

Levels of analysis

It is a central element of the global politics course that the key political concepts and contemporary political issues are studied at a number of levels: global, international, regional, national, local and community. These levels help students to appreciate that what may initially appear to be a global issue actually has many local implications and vice versa, and that decision-making on the same phenomenon may look quite different depending on whether it is analysed on a systemic or sub-systemic level. The appropriate level of analysis depends on the issue at stake and students' objectives in a task. Brief explanations of the various levels are given below.

Level of analysis	Explanation
Global	In the context of the global politics course, the term <i>global</i> refers to events and trends that have far-reaching and long-term impact across the world, cutting across national identities and interests. Examples include, but are not limited to, climate change, migration, terrorism, epidemics, etc.
International	In the context of the global politics course, the term <i>international</i> refers to events and trends that have a narrower impact than global events and trends, but nonetheless have implications for several countries. Examples include, but are not limited to, the operation of various international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations (MNCs), international law, etc.
Regional	In the context of the global politics course, the term <i>regional</i> refers to events and trends that have implications limited to a particular geographic region, such as the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, etc. Examples include, but are not limited to, the operation of the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), The Arab League, etc.
National	In the context of the global politics course, the term <i>national</i> refers to events and trends that have a limited impact within the geographical boundaries of a particular country. Examples include, but are not limited to, economic crises or economic change in a particular state, political and legal reforms in a particular state, changes in the governance of a particular state, etc.
Local	In the context of the global politics course, the term <i>local</i> is used to refer to the geographic area in which social organization is created and in which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. Local is defined by its inhabitants and their practices, and so can represent a geographic space as small as a gated community or as large as a city or region.
Community	The idea of community is one of the most debated concepts in the social sciences. Communities were once thought of as geographically based groups of people with similar interests, mutual support and cultural traits. The most commonly held view was that communities must include not only spatial and ecological definitions, but institutional and emotional ones. Recently, however, processes of globalization have led social scientists to rethink standard definitions. Advances in communication technologies allow similar interests to be nurtured beyond physical boundaries, and the definition of community has become intertwined with debates about globalization and the role and place of people within it.

Individual and group perspectives

Throughout the course, it is also necessary to approach the key political concepts and contemporary political issues through various individual and group perspectives. These help students to develop an appreciation for multiple points of view and to deepen their understanding of the complexity of many issues encountered in the study of global politics: our unique personalities, life experiences and the social and cultural environments of which we are a part influence how we act in global politics. Three examples of important perspectives are gender, ethnicity and religion; additional individual and group perspectives will be relevant depending on the issue at stake.

Gender

Gender is an important form of identity that can be socially constructed as well as biologically determined. Gender values can also change dramatically over time. In the 20th century, feminist movements successfully drew attention to women's inequality in education, employment, the home and in politics, and these issues remain ever pertinent. Today, *gender relations* in global politics refers to contested and changing power relations between men and women in which constructions of masculinity are often privileged. Many key aspects of global politics such as human rights, development and conflict remain highly gendered, and issues such as literacy, migration, sexual violence and disease continue to impact on men, women and children differently.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a form of identity in terms of membership of an ethnic group. Individuals within an ethnic group share common characteristics including cultural and societal similarities such as language, beliefs and history. Although there may be no formal agreement about what makes each ethnic identity unique, many people describe themselves as descendants of a particular ethnic group and wish to preserve this status and their rights. Categories based on ethnicity may or may not overlap with national identities.

Religion

Religion refers to a diverse set of belief systems. Religious identity usually has both a personal and a social dimension. On one hand, religion provides answers to questions about life, death, origins of the world and so on, and is a way for individuals to find or generate meaning in their own lives. On the other hand, members of a religion share narratives, rituals and, often, social norms and a moral code; being a member of the religious community is an important aspect of most religions. The potency of both the personal and social dimensions of religion combined with the fact that religions assert authority from supernatural sources serves to strengthen the influence of religious identities and communities in global politics.

Core units: people, power and politics

The common core for SL and HL students consists of four units. The first unit can be perceived as the foundational unit for the other units, and some treatment of it is likely to be desirable at the start of the course. However, there is no expectation of a linear progression, and topics within the course can be studied in any order.

Specific key concepts are tied to specific units to aid course planning and to help create focus. However, given the connections between political issues discussed in the different units, these concepts should be addressed as natural in the progression of the course.