

Foundational unit: power, sovereignty and international relations

This unit focuses on the dynamics of power and how it is manifested and legitimized at various levels. The roles of state and non-state actors are examined, their interactions in global politics are discussed and their success in achieving their aims and objectives is evaluated.

Key concepts: power, sovereignty, legitimacy, interdependence

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples (Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)
Nature of power	Definitions and theories of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Mearsheimer, Joseph Nye, Antonio Gramsci, Steven Lukes
	Types of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard versus soft; economic, military, social, cultural; individual versus collective; unilateral versus multilateral
Operation of state power in global politics	The evolving nature of state sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terminology, eg state, nation, nation-state, stateless nation The Westphalian conception of state sovereignty Present-day status of sources of state sovereignty, eg possession and use of force, international law and norms, recognition by other states due to economic and balance of power considerations, consent (or lack thereof) of the governed through political participation Present-day challenges to state sovereignty, eg globalization, supranationality, humanitarian intervention, indigenous rights
	Legitimacy of state power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democratic states, eg unitary states, federal states Authoritarian states Fragile/failed states
Function and impact of international organizations and non-state actors in global politics	The United Nations (UN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UN, eg <i>Charter of the United Nations</i>, UN principal organs (General Assembly, Security Council, etc) and subsidiary organs and agencies
	Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union (EU), African Union, Arab League, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
	Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations (MNCs) and trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs, eg International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Greenpeace, BRAC MNCs, eg Unilever, Philips, IKEA, Lenovo, Tata Trade unions, eg International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
	Social movements, resistance movements and violent protest movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social movements, eg Occupy, Avaaz • Resistance movements, eg Arab Spring, Orange Revolution in Ukraine • Violent protest movements, eg Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Hezbollah, Naxalites
	Political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA's Republican and Democratic parties, Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD), Communist Party of China (CPC)
	Informal forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G20, The Group of Seven (G7), The Group of Eight (G8), G2, World Economic Forum (WEF), World Social Forum (WSF)
	Legitimacy of non-state actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representativeness • Means of exerting influence • Efficacy
Nature and extent of interactions in global politics	Global governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Security Council resolutions, climate change agenda, Basel accords on financial regulation, WTO trade agreements, regional decision-making
	Cooperation: treaties, collective security, strategic alliances, economic cooperation, informal cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaties, eg Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Montreal Protocol • Collective security, eg North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of American States (OAS) • Strategic alliances, eg China's alliances in Latin America and Africa, USA–Taiwan, USA–Israel, India–Afghanistan • Economic cooperation, eg bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, regional economic integration, facilitation and regulation of international production • Informal cooperation, eg extraordinary rendition, technology harmonization, cultural exchange
	Conflict: interstate war, intrastate war, terrorism, strikes, demonstrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interstate war, eg Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan • Intrastate war, eg Syria, Ukraine, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Central African Republic • Terrorism, eg Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Boko Haram • Strikes and demonstrations: local examples

Human rights unit

This unit focuses on the nature and practice of human rights. Debates surrounding human rights are examined.

Key concepts: human rights, justice, liberty, equality

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples (Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)
Nature and evolution of human rights	Definitions of human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notions such as inalienability, universality, indivisibility, equality, justice, liberty
	The UN's <i>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> (1948)	
	Developments in human rights over time and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights milestones, eg civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, gender rights, children's rights, indigenous people's rights, refugee rights Internationalization of human rights, eg universal jurisdiction, international humanitarian law
Codification, protection and monitoring of human rights	Human rights laws and treaties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of custom Human rights in constitutions, eg South Africa, Brazil International examples, eg International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Rome Statute
	Protection and enforcement of human rights at different levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National courts and police, International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Court (ICC), Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Cambodia Tribunal
	Monitoring human rights agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ombudsmen, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International (AI), International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, monitoring elections

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
Practice of human rights	Claims on human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour rights, indigenous land claims, movements for gender equality, debates about same-sex marriage
	Violations of human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child soldiers, human trafficking, forced labour, forced relocation, denial of prisoners of war rights, violations of freedom of speech, violations in the name of prevention of terrorism, gender discrimination
Debates surrounding human rights: differing interpretations of justice, liberty and equality	Individual versus collective rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western, Asian and African conceptions; indigenous conceptions
	Universal rights versus cultural relativism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharia law, honour killings, hate crime laws, consumer rights
	Politicization of human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of human rights for political gain, humanitarian arguments, responsibility to protect, use of sanctions

Development unit

This unit focuses on what development means, how it can be pursued and what may help or stand in the way of people, communities and countries becoming better off in a comprehensive sense. Debates surrounding development are examined.

