

IS 101

Revision session.

This revision session has three components.








1. The themes we covered throughout the course.
2. An example question to help you with your planning (10-15 minutes before you begin writing).
3. Excerpts from two final exam questions. One from another course (that had an A-), the other is from IS 101 (and had a B+).

Week 1

This was our introductory session and so you were not required to do these readings, but they have intersecting themes that we built on in the remainder of the semester.

Theme:

1. Nation and national identity is constructed.
2. Law, identity documents and passports are imbued with global power relations and limit mobility on that basis. (Annan)
3. Myths of origin and turning points both have power in telling the story. This affects our view of the world (Carvalho; Smallman and Brown)

⋮	Topics: 'problems without passports', global governance, global citizenship, and the 'international community'	✓	⋮
⋮	 • Carvalho, Benjamin de, Leira, Halvard and Hobson, John M. "The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths that Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919", <i>Millenium: Journal of International Studies</i> , No. 39, Vol. 3 (2011): pp. 735-758.	✓	⋮
⋮	 • Kofi Annan, "Problems without Passports", <i>Foreign Policy</i> , No. 132, 2002, pp. 30-31. 	✓	⋮
⋮	 • Shawn Smallman & Kimberly Brown, "History", chapter 2 in <i>Introduction to International and Global Affairs</i> , 2nd edition, (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), pp. 11-32. (Note: if you search for this book in the SFU library catalogue, be sure to click on the third edition, published in 2015.) 	✓	⋮
⋮	 National identities in the world today are based on an idea or concept and are not literal, actually existing facts 	✓	⋮
⋮	Tutorial plan: Introductions. Questions you will be asked in addition to introductions (a) what sources of information have you used to get information about international affairs? (b) Do you consider yourself to be "international"? Explain. (c) Can you relate the answers that you just heard your peers discuss in (a) and (b) to the concept of "mythical origins" discussed in the lecture?	✓	⋮

Week 2. States and Nations (explained the concept of nationalism and how it is linked to states [a bounded territory with permanent institutions like the bureaucracy, army, police etc. controlled by a government])

Includes

Theme 1: Nation and national identity is constructed (Calhoun: different scholarly perspectives that agree (Gellner) and disagree (Smith) with this. His own perspective aligns closely to Anderson's. It is a constructed community. Anderson also argued that it was constructed in the colonial encounter in the Americas).

Rao and Delatolla overlap with this idea (and therefore link to the Gilroy piece from Week 1) because they argue that race is embedded in our view of nations across the world.

Theme 4: To comprehend the world and the relative power of nations in the international system, it is essential to grasp the impact of colonialism on shaping the modern world (Yao and Delatolla – they explain the impact of colonialism by focusing on race).

Week 2 States and Nations:			✓	+	⋮
⋮	🔗	Read this: Craig Calhoun, chapter 1, Nationalism, (Open University Press, 1997), pp. 1-9.	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Joanne Yao and Andrew Delatolla. "Race and Historical International Relations," in Routledge Handbook of Historical International Relations (eds) Benjamin de Carvalho et. al. (Routledge, 2021).	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Week 2 Recommended reading to help you understand what "modernity" is	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Newspaper article (BYT) Myanmar Follows Global Pattern in How Ethnic Cleansing Begins - The New York Times.pdf	✓		⋮
⋮		Tutorial question: (a) Try and describe the main argument in the Calhoun reading. (b) The principle of national self-determination is a key element of the international system. According to Taub, a commitment to this principle increases the likelihood of conflict and violence. Why does she think this? Do you agree or disagree?	✓		⋮

Theme:

5. Globalization and its impacts.

6. An increasingly interconnected world may be new, but many of the inequities of the global system (discussed in the previous themes) are reproduced as the world becomes more connected (Epstein – this links to Theme 4, slide 4).

7. Resistance movements aim to change the status quo, but do not always succeed in doing so. (Horner; Zahra)

Week 3 economic globalization			✓	+	⋮
⋮	🔗	Read this: Manfred Steger, "The Economic Dimension of Globalization", Globalization: A Very Short Introduction, (Oxford, 2017), pp. 37-59	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	• Charlotte Epstein. "The postcolonial perspective: an introduction." International Theory, 6(2), 294-311.	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Anti-globalism, then and now: Professor Tara Zahra on resistance to globalization and mass politics between the World Wars 📄	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	• R. Horner, D. Haberly, S. Schindler, & Y. Aoyama, "How anti-globalization switched from a left to a right-wing issue and where it will go next", The Conversation, January 25, 2018. 📄	✓		⋮

8. International development, inequality and its impacts (NGOs section shows us how these impacts are not always straightforward. You would have to compare each reading to argue this).

