

WORLD POLITICS

Professor: **Hélène Thiollet**
Session: **June 2025**
Language of instruction: **English**
Number of hours of class: **36**



Objective of the Course

This course offers an interdisciplinary approach to World Politics, combining conceptual tools, historical insight, and empirical evidence. Its objective is to equip students with key knowledge and notions and rigorous framework to analyse world politics.

It introduces students to core notions, such as state, power, security, cooperation, sovereignty, identity, and multilateralism from various disciplinary perspectives including global history, political science, comparative politics, political theory, international relations, international political economy, sociology and international public law.

In order to account for the profound transformation of world politics wrought by globalization, the course explores a vast array of topics and issues ranging from empires, globalization, foreign policy, wars, terrorism, the environment and migration. To do so, the course emphasises the important of multi-levels analysis – from the local to the global.

By investigating historical or contemporary dynamics, students will develop analytical skills grounded in both theoretical and empirical knowledge.



Summary

The first set of sessions introduces and examines analytical frameworks to understand world politics through historical examples. These sessions introduce discussions on states, sovereignty, empire, globalisation, international order, international systems, international society and power.

The second and third sets of sessions examine national, transnational and international politics. We focus particularly on migration and environmental politics as key case studies.

The fourth and last sets of sessions explore war and peace, violence, crises and revolutions.

In each session, the instructor introduces the material and opens the discussion to class participation based on academic readings (a reading list is provided) and in class engaging assignments. At the end of the lectures, students present group assignments on specific case studies in a workshop format.

The course ends with a final individual exam.



Organization of the course

1. World Politics through History: introducing useful notions and (counter) intuitions

- Unsettling the discussion: Political History, the Politics of History
- Settling the discussion: Empires, World Orders, International Systems, Globalisation

2. States and World Politics

- Sovereignty
- Foreign policy
- International interventions, supranationality
- States and non-state actors in world politics

3. Multilateralism and World Politics

- What is multilateralism? National interests and cooperation
- International regimes
- International organisations and international public law
- International migration in World Politics

4. War and World Politics

- Conflicts, wars, security in 2025
- Old wars, new wars since 1991
- The causes of wars: a focus on identity and violence
- The geographies and logistics of wars
- Violence without war? Genocide; Terrorism
- War without violence? Back to discussing “interventions”
- The politics of making peace

5. Concluding Remarks: Change in World Politics

Guest lectures

Dr Julien Seroussi, sociologist, former International Criminal Court analyst and Analyst @ War Crime Unit (Paris Court of Appeal)



Bibliography

A full bibliography will be available on the course's moodle.



Requirements for validation

The course is designed for students with a background in at least one of the human and social sciences (sociology, history, political science, economics, anthropology, geography, psychology).

The course combines theoretical and empirical contents to enable students to analyse world politics. It is composed of 36 hours of teaching including lecture-type courses, class discussions around readings and workshop sessions in which groups of students present a case study connected to one of the topics of the course.

Students are required to attend all classes, including workshop sessions and to engage actively in class discussions.

It should be noted that “World Politics” will required intense coursework, readings, knowledge and skills acquisition.

The assignments for this course are:

- A case study presented **orally** in class (min 10'-max 15') and prepared by **two or three students**. The presentation of the case study is followed by a short **Q&A** with the class and the instructor (10' to 15').
- A final sit-in exam (individual) composed of a series of essay questions and commentary of an image or a graph.

A full description of assignments is available on the course's moodle.



Professor's Biography



[H el ene Thiollet](#) is a CNRS tenured researcher at Sciences Po and teaches international relations, comparative politics, and migration studies. Her research focuses on the politics of migration and asylum in the Global South, notably in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

H el ene is co-leading the [DIMIG Discourses on Migration](#) project (2023-2025), led Sciences Po team for the H2020 project [MigrAtion Governance and asYlum Crises MAGYC](#) financed by the European Union (2018-2023). She was also Principal Investigator for the research project the [Politics of Asylum Crises in Europe \(PACE\)](#) financed by the French National Agency for Research (ANR) (2019-2024).

Recent publications (available [here](#))

Savatic, F., Thiollet, H., Mesnard, A., Senne, J.-N., & Jaulin, T. (2024). Borders Start With Numbers: How Migration Data Create "Fake Illegals". *International Migration Review*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183231222169>

Katharina Natter & H el ene Thiollet (eds) (2024) *Migration Politics across the World*, Routledge, ISBN 9781032601168, 166 p.

H el ene Thiollet (2023) Immigration rentier states, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2269783>

C eline Cantat & Antoine P ecoud, & H el ene Thiollet (2023) Migration as Crisis, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 0(0). DOI: 10.1177/00027642231182889

Michelle Reddy & H el ene Thiollet (2023) The Making of a Crisis: Migration and Polarization in the French Press. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 0(0). DOI: 10.1177/00027642231183274

Antoine P ecoud & H el ene Thiollet (2023) *Research Handbook on The Institutions of Global Migration Governance (2023)* edited with Antoine P ecoud (eds.), Edward Elgar, London. 480 p.

H el ene Thiollet, Ferruccio Pastore & Camille Schmoll (2023) "Is the forced/voluntary dichotomy really shaping migration governance?" in *Handbook of Human Mobilities and Migrations*, Ettore Recchi and Mirna Safi (eds.) Edward Elgar