synthesis, and argumentation) and includes a focus on transfer of independent research and solutions-oriented thinking. The responses are mainly informed by students' researched case studies. While there is no additional prescribed content for the HL extension, candidates are expected to have devoted 80 hours to explore the guiding inquiries, engaged with at least two HL extension topic areas and at least two case studies from different contexts.

HL-only paper 3				
Description	Paper 3 is a stimulus-based paper and is focused on the HL extension on global political challenges. Knowledge of course concepts, content and contexts, as well as additional research of multiple case studies, is required to address questions properly. The stimulus may include text, data, diagrams and infographics.			
Duration	1 hour 30 minutes			
Weighting and marks	30% 28 marks			
Question structure	Question 1 (3 marks) Requires understanding and analysis of the presented stimulus, as well as knowledge of global political challenges.	Question 2a (4 marks) Requires demonstration of knowledge, understanding and analysis of an identified political issue.	Question 2b (6 marks) Requires a recommendation of a possible course of action or solution to the identified political issue.	Question 3 (15 marks) Requires synthesis and evaluation of researched case studies and global political challenges. The question will be based on the guiding lines of inquiry for the HL extension.
Student instruction	Students answer all questions.			

Preparing for paper 3

Familiarizing students with the format and expectations of the paper is essential to prepare them for their external assessment.

Markschemes and marking notes

The examination's markscheme can be integrated into classroom activities so that, by the end of the course, students fully understand the demands of marking instruments for short and extended response questions.

Skills practice

Providing multiple opportunities for students to practise the skills assessed in the examinations is crucial to their success. As part of ongoing classroom activities, teachers can help students to become familiar with

different types of stimulus that invite thinking from multiple HL extension topics, and with the types of tasks they will be expected to complete in paper 3.

Mock examinations

Many schools conduct mock examinations during the course. In addition to gauging student performance, mock examinations help students identify areas for improvement within the context of lower-stakes assessment.

Student strategies

Strategy 1: Prepare and focus

Paper 3 involves understanding, analysing, evaluating and synthesizing information from the HL extension around a particular topic or focus provided by the examination. Students should make sure to devote significant time to exploring the guiding lines of inquiry included in the subject guide. This will help them prepare for question 3 (which will be related to one of these) and will also provide a structure for their independent research.

Strategy 2: Timing

The time allocated for paper 3 includes time to review the stimulus provided and the questions, as well as making links with the students' researched case studies. Paper 3 is likely to require significant thinking time from students as they identify the pieces of their research that will be relevant and most useful to respond to the questions in the paper.

Strategy 3: Become an expert

Paper 3 is a prime opportunity for students to foreground their knowledge, research and expertise about challenges and possible solutions or courses of action explored during the course. Due to the flexible nature of the HL extension, this expertise will be different for each student and can be evidenced in multiple appropriate ways.

Encourage students to approach paper 3 with both rigour and curiosity. When conducting their HL extension inquiries, students should keep in mind the guidelines provided and the expectations of the paper. The more they explore the HL topic areas in depth and the more diverse their selected case studies are, the better prepared they will be for adjusting and responding to questions.

Strategy 4: Plan, then respond

For longer response questions, planning will help students organize a more effective response that includes a claim or argument along with supporting evidence from their inquiries. Longer responses are not intended to be perfect reflections of formal academic writing but should indicate logical organization, purposeful use of evidence and substantiated claims, as well as accurate and relevant knowledge and terminology. The stimulus provided in the paper is meant to focus students on particular topics, stakeholders or challenges. It should help students channel their attention so they can make a critical selection of what is relevant from their own research.

Strategy 5: Remember the markscheme

Longer response questions are scored using markschemes as well as marking guidance specific to a session. The markscheme is a powerful tool to share with students. Familiarity with this markscheme will ensure that students understand what their responses must demonstrate to be successful.

Guidance on internal assessment

The global politics engagement project

The engagement project provides students with an opportunity to explore power and agency in practice and outside the classroom. As part of their engagement project, students may, for example:

- learn about the local manifestations of a global issue
- engage with primary and secondary sources
- explore the dynamics and consequences of decision-making on individuals and communities.

Although the emphasis of the task is on active engagement, it is expected that students undertake exploratory and complementary research to inform their planning and actions, and their discussion of the political issue identified in their project.

Learner agency

One of the most meaningful outcomes of the engagement project is increased student agency. First, this is promoted by the students being able to select any topic that is of personal interest to them and managing their exploration, research and overall learning process. Second, as part of the process of dealing with a community or local scope, students may gain a sense of agency as political actors and stakeholders by understanding how they (and others) can become actively involved in exploring (and addressing) political issues.

