



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Provisional Syllabus

AI and Global Politics: Navigating Technology's Impact on International Relations

PROF. ALESSANDRO QUARENghi

Term	Summer 2026
Area of study	International Relations
Credits	6 ECTS
Dates	22 June – 3 July 2026 (2 weeks)
Method of instruction	In person

Description

The course aims to provide students with tools to understand how the current wave of technological innovation (AI, quantum computing, 3-D printing, etc.) is transforming the world. To do so, it defines the contemporary international order and its processes of change before focusing on the relationships between international relations and technology. Finally, it discusses how technology is influencing the reshaping of politics, society, economics, security, diplomacy, and even identities.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will

- be familiar, both from a theoretical and empirical perspective, with the features of the main models of the international system, its current structure and its contemporary processes of change;
- be aware of the reciprocally influencing relationship that has always existed between technology and politics;
- be able to discuss and trace how current technologies are redefining humans and the environment in which humans operate;
- have gained a preliminary knowledge of the tools that states are employing to govern technological change.

Course contents

The course is divided into two main parts. The first section focuses on international politics, tracing its transformation since its birth, before defining the concepts of social, political, and international order. The main models of the international order are then outlined. Finally, it outlines the main features of the contemporary international order and the issues and processes that are transforming it.

The second part of the course initially discusses the relationship between international politics and technology, but focuses on the ways the current wave of technological innovation is changing the ideas, images, and relationships which the world is based upon. In order to trace the complexity of technological influence, it discusses how technology is redefining identities, and the environments in which humans operate (socio-political, economic, security, and diplomatic). The end of the course aims to discuss tools and strategies that states are developing to govern this technological wave.



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Prerequisites

The course can be accessed by students of all backgrounds. A good working knowledge of English is essential.

Method of teaching

The first part of the course will consist of lectures. In the second part of the course, and depending on the number of students, some issues will be introduced by a student presentation (15-20 minutes), which can be supported by the assigned readings. The issues raised by the presentation and by the readings will foster a discussion led by the instructors, which will constitute the bulk of the class. The instructors will then conclude by briefly (10-15 minutes) summarizing the most important points made during the discussion.

Course requirements

- a. Students are expected to actively take part in debate;
- b. Before each class, students are expected to have some of the readings;
- c. Students are required to research and orally present one of the topics provided by the instructor;
- d. Students will have to take a final written exam.

Credits

6 ECTS

Grading

Participation	10% of final grade
Group project (presentation)	30% of final grade
Final written exam	60% of final grade

Course readings and materials

All course readings and materials will be available on the course Blackboard page, in the Materials section, or can be accessed through the links provided.

Instructor bio

Alessandro Quarenghi is a Lecturer in International Politics at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, where he teaches International Relations, Economic Geography, and International Relations of the Middle East. He holds a degree in Law, a PhD in International Relations, a Specialization in International Economics and Politics, and Master's Degrees in Postcolonial Politics and Cross-cultural Mediation. His work focuses on



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

US foreign policy, international order, international order and technology, and international relations and politics of the Middle East.

@: alessandro.quarenghi@unicatt.it

Course Schedule

Lesson	Date	Topic	Reading/Course Material
FIRST PART. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SYSTEM			
1	June 22 14.00- 18.30	INTRODUCTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the course: aims, structure, class-by-class overview. Assignments: suggestions on how to successfully complete the course • Introduction to Power. Main concepts (Dahl's, Bachrach and Baratz's, Luke's, and Foucault's proposals) 	<p>Lukes S., <i>Power: A Radical View</i> (Macmillan 1974).</p> <p>Digester P., "The Fourth Face of Power", <i>The Journal of Politics</i>, 54 (4), Nov. 1992, pp. 977-1007.</p> <p>M. Foucault, "Disciplinary Power and Subjection", in Steven Lukes (ed.), <i>Power</i>, Basil Blackwell, London 1986, 229-242</p>
2	June 23 10.00- 14.30	THE STATE AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: BIRTH AND CHANGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State: • The international system: historical change • International Relations Theory: Brief review of 'traditions' and 'approaches' to International Politics 	<p>Grieco J., Ikenberry J. G., Mastanduno M., <i>Introduction to International Relations. Enduring Questions and Contemporary Perspectives</i> (Palgrave, 2015), pp. 2-28; 32-51; 70-103; 418-436</p> <p>Bremmer I., Keat P., <i>The Fat Tail: The Power of Political Knowledge in an Uncertain World</i> (OUP, 2009), pp. 47-51. https://tinyurl.com/y5k9lcje (NOT ON BLACKBOARD)</p>