9. Understanding the groups/stakeholders in society and the role they play in the international system (Chandoke, Castells)

Also includes the themes from the last slide.

Week 4: Political Globalization			✓	+	⋮
⋮	📎	Read this one: Smallman, SC and Brown, K. "Political Globalization" in Introduction to International and Global Studies, Second Edition (University of North Carolina Press, 2015)	✓		⋮
⋮		Cities in political globalization	✓		⋮
⋮	📎	• Calder, K.E. "Conclusion: Cities and the Future of Global Governance" in Global Political Cities, (Brookings Institution Press, 2021)	✓		⋮
⋮		NGOs	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	• Sally Matthews, "The role of NGOs in Africa: Are they a force for good?" The Conversation, April 25, 2017. ➡	✓		⋮
⋮	📎	• Paolo Novak. The success of Afghan NGOs, Development in Practice, 23: 7, (2013): pp. 872-888.	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	• Nives Dolšak & Aseem Prakash, "NGOs are great at demanding transparency. They're not so hot at providing it." Monkey Cage blog, Washington Post, February 22, 2016. ➡	✓		⋮
⋮		Civil Society	✓		⋮
⋮	📎	• Neera Chandoke, "How Global is Global Civil Society?" Journal of World Systems Research, Volume 11, no. 2, August 2005, 355-371.	✓		⋮
⋮	📎	• Manuel Castells. "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance" in Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616: 1, (2008): pp. 78-93.	✓		⋮

2. Law, identity documents and passports are imbued with global power relations and limit mobility on that basis. (Anghie and Klabbers)

8. International development, inequality and its impacts (Case study: Brazil's rainforest mafia are built by authoritarian states and institutions that are not responsive to the people combined with resource wars and profits to be made in the global market).

10. Sovereignty: does it belong to the state or to the international system? The global system lacks "teeth". It is consent based and predicated on the consent of those who are part of it, to adhere to its collective rules.

Week 5: International Law and Human Rights			✓	+	⋮
⋮	🔗	Read this: Jan Klabbers. "The Making of International Law" in International Law (Cambridge, 2013)	✓		⋮
⋮		Recommended readings	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	• Antony Anghie. "Toward a postcolonial international law" in Prabhakar Singh and Benoit Mayer (eds) Critical international law: postrealism, postcolonialism and transnationalism (Oxford, 2014).	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 📄	✓		⋮
⋮		Case Study: Brazil's Amazon Rainforest - what can international law do to save the rainforest? (I will go over these readings in class to give you the information needed to answer the tutorial questions)	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Watch this video on the Brazil's rainforest mafias (by Human Rights Watch) 📄	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Climate News: Katie Surma. Lawyers Press International Court to Investigate a 'Network' Committing Crimes against Humanity in Brazil's Amazon (2022)	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	This updated version of the case that is with the International Criminal Court can be read here (January 2023) 📄	✓		⋮
⋮		Tutorial Questions: (1) Which human rights are threatened or violated by violence and state inaction described in "Rainforest Mafias"? (2) What are the most promising or constructive steps that international actors can take to protect the rights that are at stake in this case? (3) Make one policy suggestion that, based on the readings and lecture, would make international law more effective in Brazil.	✓		⋮

Political systems (like democracy) are a work in progress. In other words, we cannot just define democracy as “rule of the people” and leave it at that. Its success requires constant work.

⋮ ▾ Week 6: Democracy and its critiques		✓	+	⋮
⋮	📎 Amartya Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value”, Journal of Democracy, 10(3), 1999, pp. 3-17.	✓		⋮
⋮	📎 Book Review of Michael Hanchard The Spectre of Race How Race Haunts Western Democracy.pdf	✓		⋮
⋮	📎 Kim Lane Scheppele, “Not Your Father’s Authoritarianism: the Creation of the ‘Frankenstate’”, European Society and Politics Newsletter, Winter 2013, pp. 5-9	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗 Paul Mozur, Jonah M. Kessel, & Melissa Chan, “Made in China, Exported to the World: the Surveillance State”, New York Times, April 24, 2019. ➦	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗 Maya Tudor, “How nationalism can actually help democracies”, Washington Post, April 25, 2018 ➦	✓		⋮

Week 7: Armed Conflict and War (we covered this in Week 11 this semester).

