

GOV 360T Fall 2026



Course Title

Multinational Corporations and International Law

Course Information

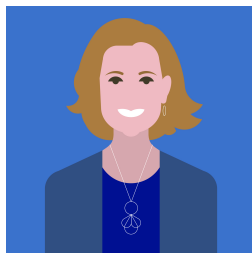
Instructional Mode: Face-to-face

Meeting Times: Mon/Wed 03:30 PM - 05:00 PM

Meeting Location: UTC 1.144

Unique Number: 40485

Instructor



Dr. Rachel Wellhausen

Email: rwellhausen@utexas.edu

Office Hours and Location

Office Location: Batts 4.138, or Zoom (utexas.zoom.us/my/wellhausen)

Office Hours:

- By appointment, Mon & Wed 1:00-3:00pm. Sign up at calendly.com/rwellhausen
- After class for ~30 min, near our classroom.

Why office hours? Please take advantage of the opportunity to connect outside of class. Potential topics to discuss include class material, current events, IPE in general, the professor's research, research opportunities for you, your career and/or future education plans, etc.! You are also welcome to come by in a group, so we can all bounce ideas off of each other. The professor may ask you to stop by in lieu of a written response to a written question; conversations are nearly always better.

Welcome Message

Welcome to Multinational Corporations and International Law!

I am Professor Wellhausen, and my primary field of interest is international political economy within international relations. Much of my body of work engages with the content and themes of this course; you can find more information on me and links to my publications at my website: <https://www.rwellhausen.com/>. I am therefore especially excited about the content we will explore this semester and to help you develop your own take on the status quo when it comes to the rights and obligations -- in both directions -- between countries and multinational corporations in the context of international law.

Our course is also special because we have been selected to work with interlocutors at the US Department of State as part of their Diplomacy Lab program. Specific State Department sections and embassies put out calls to universities for deliverables that would be of use to their work. We have answered the call by the political economy section of the US Embassy in Somalia to contribute to their project, "Improving Somalia's Investment Climate." As one of the poorest and most fragile countries in the world today, Somalia sits outside of much of the legal infrastructure we will learn about in the course. At the same time, Somali policymakers, the United States, and the international community writ large have interests in bringing Somalia into contemporary law and institutions. Our goals are to develop the knowledge and skills to specify what is *absent* in Somalia, what Somalia *could* choose and with what consequences, and what we as specialists would curate as priorities starting from what might be best understood as a tabula rasa.

The last time I taught this course, students contributed directly to scholarship applying course content to contemporary Ukraine (we will also read this piece during the semester). This time, I am glad our deliverables already have an

intended public audience; I'd like to keep in mind the possibility of working together on scholarly output as well.

Finally, I am an AI booster. Over the last months I have found the AI use case for me in the context of my scholarly research. It has helped me uncover sources, pre-test arguments, and act as an informed colleague with which I can discuss "the weeds." It can help me get content into my head. It also cannot produce research without me, and it is an error to pretend otherwise. I want during this semester for us all to try embracing AI as a super-charged, always available research assistant; let's see whether you can find and refine your use case.

Onward,

Prof Wellhausen.

Catalog Description

Study the ways governments use international economic law to shape international business.

Prerequisites for the Course

Prerequisite: Upper-division standing. Government 355M (Topic: Multinational Corp/Intl Law) and 360T may not both be counted.

Overview of the Class

Extended course description:

In the last decades, the importance of multinational corporations (MNCs) in international economic relations has skyrocketed. We know that MNCs can profit by investing capital in foreign countries. At the same time, the expectation has been that MNCs generate benefits for the countries in which they invest, thanks to economic growth and development. But things are not always so easy.

Sometimes, the interests of an MNC and the government of the country where it invests come into conflict. What then?

In the status quo international political economy, a variety of international economic law addresses the problems of matching the reality of economic globalization to the priorities and preferences of sovereign countries. We will learn about the purposes of this law, its designers' intentions, and (unexpected) consequences. We will engage with formal treaties and their limits, where codified law transitions into informal and fluid norms. We will take up questions from the point of view of the sovereign countries that choose to commit to international economic law (or not), as well as the point of view of multinational corporations pursuing profit motives in the global economy. The course also has an active research component, in which students will develop final projects that enumerate and adjudicate the options available to developing countries, with an eye to how status quo might transition in the near future.

Schedule:

This course operates through Canvas Modules; all dates, readings/materials, slides, and further information are available there. The professor reserves the right to adjust the course based on our progress during the semester; adjustments will be made directly in Modules.