<p>3</p>	<p>June 24 10.00-14.30</p>	<p>INTERNATIONAL ORDER, AND PROCESSES OF CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, Political, International, and World Order • Types of International Order • The contemporary international global order and its interpretation • A current disorder? Transition of power (hegemonic change). 	<p>Ikenberry J. G., <i>After Victory. Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars</i> (Princeton University Press, 2001) pp. 21-49</p> <p>Ikenberry J. G., "The End of Liberal International Order?", <i>International Affairs</i>, 94 (1), 2018, pp. 7–23. https://gji3.scholar.princeton.edu/sites/g/files/toruqf2666/files/gji3/files/inta94_1_2_241_ikenberry.pdf</p> <p>H. Bull, <i>The Anarchical Society. A Study of Order in World Politics</i> (Columbia University Press, 4th Ed. 2002), pp. 3-21; 51-94.</p> <p>Walt, "The End of Hubris And the New Age of American Restraint", <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, 98 (3), May/June 2019, pp. 26-35. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/end-hubris</p> <p>Flockhart T., Korosteleva E. A. "War in Ukraine: Putin and the multi-order world", <i>Contemporary Security Policy</i>, 43:3, 2022, pp. 466-481, DOI: 10.1080/13523260.2022.2091591</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>June 25 10.00-14.30</p>	<p>TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and International Relations Theory: Main theoretical approaches and outcomes • AI in International Relations 	<p>Eriksson, J., & M. Newlove-Eriksson, L. (2021). "Chapter 1: Theorizing technology and international relations: prevailing perspectives and new horizons". In Giampiero Giacomello, Francesco N. Moro, and Marco Valigi (eds.) <i>Technology and International Relations</i>. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788976077.00007</p> <p>Milner, H. V., Solstad S. U., "Technological Change and the International System", working paper 2020, pp. 1-10. https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/technology_diffusion_and_the_international_system.pdf</p> <p>McCarthy D. R. "Introduction", in McCarthy D.R. (ed.) <i>Technology and World Politics. An Introduction</i>, Routledge 2018, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788976077.00007</p> <p>Drezner, D. W. (2019). "Technological change and international relations". <i>International Relations</i>,</p>



			<p>33(2), 286-303. https://doi-org.ezproxy.unicatt.it/10.1177/0047117819834629</p> <p>Payne, K. (2024). "The Geopolitics of AI". <i>The RUSI Journal</i>, 169(5), 54–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2024.2413274</p> <p>Bode, I. (2024). "AI Technologies and International Relations: Do We Need New Analytical Frameworks?" <i>The RUSI Journal</i>, 169(5), 66–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2024.2392394</p> <p>Sajduk, B. (2019). "Theoretical premises of the impact of artificial intelligence on the international relations and security". <i>The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies</i>, (2), 157–180. https://doi.org/10.12775/CJPS.2019.017</p> <p>Quarenghi A., "The Reshaping of the International Order, Digitalisation, and the Emergence of New Governance Regimes", in Y. Kütük, F. Aksu, E. Alkin, (eds.) <i>Understanding Digital Transformation in International Politics and Economy</i>, Nobel-Altinbas University Press, Istanbul, 2023, 79-92.</p>
SECOND PART. CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND GLOBAL CHANGE			
5	June 26 10.00-14.30	<p>NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND ECONOMICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fourth Industrial Revolution • Technology innovation as an economic process • Innovation and competitiveness • Knowledge economy • Surveillance capitalism <p>PRESENTATION 1. Is there something special about Tesla?</p>	<p>Schwab K., "The Fourth Industrial Revolution. What It Means and How to Respond", <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, 12 December 2015. Available at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-12-12/fourth-industrial-revolution</p> <p>Drum K., "Tech World. Welcome to the Digital Revolution", <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, July/August 2018. Available at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-06-14/tech-world</p> <p>Zuboff, S. (2022). "Surveillance Capitalism or Democracy? The Death Match of Institutional Orders and the Politics of Knowledge in Our Information Civilization". <i>Organization Theory</i>, 3(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/26317877221129290</p> <p>Zuboff, S. (2016). "The secrets of surveillance capitalism". <i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>, 5. https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/the-digital-debate/shoshana-zuboff-secrets-of-surveillance-capitalism-14103616.html</p> <p>Cantwell J., "Innovation and Competitiveness", in Fagerberg J., Mowery D.C., and Nelson R.R. (eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Innovation</i> (Oxford</p>