11. International perspectives on “security” are contextual.

In other words, our understanding of security and of what constitutes a threat to that security “is framed by our membership in particular communities and ideologies” (Smallman & Brown). (all the readings and case studies in this section touch on this).

Themes 8, 3 and 4 are also in this module.

Read this. You may skip the section on "realism": • Smallman & Brown, "Security", in Introduction to International and Global Affairs, 2nd edition, pp.155-179	✓	:
Recommended reading (will be discussed in class)	✓	:
Case study 1: Climate change	✓	:
Climate Change and Increasing Conflict	✓	:
Case study 2: information, social media and the war in Ukraine	✓	:
• Emily Chen and Emilio Ferrara. "Tweets in Time of Conflict: A Public Dataset Tracking the Twitter Discourse on the War between Ukraine and Russia in Proceedings of the Seventeenth International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (ICWSM 2023).	✓	:
Case Study 3: Congo and Conflict Minerals	✓	:
• Enough Project, "Progress and Challenges on Conflict Minerals: Facts on Dodd-Frank 1502".	✓	:
• Christoph Vogel & Ben Radley, "In Eastern Congo, Economic Colonialism in the Guise of Ethical Consumption?" Washington Post, September 10, 2014.	✓	:
Discussion thread for participation for this week (no in-person tutorials this week).	✓	:
Case Study 4: Israel-Palestine viewed through International Human Rights Organizations and their statements. This is just a starting point - I encourage you to read further and come to your own conclusions	✓	:
Human Rights Watch report on the region from 2021. This is a very long one that also gives a historical overview	✓	:
Amnesty International UK's current statement	✓	:
Current Rejection of UN Resolution - Tabled another by Brazil	✓	:
International Committee of the Red Cross	✓	:

12. Migration (specifically the movement and mixing of people from across the world) has been crucial to how global societies have evolved. (Therefore, denying that diversity is a political act.

(also includes themes 2 (Kennedy, Madden) and 3 (Chan and the UN World Migration Report which tells us a small minority of the world's population lives in a country other than the one they were born in).

Week 8: International Migration, Visa Regimes and Race			✓	+	⋮
⋮	🔗	Read this: Sucheng Chan "Migration" in Mark Juergensmeyer et. al. (eds) The Oxford Handbook of Global Studies (Oxford, 2018): pp. 359-382.	✓		⋮
⋮		Recommended	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Duncan Madden. Ranked: The world's most and least powerful passports in 2023, Forbes. Jan 10th 2023. 📄	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Lesley Kennedy. How the Immigration Act of 1965 Changed the Face of America. 2019. History Channel. 📄	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	UN World Migration Report 2022 📄	✓		⋮

Theme 13: Institutions and the conditions for prosperity or development are created in specific circumstances. They cannot be explained outside of those circumstances. (Acemoglu and Robinson)

Also includes 8.

<div><div></div><div>▼ Week 9: Poverty, Inequality and Development</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>+</div><div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div>Required</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div></div>Read this: Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty, pp. 70-95</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div>Recommended</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div></div>Chang Ha-Joon, Kicking Away the Ladder, in Kyung-Sup (ed.) Developmental Politics in Transition (Palgrave MacMilan, 2012)</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>

Themes 13, 8, 5,
11

You should now be able to tell that there are many readings that discuss concepts that link many themes together. One of these links is: the reasons why we have different perspectives on global challenges.

Week 10: Population and Environment			✓	+	⋮
⋮	Required reading		✓		⋮
⋮	📎	Read this: John L. Seitz & Kristen A. Hite, "Population", Global Issues: An Introduction, 5th edition, (Wiley- Blackwell, 2016), pp.7-38. Although you should read the text in the box on pp.30-31, you can skip the text in all the other boxes.	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	An excellent summary of the main points your required reading makes about the relationship between climate change and population growth can also be found by following this link and reading the abstract. ➞	✓		⋮
⋮	Recommended		✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Declaration of the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) in 2022 in Egypt ➞	✓		⋮
⋮	📎	A critique of COP27: Laleh Khalili • Short Cuts_ In Sharm El-Sheikh • LRB 1 December 2022.pdf	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Overview of the United Nations attempts and legal instruments used to deal with climate change ➞	✓		⋮
⋮	🔗	Why pollution is as much about colonialism as chemicals - transcript ➞	✓		⋮

Themes 2, 6, 8 and 12.

*Can you see if you can link these together to explain the course module overall?