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No recording allowed without explicit permission: [HOP 2-9970](#) prohibits students from recording class instruction (audio or video) unless a student obtains the instructor's permission or Disability & Access has approved audio recording as an accommodation.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the architecture of international economic law and identify where politics shapes how the law works.
- Characterize the formal and informal rights and obligations that governments and multinational corporations have to each other in the context of foreign investment.
- Connect theory to primary sources such as treaties, governmental policies, and corporate statements.

- Produce policy-relevant written analysis for a professional government audience.
- Develop and practice strategies to use AI assistance in a research workflow.

Grading Policy

Grade scale:

94 and above A; 90-93 A-; 87-89 B+; 84-86 B; 80-83 B-; 77-79 C+; 74-76 C; 70-73 C-; 67-69 D+; 64-66 D; 60-63 D-; 59 and below F.

** Final grades rounded to the nearest whole number (per basic math rules).

Grade distribution:

40% Exams

30% Assignments

20% End-of-semester deliverable

10% Engagement

+1% available in Extra credit

Detail on graded components:

Exams: This course includes in-person exams to be taken on paper (provided) at the designated class time. One 8.5x11 double-sided sheet of notes is allowed. You must take the exam in person at the designated time. In case of emergency that will require accommodations, you must use Student Outreach and Support (SOS) in the Office of the Dean of Students, <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>. See attendance policy below for more information.

Assignments: Assignments are due before the next class session, unless otherwise specified. Late submissions are not accepted. AI use on assignments follows the course AI policy.

Engagement: Engagement credit is earned through class participation, such as participation in group work, in-class activities, and asking and answering questions. Attendance alone without evidence of preparation is not engagement.

The final engagement grade will be informed by your own self-reflection at the end of the semester.

End-of-semester deliverable: 15% for your team's contribution (one group submission, one grade) and 5% informed by an individual closing reflection (individually graded). Both are due at the end of the final exam period.

Extra credit: You can earn an additional 0.5% on your final grade by attending and reflecting on a course-related event around campus during the semester (see Canvas assignments for details). You can also earn an additional 0.5% on your final grade by providing proof of completion of the course evaluation.

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Attendance policy: There is no need to notify the professor if you will be absent. Multiple absences have the potential to negatively impact your engagement grade. It is your responsibility alone to work with your colleagues to catch up on missed material; the professor will not engage in conversations nor respond to emails along the lines of, "What did I miss?"

Exceptional circumstances: In case of emergency that will disrupt your ability to be successful in the course, including but not limited to taking the exam at the scheduled time, students are expected to use **Student Outreach and Support (SOS) in the Office of the Dean of Students**, <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>. It is SOS's job to work with you and then notify your professors on your behalf. Once notified by SOS, the professor will work with you to determine the best course of action and whether additional accommodations can be made, on a case-by-case basis. Accommodations are ultimately at the professor's discretion. We appreciate if you reach out on the day to give us a heads up that you won't be present, but this is not a hard requirement. The most important thing is for you to get your personal situation resolved.

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence for a religious holy day as far in advance as possible of the date of observance. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, please fill out the Religious Accommodations Form administered by the Office of the Dean of Students: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UTAustin&layout_id=400. You will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence, as per Texas Education Code Section 51.911.

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Academic Integrity:

All allegations of academic misconduct will be referred by faculty to the Office of the Dean of Students. Students who violate University rules on academic misconduct are subject to the student conduct process. A student found responsible for academic misconduct may be assigned both a status sanction and a grade impact for the course. The grade impact could range from a zero on the assignment in question up to a failing grade in the course. A status sanction can include a written warning, probation, deferred suspension, suspension, or expulsion from the University. To learn more about academic integrity standards, tips for avoiding a potential academic misconduct violation, and the overall conduct process, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/student-conduct-processes.php>.

Course AI Policy Syllabus Statement

The course as a whole embraces AI use, and exploring the ways AI can assist us in research and knowledge production -- and its limits -- are underlying pedagogical goals. Students are expected to use and develop fluency in AI tools provided by UT Austin; we will focus on Anthropic's Claude as our common source.

Short assignments are designed around responsible use of AI as a research assistant, and success requires evidence of AI assistance in iterating with the student as an artificial interlocutor in ways that augment the student's human analysis and output quality.

Exams are in-person, on paper. Students are welcome to use AI in whatever way they see useful in preparing for exams. Students are allowed one piece of paper with notes (8.5 x 11, double-sided) to assist them during exams. This format allows students to use AI -- or not -- as a tool that increases their own intellectual uptake of information and analysis capabilities.

