POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND BUSINESS INTERESTS
The Confluence of Government Relations and Business
POGO 750-011
George Mason University
Schar School of Policy and Government
Spring 2020

GENERAL INFORMATION

Listing: POGO 750-011
Time/Location: Wednesdays, 7:20-10:00 pm, ARLVM 311
Instructor: Lee R. Godown
President and CEO, Alpex International LLC
(Retired General Motors Global Vice President)
linkedin.com/in/lee-godown
Phone: +1.202.480.7008
Email: lrgodown@gmail.com
Office Hours: By appointment, usually early Wednesday evenings
Arlington campus

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The objective of this course is to explore the nexus of global politics and the business world. We will examine the ways political influence (lobbying, third party engagement, etc.) can impact decisions that are made by governments around the world. We will also examine the converse – how legislatures, parliaments, executive agencies) can and do make doing business easier and more difficult at times. Conventional wisdom is that governments generally pose a threat to business; but is that really the case, or can politicians and business leaders be partners? Special emphasis will be placed on actual case studies from around the world the instructor has been part of, and the current dynamics in global political and business alliances. We will also study examples of governmental and business interactions currently unfolding, with a focus on the present disruption in international trade.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Successful completion of this course provides the students with the following:
1. An understanding of the ways multi-national corporations deal with the variety of types of governments around the world, and the impacts governmental decisions have upon multinational companies;

2. Exposure to guest speakers from the world of international business at the “C-suite” level, as well as global political leaders, and the ability for students to network with them;

3. The development of a skill set to base future career success upon in the area of international business, including a basic understanding of how to establish an international small, startup business;

4. An understanding of ethical behaviors and norms in influencing global governments (e.g. what may be appropriate in one part of the world, may not be in another);

5. An opportunity for in-class interactions with a Fortune 7 corporate executive, as well as a senior government official involved in trade policy, and a last class networking reception with global governmental and business leaders.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:

Class members are responsible for obtaining and reading all of the assigned course materials. The class will also use breakout groups to work on several, individual real-world examples of situations companies sometimes find themselves in, and be required to devise a strategy to overcome the business challenge. Some of the assigned reading will go beyond those texts below, and will be provided in a course packet before the term begins.


- **Foreign Subsidiary Sale Case Study/Bochum Perspektive 2022.** Materials provided prior to start of course;

- **Biographies/pertinent materials on class speakers.** Normally provided to students by email the week prior.

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:

Both individual and group break-out session work are important skills to be developed, and students will be evaluated on each throughout the course. You will be encouraged to demonstrate your knowledge of the theories and practices studied during the course, and you will be encouraged to strengthen your oral presentation, writing and research skills. Active participation in class discussions is greatly encouraged by all students, and a contemporaneous
record of same will be kept (one credit per class if active participation is noted/maximum 10 credits possible during the course). Two multiple choice exams (closed book) will be administered, as well as a final exam. Grades will be assigned and apportioned as per below:

- Participation in Discussion During Class 15%
- Formal Oral (Socratic) Responses (x3, 5% each) 15%
- Break-Out Session Papers & Presentation (10% each) 20%
- Written Exams X3 (5% on #s 1 & 2, 10% on final exam) 20%
- Final Written Paper 20%
- Networking Reception Attendance 10%

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AT A GLANCE** (Dates pertinent to reading assignments, break-out sessions, written exams, written papers).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>PSA Groupe Sale of Opel/Vauxhall &amp; Bochum Perspektive Case Study</td>
<td>Pertinent materials distributed on 1/17 by email</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>The Globalization of International Business</td>
<td><em>International Business, Chapter 1, pages 5-47</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Culture and International Business</td>
<td><em>International Business, Chapter 2, pages 54-81</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Written Exam #1</td>
<td>Multiple choice exam based upon Opel/Vauxhall/Bochum and <em>International Business</em> readings</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>General Motors in China</td>
<td><em>American Wheels, Chinese Roads</em> - pages 1-218</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>Managing International Operations</td>
<td>*International Business, Chapter 17, pages 680-718</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Discussion of Breakout Group Sessions/Team-Based Written &amp; Oral Presentations</td>
<td>Class handout and discussion of group projects/deliverables</td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td><strong>SPRING RECESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Written Exam #2</td>
<td>Multiple choice exam based upon <em>International Business</em> and <em>American Wheels...</em> readings</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Doing Business in Different Countries</td>
<td><em>Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands</em> - pages vii-xiii. Students assigned individual countries</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Guest Speaker – General Motors Executive</td>
<td>Background on speaker/materials distributed 3/27 by email</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Student Reports on &quot;Doing Business in My Country&quot;</td>
<td><em>Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands - individually-assigned country chapters/student oral class reports</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Guest Speaker – Government Trade Official</td>
<td>Background on speaker/materials distributed 4/10 by email</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Review of Final Written Paper Topics</td>
<td>Class handout and discussion of topics for, and contents of, final written paper</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Final Written Paper Due</td>
<td>Course read out and discussion of outcomes</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Final Written Exam</td>
<td>Two parts: 1) multiple-choice/targeted questions; 2) essay</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Networking Reception</td>
<td>Professor Godown’s home in Fairfax</td>
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GENERAL GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Papers

Writing research and policy papers is a fundamental part of graduate study. The quality of a paper is determined by a number of factors, including presentation of facts, development of argumentation, clarity of analysis, acknowledgment of sources, and accuracy of format and style. A good guideline for elements and format of a research paper and bibliography, including online sources, is *A Pocket Style Manual, Seventh Edition* (2015), by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers.

Grading

All written and oral assignments will be judged using the GMU system for grading graduate courses as laid out in the university catalog. Grades earned for each assignment will be added numerically, and the weighted average will be used to determine the final grade, which allows for the grades of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, as well as C, F, and IN. Assignments that are submitted late will lead to a grade reduction, up to being marked as missed entirely. Unacceptably frequent periods of absence (missing more than three classes) will result in grade reduction as well. Extra credit can be earned periodically throughout the class.

Electronic Communication and Blackboard

The GMU email accounts are the primary and authoritative means of electronic communication; announcements regarding classes will be sent to those accounts only. Students are free to use other accounts, but are solely responsible for any failed communication, missed deadline, etc. Blackboard will also be used to post announcements, presentations, and other items, so be sure to check regularly.

Use of Cell Phones, Computers, and Other Electronic Devices in Class

Students are expected to focus entirely on seminar discussion during class. They are expected to refrain from carrying on other professional or personal activities while the class is meeting. This means on both phones and computers. Devices should be turned to vibrate, and only used in case of emergency (personal or professional). Computers are permitted only for use pertaining to the course and may be prohibited at the discretion of the instructor.

Special Needs

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at http://ods.gmu.edu/. All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS before classes start.

Academic Integrity
Faculty at the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty, and will strictly enforce Mason’s honor code.