To develop this sense of agency, teachers could create opportunities for students to share their learning and contribute to building the course further from their own experience. As students explore how political issues manifest in specific contexts, they can consolidate their understanding and also contribute to their peers' learning.

SL/HL project and HL differentiation

Project process and outcomes

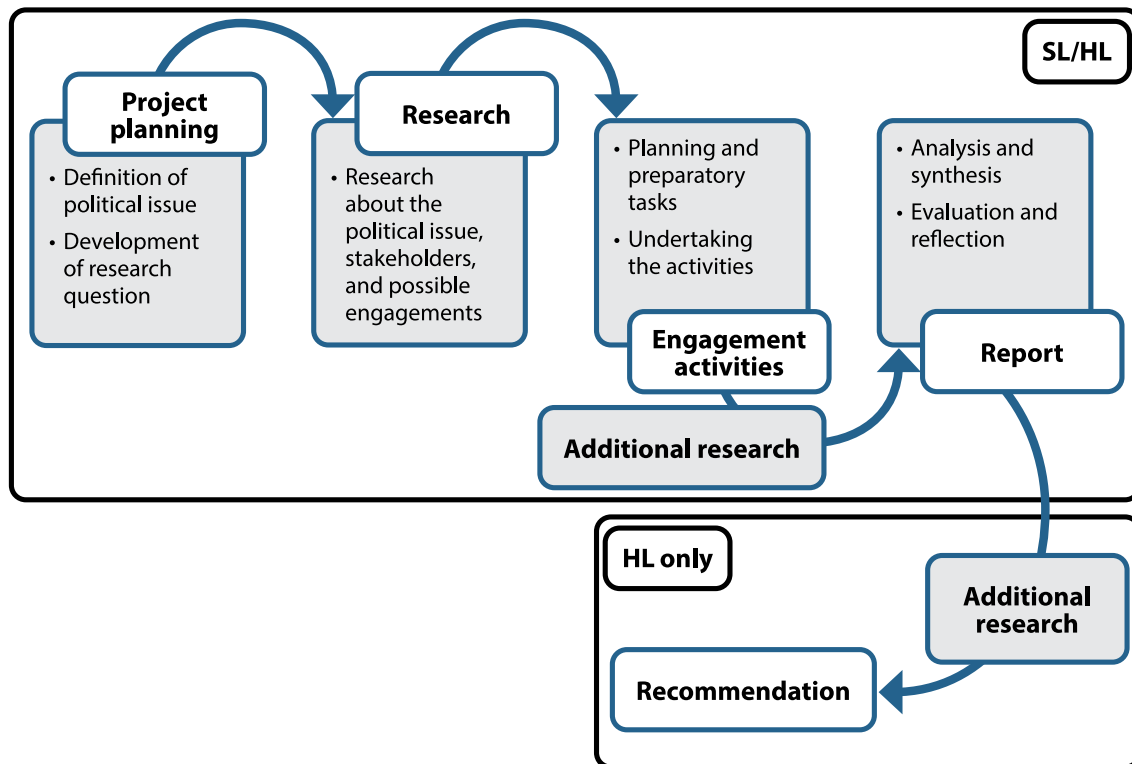
The engagement project should be seen as a continuous, extended and iterative learning experience, rather than a single occurrence (figure 15). Before pursuing particular engagements with external stakeholders, students should define and refine their topic of interest and ideally identify a clear political issue from the start. This will allow them to do a more structured inquiry instead of finding that their engagement activities are too limited to offer enough understanding.

This does not mean that as part of their exploration students cannot have initial contact with stakeholders. For example, a student might reach out to multiple non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or governmental agencies that are linked to a topic (e.g. Indigenous rights and claims over certain territories) to explore options for possible engagements. However, when formally approaching stakeholders for specific engagements—such as interviews, civic demonstrations, participation in political symposiums or conferences, internships—students should have carried out enough preparatory research to provide a meaningful contribution on their part.

The written report is an opportunity for students to bring together the lessons they have learned about their chosen political issue through their engagement activities and complementary research. As for other large writing projects, it will probably be helpful for students to formulate an initial question, tightly linked to the political issue, that they attempt to answer through their experiences and research. They can refine this question and how they plan to address it throughout the engagement project process.

HL candidates are expected to devote additional time for researching and exploring possible courses of action to address the identified political issue. This could include investigating ways in which similar issues are addressed in other contexts, researching theories and models that could contribute to the analysis and understanding of the issue, analysing input provided by stakeholders, and identifying trends and possible action points.