Key concepts: development, globalization, inequality, sustainability

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
Contested meanings of development	Different definitions of development, including sustainable development and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic growth, fairer income distribution, reduction in poverty, meeting basic needs, improved capabilities, achievement of political and social freedoms, well-functioning institutions, lifestyles that respect the ecological constraints of the environment
	Measuring development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross national product (GNP), Human Development Index (HDI), Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), Inclusive Wealth Index (IWI), Happy Planet Index (also HPI), corruption indices, trust indices

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
Factors that may promote or inhibit development	Political factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideologies, history of and persistence of conflict, stability, accountability, transparency, legal frameworks, political consequences of different development paths, decisions about the allocation of aid, political culture, culture of bureaucracy, vested interests
	Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to resources, increasing resource constraints, infrastructure, debt, access to capital and credit, aid, trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), income distribution, informal economy, vested interests
	Social factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values, cultures, traditions, gender relations, migration
	Institutional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UN, IMF, World Bank, WTO, partnerships between developing countries, efficacy of national and local institutions
	Environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography, resource endowment, consequences of climate change on people and communities' lives
Pathways towards development	Models of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neoliberal theories (eg Washington Consensus), state capitalism (eg China, Russia), capability theories (eg Sen, Nussbaum)
	Approaches for developing the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade liberalization, export orientation, commodity-led growth, tourism, entrepreneurship, knowledge economy, circular economy, complementary currencies
	Approaches for developing society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern for citizenship skills and engagement, improving education and health care, changing roles of women, more ecological living, indigenous revitalization movements
Debates surrounding development: challenges of globalization, inequality and sustainability	Globalization: wins and losses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facts about development of standard of living and assessment of realization of human rights, well-being and opportunity for different groups of people within and between societies Environmental impacts of globalization Various perspectives, eg North, South, rising powers
	Inequality and development: role of politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for and limits of state, IGO and NGO action, eg global regulation of MNCs and cross-border financial flows, role of local regulation of conditions of work, power of lobbies
	Sustainable development: role of politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for and limits of state, IGO and NGO action, eg progress in global climate change negotiations, role of regional, national and local policies for sustainable development

Peace and conflict unit

This unit focuses on what peace, conflict and violence mean, how conflicts emerge and develop, and what can be done to build a lasting peace.

Key concepts: peace, conflict, violence, non-violence

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
Contested meanings of peace, conflict and violence	Different definitions of peace, conflict and violence, including positive peace and structural violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace, eg negative peace, peace as balance of power, peace in different political traditions and religions, feminist peace Conflict, eg through scale of conflict from disenfranchisement through to interstate war Violence, eg direct violence, cultural violence
	Types of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Territorial conflict, eg Russian claims, disputes in the South China Sea Interest-based conflict, eg weapon sales, positive discrimination on the factory floor Ideological conflict, eg political ideologies, free market versus state-led economy Identity conflict, eg indigenous populations, more heterogeneous populations in previously homogeneous states
	Justifications of violence, including just war theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanitarian intervention, self-defence, religiously or culturally condoned violence
Causes and parties to conflict	Causes of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greed versus grievance (eg Colombia, Sierra Leone), territorial control, material interest, resource scarcity, ideology, threatened identity, perception
	Parties to conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States, intrastate groups, protest groups, individuals

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
Evolution of conflict	Manifestations of conflict, including non-violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrations, civil disobedience, violent protests, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, genocide, intrastate war, interstate war, arms proliferation, nuclear deterrence
	Conflict dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galtung's conflict triangle, positions–interests–needs, conflict cycles
	Third-party involvement in conflict, including humanitarian intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weapon embargoes, financial freezes, trade limitations, NATO involvement, UN peace enforcement, election observers
Conflict resolution and post-conflict transformation	Peacemaking, including negotiations and treaties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Military victory, imposed settlement, ceasefires, truces, arbitration, mediation, peace treaties, peacekeeping
	Peacebuilding, including reconciliation and work of justice institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truth and reconciliation commissions (eg Sierra Leone), courts (eg Cambodia, International Criminal Court), forgiveness

Engagement activity

The engagement activity provides students with an opportunity to explore the central unifying theme of the course—people, power and politics—in practice and outside the classroom. In the course of their engagement activity, students may, for example, learn about the local manifestations of a global issue, engage with primary sources and experience the dynamics and consequences of decision-making on individuals and communities. Although the emphasis of the task is on active engagement rather than primarily on research, it is expected that students make use of the key concepts, theories and ideas they are learning in the classroom and undertake further reading to inform their planning and actions, and their discussion of the political issue raised in their activities. In brief, the task aims at active and reflective engagement. The engagement activity work culminates in a 2,000-word written report. More information on the assessment of the written report is given in [Guide > Internal assessment](#).

There are three parts to the engagement activity work: undertaking an engagement, doing complementary research and writing a report. Although the written report is the assessed component of the engagement activity, students' planning, actions, further reading and discussion are interconnected; all are required for a good end result. Moreover, students can expect to go back and forth between the different elements of the work: for example, they should do some preliminary research on the context of their activities before they engage, and while writing their report, they may discover areas for which additional research is needed to balance the perspectives acquired through the engagement.