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

		<p>PRESENTATION 2.</p> <p>How is China's economic transition going?</p>	<p>University Press 2006). As a working paper (2003) available at http://globalbusiness.rutgers.edu/Working_papers/jc_ohib.pdf</p> <p>O'Sullivan D., Dooley L., <i>Applying Innovation</i> (SAGE 2009), Chapters 1, 2, 3 (pp. 1-71). Available at https://tinyurl.com/yxbeggjq (NOT ON BLACKBOARD)</p> <p>McKinsey Global Institute, <i>The China Effect on Global Innovation</i>, Research Bulletin June 2015. Available at http://mckinseychina.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/mckinsey-china-effect-on-global-innovation-2015.pdf</p> <p>Steinfeld E. S., Beltoft T., "Innovation Lessons from China", <i>MIT Sloan Management Review</i> 55 (4), 2014, pp. 49-55.</p> <p>Prud'Homme D., von Zedtwitz M., "The Changing Face of Innovation in China", <i>MIT Sloan Management Review</i> 59 (4), 2018, pp. 24-32.</p> <p>Nallari R., Griffith B., <i>Clusters of Competitiveness</i>, The World Bank, 2013. http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/152521468158381169/pdf/Clusters-of-competitiveness.pdf</p>
6	<p>June 29</p> <p>10.00-14.00</p>	<p>FIELD TRIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISTITUTO DI RICERCHE FARMACOLOGICHE MARIO NEGRI <p>https://www.marionegri.it/eng/home</p>	<p>Istituto di ricerche farmacologiche Mario Negri, via Mario Negri 2, Milano</p> <p>Alessandra Roncaglioni, Head, Laboratory of Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology https://www.marionegri.it/personale/alessandra-roncaglioni</p> <p>Marten Beeg, Head, Unit of Molecular Modelling, Design and Interactions https://www.marionegri.it/personale/marten-beeg</p>
7	<p>June 30</p> <p>10.00-14.30</p>	<p>NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populism and Technology 	<p>C. Mudde, "The Populist Zeitgeist", <i>Government and Opposition</i>, Vol. 39, No 4 (Autumn 2004), 541-563. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44483088</p> <p>European Center for Populism Studies, <i>Technocratic Populism</i>.</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media, Echo chambers, polarization, and emotions • A new 'Great Transformation'? Knowledge, society, and power <p>PRESENTATION 3. The Pirate Party (PP)</p> <p>PRESENTATION 4. Why is the migration issue so central in Western contemporary politics?</p> <p>PRESENTATION 5. The conflict between the Trump administration and Harvard University: What is the point?</p>	<p>https://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/technocratic-populism/</p> <p>European Center for Populism Studies, <i>Techno-Populism</i>. https://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/techno-populism</p> <p>Barberá, P. (2020) 'Social Media, Echo Chambers, and Political Polarization', in N. Persily and J.A. Tucker (eds.) <i>Social Media and Democracy</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (SSRC <i>Anxieties of Democracy</i>), pp. 34–55.</p> <p>Jasanoff S. "Future imperfect: Science, technology, and the imaginations of modernity", in S. Jasanoff, <i>Dreamscapes of modernity: Sociotechnical imaginaries and the fabrication of power</i>, Routledge, 2015, 1-33. https://go.exlibris.link/WcQPnPbv</p> <p>Jasanoff S. "The idiom of co-production" and "Ordering knowledge, ordering society", in S. Jasanoff (ed.) <i>States of knowledge. The co-production of science and social order</i>, Taylor & Francis, 2004, pp. 1-45. https://go.exlibris.link/7gk7nIF9</p>
<p>8 July 01 10.00-14.30</p>		<p>NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI and war • Techno-geopolitics • Security • Digital Diplomacy <p>PRESENTATION 6. The Israel-USA-Iran conflict: The role of AI.</p> <p>PRESENTATION 7. The US-China digital power competition: the cases Huawei and TikTok.</p>	<p>Horowitz, Michael, Elsa B. Kania, and Gregory C. Allen and Paul Scharre. 2018. <i>Strategic competition in an era of artificial intelligence</i>. Center for a New American Security Reports (Jul 18), https://www.proquest.com/reports/strategic-competition-era-artificial-intelligence/docview/2072898763/se-2 (accessed March 2, 2025).</p> <p>Giacomello G., Moro F. N., and Valigi M., "Introduction", in G. Giacomello, F.N. Moro, and M. Valigi (eds.) <i>Technology and International Relations</i>, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021, viii-xvii. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788976077</p> <p>Mialhe N., "The geopolitics of artificial intelligence: The return of empires?", <i>Politique étrangère</i>, 2018/3 (Autumn Issue), p. 105-117. Available at https://www.cairn-int.info/journal-politique-etrangere-2018-3-page-105.htm</p>