2 Law, identity documents and passports are imbued with global power relations and limit mobility on that basis

6 An increasingly interconnected world may be new, but many of the inequities of the global system (discussed in the previous themes) are reproduced as the world becomes more connected

8. . International development, inequality and its impacts

12. Migration (specifically the movement and mixing of people from across the world) has been crucial to how global societies have evolved. (Therefore, denying that diversity is a political act.

Week 12: Labour, transnationalism and the gig economy		✓	+	⋮
Required Reading		✓		⋮
🔗	Read this: Mark Jeurgensmeyer (ed) "Transnational Economy and Global Labor" in Thinking Globally: A Global Studies Readers (University of California Press, 2013).	✓		⋮
Recommended Reading		✓		⋮
🔗	Adam Tooze on Labour and its history in Gaza 🌐	✓		⋮
🔗	Mark Jeurgensmeyer (ed) "Global Communications and New Media" in Thinking Globally: A Global Studies Readers (University of California Press, 2013).	✓		⋮
🔗	Promotion, inclusion and protection of refugees and host communities in the gig economy (ILO) 🌐	✓		⋮
🔗	Mark Graham, Isis Hjorth and Vili Lehdonvirta. Digital labour and development: impacts of global digital labour platforms and the gig economy on worker livelihoods. etui, 23: 2 (2017): pp. 135-162.	✓		⋮
🔗	Source for video that showed the Seattle (1999) protests 🌐	✓		⋮

Some of these themes are marked for you to help you identify where they were discussed. Many other connections are possible and were referred to in the lectures.

- 1 Nation and national identity is constructed *This one is discussed as an example of how to make an argument, using the course readings, on slide 3.
- 2 Law, identity documents and passports are imbued with global power relations and limit mobility on that basis. (Annan)
3. Myths of origin and turning points both have power in telling the story. This affects our view of the world (Carvalho; Smallman and Brown)
4. To comprehend the world and the relative power of nations in the international system, it is essential to grasp the impact of colonialism on shaping the modern world
5. Globalization and its impacts.
- 6 An increasingly interconnected world may be new, but many of the inequities of the global system (discussed in the previous themes) are reproduced as the world becomes more connected
- 7 Resistance movements aim to change the status quo, but do not always succeed in doing so. (Horner; Zahra)
8. International development, inequality and its impacts (Case study: Brazil's rainforest mafia are built by authoritarian states and institutions that are not responsive to the people combined with resource wars and profits to be made in the global market).
9. Understanding the groups/stakeholders in society and the role they play in the international system
10. Sovereignty: does it belong to the state or to the international system? The global system lacks "teeth". It is consent based and predicated on the consent of those who are part of it, to adhere to its collective rules.
11. Our understanding of "security" and of what constitutes a threat to that security "is framed by our membership in particular communities and ideologies" (Smallman & Brown).
- 12 Migration (specifically the movement and mixing of people from across the world) has been crucial to how global societies have evolved. (Therefore, denying that diversity is a political act.
- 13 Institutions and the conditions for prosperity or development are created in specific circumstances. They cannot be explained outside of those circumstances.

Q. Some scholars argue that national identity is constructed. Do you agree? Use examples from specific readings to back up your argument. This slide is an example of what your planning notes should look like.

Main idea: Nation and national identity is constructed

Introduction

- Developing/explaining the main idea:
- The first paragraph should (1) outline the topic (for instance by referencing the most relevant reading that from the course that addresses the topic), (2) provide relevant background information, (3) contain your thesis and (4) outline how you will present the evidence for your topic (in this essay you will use only the material in your canvas as evidence).
- Be clear on your position. For example, you could say: “This essay will agree with Calhoun that nation and national identity is constructed. However, it is important to emphasize that not all nations are constructed in the same way. Nor do their characteristics remain the same over time. In other words, specific circumstances affect the way in which national identity is constructed. I will argue this by using X case that we discussed in class as an illustration...”
- Using relevant examples (you may use both recommended and required texts).
- Your own insight (based on the text so not your own subjective opinion): For example you could say:

“Nationalism is constructed and is constructed in a way that is specific to its geographical and temporal context, but it is interesting to see the strong feelings it evokes and how it is contested even by people who identify as belonging to a particular group within the nation. For instance, Paul Gilroy (in Week 1, recommended reading “The last humanist...”) expresses hostility toward all forms of “ethnic nationalism” and says that both white supremacy and black nationalism “can be as toxic as any other form of nationalism.” I think it may be important to be wary of all forms of nationalism that does not allow all people in the territory, (regardless of religion, ethnicity or place of birth), equal claims to belonging.”