Figure 15

Engagement project process and deliverables

Possible links with HL extension topic areas

The HL extension topic areas can provide a useful starting point for the engagement project as they refer to more specific issues that students may have an interest in. For example, while it might be difficult for students to think of ways to engage with “rights and justice”, topics like “poverty”, “health” or “technology” could be more evident in their everyday lives. As they begin to explore possible political issues, students could then make links to both the thematic studies and core topics, as appropriate. This is not exclusive to HL students.

Process scaffolding

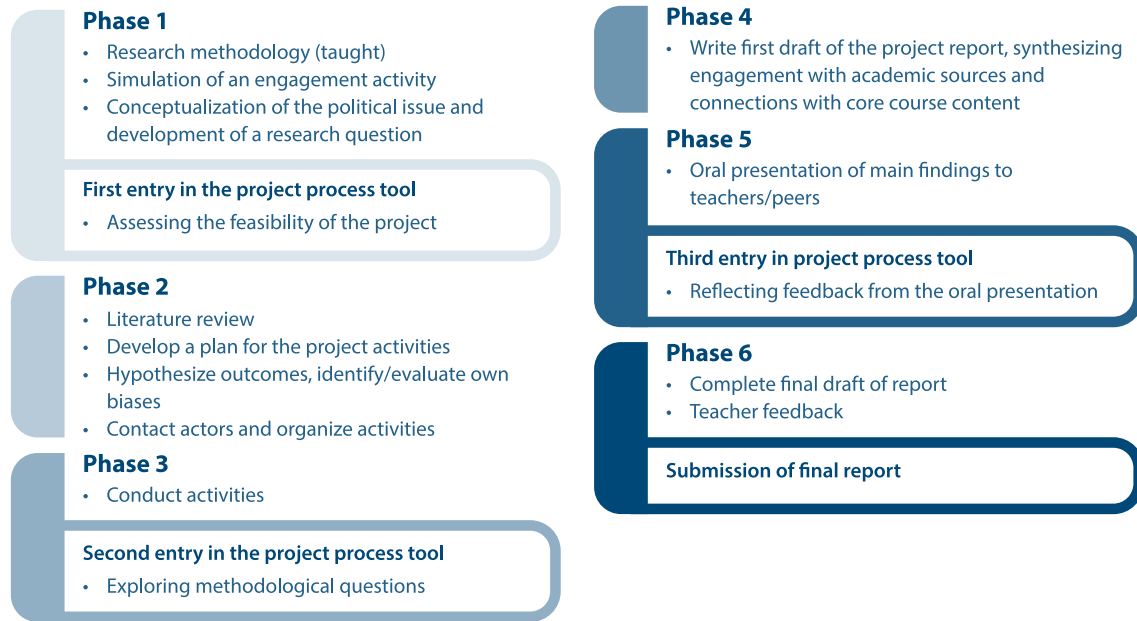
As figure 16 shows, the process for the engagement project can be further scaffolded into smaller, more manageable phases. This will allow students to evaluate the feasibility of the project before devoting considerable time to engagements that may not be appropriate or as useful as originally thought. It will also provide important formative assessment opportunities for teachers and peers to contribute feedback and improve the outcomes of the project. Scheduling regular check-in moments along the project will ensure students are devoting the required time and will help them identify possible obstacles in a timely manner so that they can be overcome successfully.

Having a monitoring tool, like a journal, can help students to document their learning journey and keep track of additional resources and feedback that they gather in the process of the project. While this is not required for assessment, it can provide clear benefits for the students and the teachers from both learning and assessment perspectives. This could be done through any learning management system (LMS) the school uses or with any additional platforms students might already be using for their creativity, activity,

service (CAS) or language and literature portfolios. The idea should not be to create additional work for students but to streamline the multiple tasks that they will have to complete as part of their project, and to facilitate self-management. This also makes it easier for teachers (and peers) to provide feedback in an organized way that can then feed into the next stages.

Figure 16

Example of possible scaffolding for the engagement project process



Supporting documents

The following documents serve as illustration for teachers. They are examples of how the course could be structured or the types of activities that could be designed for the course. Teachers can use them as starting points to build their own resources, responding to their learning and teaching contexts and students' interests.

Course outlines

- [Case-based course outline](#)
- [Issues-based course outline](#)
- Suggested distribution of prescribed content—Coming soon

Sample units and activities

- [Understanding power: Summarizing diverse conceptions](#)
- [Plan for a unit on rights and justice](#)
- [Plan for a unit on development and sustainability](#)

Additional supporting documents

- [Case study template](#)
- HL extension topic areas: possible lines of inquiry—Coming soon