		<p>Kello, Lucas. <i>The Virtual Weapon and International Order</i>, Yale University Press, 2017. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.unicatt.it/lib/unicatt-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4987810 (NOT ON BLACKBOARD)</p> <p>Bjola C., Kornprobst M. (eds.), <i>Digital International Relations: Technology, Agency and Order</i>, Taylor & Francis, 2023. https://go.exlibris.link/B7tYbXDk (NOT ON BLACKBOARD)</p> <p>Cohen J., Fontaine R., “Uniting the Techno-Democracies. How to Build Digital Cooperation”, <i>Foreign Affairs</i>, November/December 2020. Available at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-13/uniting-techno-democracies</p> <p>Kalantzis-Cope P., “Geopolitical Structuring in the Age of Information: Imagining Order, Understanding Change”, <i>Alternatives: Global, Local, Political</i>, 41(4) 2016, pp. 179-193</p> <p>Watson V. B. “The Fourth Industrial Revolution and its Discontents: Governance, Big Tech, and the Digitization of Geopolitics”. <i>Hindsight, Insight, Foresight: Thinking About Security in the Indo-Pacific</i>, edited by Alexander L. Vuving, Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2020, pp. 37–48. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26667.8.</p> <p>Doshi R., “The United States, China, and the Contest for the Fourth Industrial Revolution”, Prepared Statement before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Subcommittee on Security For the Hearing “The China Challenge: Realignment of U.S. Economic Policies to Build Resiliency and Competitiveness”, July 30, 2020. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Doshi-Commerce-Testimony-7.30.2020-Final.pdf</p>	
9	<p>July 02 10.00-14.30</p>	<p>NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND IDENTITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reshaping of identity: the liberal, the post-human and its critics 	<p>Shubham Bhattacharjee. “Posthuman feminism: Reconfiguring gender, identity, and agency in a technological era”. <i>Int. J. Humanit. Educ. Res.</i></p>



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

		<p>PRESENTATION 8. Stonewall</p> <p>GOVERNING TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview: technology foresighting, strategy, roadmap, evaluation.• European Union's AI Act	<p>2024;6(2):250-252. DOI: 10.33545/26649799.2024.v6.i2d.115</p> <p>Miles I., Saritas O., Sokolov A., <i>Foresight for Science, Technology, and Innovation</i> (Springer, 2016)</p> <p>Jasanoff S, "Governing Innovation: The Social Contract and the Democratic Imagination." Seminar 597, May 2009. Available at https://www.india-seminar.com/2009/597/597_sheila_jasanoff.htm</p> <p>Sus M., Hadeed M. (eds), <i>European Security 2030. The Results of the Dahrendorf Foresight Project</i>, September 2019. https://www.dahrendorf-forum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Dahrendorf-Foresight-Report.pdf</p> <p>European Union, <i>The Artificial Intelligence Act</i> (at this stage, 2023, a draft of EU Regulation). Available at https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/ (NOT ON BLACKBOARD)</p> <p>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), <i>Principles for trustworthy AI</i>, 2019 (updated 2024) https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0449</p>
	July 03 10.00- 14.00	EXAM	