- End by linking back to the main question.

Body of the essay:

Should contain 3 or more paragraphs. Each paragraph has a different idea that supports your thesis. General advice: State position/ make sure every paragraph has a clear topic sentence. Some evidence you could use:

Relevant examples or data from the reading(s). (These can come from the lecture and/or from readings used in other weeks as well).

Opposing points of view and why the reader should agree/disagree with them. (These can come from the lecture and/or from readings used in other weeks as well).

The more thoroughly you explain your position the better you will do.

Conclusion: Restate thesis, summarize the main points that you think are your strongest (that you would like the reader to walk away with as the most important). A sentence explaining the broader importance of your argument, or why it is important to you are both very useful.

Now you are ready to begin writing. Things to keep in mind while writing (this relates to structure).

- Link to the question throughout. If any one paragraph is not connected to the answer to the question, you may have gone off track.
- Ask yourself: is my main theme (i.e. the central thread of my answer) clear throughout? If some information is not connecting to the main theme, do I really need to include it?
- One idea per paragraph.
- Do not bury the lede. Remember to signpost. Link to the question.

Example from another course or a short take home final exam essay from a 100 level course that had an A-.

(1) It showed clear evidence of understanding the readings, but only partially demonstrated understanding of the main argument.

(2) The essay was also very clear in its use of important terms, but was unable to clearly put those terms in context *and define them with respect to the readings* (a google definition will not suffice).

(3) Analysis was very good, but could have been more in-depth.

(4) Connections to the question needed throughout the piece.

The overall grade was an A-.

Q3. According to Eaton, what was unique about the changes that took place in Bengal and Punjab in the 18th century in comparison to what was happening in the rest of India at the time? Why does this matter for Eaton's main argument?

Changes were occurring throughout India during the 18th century, mostly linked to socio-economic status and the formation of cultural identities. In Bengal and Punjab this identity and status formation were a result of an unintentional Islamization.

need to qualify what that means in the 18th century

In Bengal, geographical, political, and economic changes occurred which led to the creation of a Muslim society. Muslim peasantry developed in the region – pioneers in the Eastern region cut down forests to make room for agriculture, especially of rice which they later were able to export through ports around the Bay of Bengal increasing their trade. Further advancement led to an influx of foreign silver which travelled to all levels of farmers, assisting with the expansion of the agrarian frontier. ~~Regardless, the aim was never to create this Muslim society.~~ It was actually in accordance with Mughal rules for pioneers to pray for the survival of the empire therefore pioneers who received a grant from the empire were required to build a place of worship in order to make this prayer. And in following that condition, more mosques appeared in the area compared to Hindu temples. All these factors led to migration as well and altogether this helped ensue advancement in socio-economic status and Islamization.

so trade & agric. imp. how is this imp. for Eaton's arg?

Similarly, in Punjab this Islamization was linked to settled agriculture and state-supported shrines of Sufi Shaikh's – rather than building of mosques. Many of these shrines attracted rural folk from across the region as well as political actors of high levels. These shrines also attracted Jat communities who would then marry off their daughters to sons of the Shrine leaders. These marital relations, as well as political and religious ones with the shrine led to an eventual adoption of Islamic identity. This socio-religious movement mixed with a transition to agrarian life for people in the region led to a, once again, unconscious process of Islamization – this time in Punjab.

During the 18th century, another status and cultural formation was taking place in a different part of India. Establishment of the Khalsa in Sikh communities and the initiation of the title 'Singh' upon every Sikh male – a title previously held by aristocratic Rajputs or the dominant commercial class, Khatri – guided a rise in the social status that they were experiencing. This difference here was that the Sikh's then decided to use the socio-religious change and join a military movement against the Mughals, rather than dive into the cash-driven labour market. This social mobility also caused a rift between the Khalsa Sikhs and the Khatri Sikhs, something that did not occur in the Muslim communities of Bengal and Punjab upon their Islamization.

Eaton's main argument was that the rise of social status (social mobility) is what drives the formation of cultural identities, and that it can happen across different castes and cultures. In Bengal and Punjab this was shown through the unintentional Islamization of farmers and labourers which led to the becoming two of India's largest Muslim communities with strong cultural identities. And in the Sikh community, the title 'Singh' and their new-found social mobility is what helped create social statuses and form a strong cultural identity.

Partly true

Example from an IS final exam. The question was: “Are strikes an essential tool that workers’ should have access to in order to protect their rights in the workplace?”

