



University
of Victoria

POLI 349: Issues in International Relations: “Middle Power Options in a World of Great Power Competition”

Instructor Summer 2023: Dr. Chris Ankersen

Course delivery: In the Summer 2023 term, this course will be delivered online using a synchronous format.

Course description:

This course examines the foreign policy choices of middle powers in a global system dominated by great powers. The course will explore the historical, economic, and political factors that shape these choices and how they navigate challenges and opportunities. Topics will include diplomacy, trades, multilateralism, alliance-making, and military strategy. The course will also consider the role of middle powers in shaping the global order and their potential to influence great power behavior. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of international relations and the strategies employed by middle powers to advance their national interests. The course will cover a wide range of middle powers, including Canada, India, South Korea, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa, and others.

Prerequisite: None

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Use course material and discussion to expand analytical and critical-thinking skills;
- Explore the key concepts and theoretical frameworks related to middle power behavior and great power competition
- Evaluate different middle power strategies, including balancing, bandwagoning, buck-passing, and hedging, and the conditions under which they are most effective
- Apply understanding of middle power behavior and great power competition to a real-world case study

Topics may include:

World order
Foreign policy
Diplomacy
Middle power; great power
Multilateralism
Alliances

This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is not an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.