Our final project is a deliverable for US governmental officials, which will require specialized research, synthesis, and application of course materials. We will use all resources available to us, including those enabled by AI assistance, to

produce content. We will also practice responsibly using AI at the point of finalizing written text, particularly in calibrating voice and information organization to the standards required by our governmental partner.

Iterative conversation with students in developing best AI practices is built into the course structure and learning goals. The professor reserves the right to adjust AI policies and expectations during the semester.

Overview of all Major Course Requirements and Assignments

This course will proceed through three modules.

Module 1: Fundamentals

In the first module, we will gain knowledge on fundamental concepts in international law and its political context, with primary attention to law concerning economic globalization and the policies of multinational corporations. Regular assignments ask students to engage with primary sources and demonstrate understanding of how class materials help explain (or not) the status quo in contemporary international political economy. This module concludes with an exam testing student understanding as well as capacity to synthesize and apply learning.

Module 2: Economic Law and Its Limits

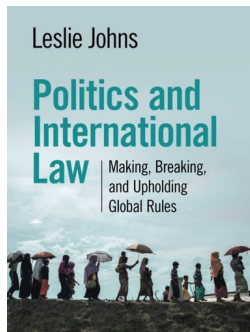
In the second module, we will continue themes developed in the first while turning to the specific content of international economic law, with a primary focus on international investment law and the protections it affords to multinational corporations investing abroad in foreign jurisdictions. We will also engage with the limited role international law plays in constraining multinational corporation activities abroad and consider the status quo of largely law-adjacent norms and obligations around multinational corporation behavior. Regular assignments ask students to engage with primary sources and increasingly emphasize student autonomy and creativity in choosing specific countries and firms to which to apply course materials.

Module 3: Application - Advising on Somalia

This course has been selected by the US Department of State to participate in the "Diplomacy Lab" program. In the third module, we will contribute to the

political-economic section of a US embassy. Officers there regularly issue Investment Climate Statements (ICS) for their host country, which advise US audiences on business opportunities and constraints and simultaneously inform country governments and other audiences. We will conduct our work with the US Embassy in Somalia, a country with very little engagement with the legal infrastructure we will have examined in the course. We will provide supplements to the Somalia ICS as well as curated recommendations to Somali policymakers. Students will be evaluated on the quality of collaborative research output and success in assembling coherent deliverables for our interlocutors.

Required Course Materials



Politics and International Law Making, Breaking, and Upholding Global Rules

ISBN: 9781108986656

Authors: Leslie Johns

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Publication Date: 2022-06-09

The textbook is available digitally through the "My Textbooks" tab in Canvas via the Longhorn Textbook Access (LTA) program. You are automatically opted in and billed through "What I Owe"; you can opt out (and back in) via Canvas through the 12th class day. All other readings and materials are provided on Canvas.

Final Exam Date and Time

Fri 11 Dec 7–9pm. Location TBA. Students will use the assigned final exam time to finalize deliverables for our US Department of State interlocutors. There is no written final exam.

Class Canvas Site Weblink

<https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1458935>

A Notice of Academic Accommodations from Disability and Access (D&A)

If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations, please contact Disability and Access (D&A). Contact and more details are available on D&A's website: <https://disability.utexas.edu>.

For accommodations to be implemented, students must have a prior accommodation letter from Disability and Access that we have discussed and signed. No accommodations will be made retroactively. Note that accommodations are ultimately determined based on the context of a specific course, as defined by the professor. Please deliver your Accommodation Letter to the professor as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and get everything sorted out sooner rather than later.

Note: If your accommodations affect your ability to take our in-person, written exams as scheduled, it is your responsibility to work with D&A to set up testing accommodations that replicate the conditions of no internet access and one (8.5x11, double-sided) page of notes to use as an aid in the exam, within 24 hours (before or after) the scheduled exam time. I will deliver the exam via RegisterBlast for D&A to proctor.

University Policies and Resources for Students Canvas Page

For a list of important university policies and helpful resources that you may need as you engage with and navigate your courses and the university, see the [University Policies and Resources for Students](#) Canvas page. The page includes important safety information including the policy on carrying of handguns on campus, the language of the University Honor Code, Title IX legal requirements for Texas employees, and information about how to receive support through the office of Disability & Access, tutoring services, the Counseling and Mental Health Center, University Health Services, and other resources.