*Please note these slides contain EXCERPTS from the final exam to illustrate what a good answer looks like. They should not be used as templates and so I have not provided you with the entire answer.

Sets up the answer by using an anecdote. The anecdote clearly contains a description of the multiple stakeholders with different interests in the issue.

In January 1979, the *New York Times* ran a story, under the headline “Strikes Alienating the Ordinary Briton,” detailing a “gulf of misunderstanding” between striking truck, ambulance and rail workers and the people who depended on their work. “Union men gone daft,” one woman, frustrated by empty grocery-store shelves, declares, while another blames a looming uptick in deaths on “selfish” paramedics. The country’s Labour prime minister, James Callaghan, urged “the trade union movement to work within the parameters of public opinion.”¹ This is a snapshot of Britain’s “Winter of Discontent,” three months before Conservative Margaret Thatcher would replace Callaghan and begin introducing anti-union legislation at the dawn of the neoliberal era.² For some, it is a cautionary tale demonstrating why labour organizers ought to heed Callaghan’s plea. Others argue unionized workers negotiate with their employers, not opinion polls. Labour activists would be foolish to adopt either perspective whole-hog.

Then moves on to stress the importance of strikes and collective action by using different readings as evidence. Points to improve:

- could have used their own words.

Quotes should only be used where they add impact because of the wording or because they give feel for something you cannot convey in your own words (Marcel van der Linden quote could have been replaced).

- Some statements need more depth of explanation to be complete. For instance: “it’s hard to imagine they would have fared better” – why?

In this answer, the student partially addresses this problem by using the example of the BC Nurses Union/

Workers are, by definition, in a power deficit with their employers. Only through collective action can they begin to tip the scales in their favour. “The foundation of this power,” Taylor and Rioux argue, “is the ability to interrupt the labour process within a given firm, either by refusing to accomplish work according to given schedules, or, more dramatically, through bringing work to a complete halt by a strike.” The scholars say striking is the “ultimate sanction that workers hold to influence employers” and paraphrase Marcel van Der Linden, who argued “it is precisely the ability to threaten a strike that ultimately defines what a labour union is.”³

Direct collective action is, indeed, the bedrock of the labour movement. If those British workers had waged a hearts-and-minds campaign in 1979 without backing it up with job action, it’s hard to imagine they would have fared better. During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers have grown tired of being praised as heroes while their material demands have gone largely ignored.⁴ The British Columbia Nurses’ Union recently launched a campaign hoping the same public that clapped for them will now pressure the provincial government to support its members, who are “struggling through a nightmare.”⁵ Time will tell whether this emotional plea works, but nurses still have the threat of a strike vote in their back pocket.

all together. The issue is that labour organizers have to balance a variety of concerns. As the grader, I will be looking for whether or not the student, by this point, has adequately explained these concerns and how they may require different responses.

How, then, should labour organizers balance these concerns? There are no shortcuts to universal worker liberation, but a repositioning of labour's tried-and-true method of building power can help reconcile this apparent dilemma. Just as coworkers who unionize can be far more effective acting as one, disparate groups have found power in building solidarity across lines that have kept them separate. In 2016, a myriad of Indian political parties, trade unions, human-rights groups and other activists joined forces to organize a one-day strike against a suite of exploitative, neoliberal government policies. The movement expanded the definition of 'worker' beyond the formally employed and that of 'labour organization' beyond unions. "We believe that the government's policies aren't just anti-worker, but also harmful to farmers, women, youth and students," Vikram Singh of the Students Federation of India said. "The only way to stop them is joint resistance."⁸ In addition to the strike, the coalition blockaded highways and put on theatre performances, showing direct action and public outreach can advance a common cause on different fronts.

Then makes the claim that the right to strike is the most effective way to empower labour. This was a B+ because while the rest of the answer was effective, its conclusion fell short.

Organized labour has power when it can put its hand directly on the levers of power.

When seeking concessions from exploitative employers, nothing is more powerful than shutting an operation down with a strike — and an ornery public is often an unfortunate but immaterial byproduct. However, organizers who ignore potential alienation, not only risk harm but likely miss out on the benefits of broad support. Just this week, B.C.'s NDP labour minister, Harry Bains, finally announced the return of one-step “card check” unionization, after years of ignoring labour groups demanding it.²⁰ Why now? “Throughout the pandemic, we have seen that many workers want to make their workplaces safer, have a say about their work schedules and negotiate better benefits and wages,” Bains said, citing Starbucks and Amazon union drives.²¹ Clearly, social context matters.

