



INTS1003

Understanding Global Systems: Power and Governance

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of International Studies

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Who holds power in the world, and how is it exercised? This unit introduces students to how power operates in the global system through governance, contestation, and the structures of the world economy. It focuses on three core frames (state power, global governance, and political economy) that provide a foundation for interpreting international affairs. Students will examine theories and concepts of international politics, and key actors and structures including states, international organisations, trade and security frameworks, corporations, and transnational movements. Case studies and scenario-based activities illustrate how systems emerge, evolve, and interact across local, regional, and global contexts. The unit explores how agendas are formed and challenged, how global power is distributed and disrupted, and how economic structures shape political outcomes. Institutions such as the United Nations, regional organisations, and global trade frameworks are studied alongside contemporary dynamics including rivalries between established (and emerging) global powers, the role of middle powers, and multilateral cooperation in a fragmented order. By the end of the unit, students will have a structured framework for understanding the systems that underpin global affairs and will be prepared to apply this knowledge in subsequent units of the Bachelor of International Studies.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Identify the structures, actors, and institutions underpinning global governance and political systems.

ULO2: Develop an understanding of the distribution and contestation of power across societies, institutions, and international systems.

ULO3: Apply analytical tools to identify the interconnections between actors, interests, and norms in real-world complex systems.

ULO4: Investigate the relevant implications of global decisions and governance structures from diverse stakeholder perspectives.

General Assessment Information

SUBMITTING ASSESSMENT TASKS

All text-based assessment tasks are to be submitted, marked and returned electronically. This will only happen through the unit iLearn site.

The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special

Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (including essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc).

Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic. The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>

REASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/appeals/grade-appeal>

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Case Studies: Actor Mapping	25%	No	06/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Simulation Activity	40%	No	18/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Reflective Writing	35%	No	06/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Case Studies: Actor Mapping

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **06/09/2026**

Weighting: **25%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students engage in a small-group mapping activity to analyse a global issue governed by overlapping authorities, examining how power operates across states, institutions, and economic structures.

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Simulation Activity

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **18/10/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students participate in a structured negotiation activity based on a shared case and shock scenario, then deliver an individual recorded video presentation analysing who is affected by the shock, how power shifts, and which analytical frames best explain what happened.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Develop an understanding of the distribution and contestation of power across societies, institutions, and international systems.
- Apply analytical tools to identify the interconnections between actors, interests, and norms in real-world complex systems.
- Investigate the relevant implications of global decisions and governance structures from diverse stakeholder perspectives.

Reflective Writing

Assessment Type ¹: Reflection task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **06/11/2026**

Weighting: **35%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students complete three short reflections across the semester, which are then combined into a single reflective writing task that tracks how their understanding of global power evolves. The reflection draws on readings, class discussions, and learning activities.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify the structures, actors, and institutions underpinning global governance and political systems.
- Develop an understanding of the distribution and contestation of power across societies, institutions, and international systems.
- Apply analytical tools to identify the interconnections between actors, interests, and norms in real-world complex systems.
- Investigate the relevant implications of global decisions and governance structures from diverse stakeholder perspectives.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

CLASSES

The unit runs from weeks 1 to 12 and consists of a 2-hour lecture on Tuesday, 11am–1pm (23WW T2 Lecture Theatre) and a 1-hour tutorial (refer to your timetable for your allocated time). Lectures are recorded and available in Echo360 within 48 hours.

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes watching or attending lectures prior to seminars or tutorials, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn/Leganto, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- Internal students are expected to attend all seminar or tutorial sessions, and external students are expected to make significant contributions to the on-line discussion forums/activities.

- In most cases students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks in order to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for all the required readings for this unit are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site, and the Leganto site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means.

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Computer and internet access are essential for this unit. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.
- This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>
- Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient.
- Information about IT used at Macquarie University is available at http://students.mq.edu.au/it_services/

Unit Schedule

Module 1: The Three Core Frames (Weeks 1–4)

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: The Political Economy and Structural Power

Week 3: The State Power

Week 4: The Global Governance and Trade Regime

Module 2: Systems in Crisis & Shocks (Weeks 5–9)

Week 5 | Global Shocks: Pandemics and Multilateralism

Week 6 | Security Through Economic Coercion

Week 7 | Platform Governance: Transnational Tech Giants vs. State Sovereignty

Week 8 | Fragmented Orders: Regionalism and Regional Governance

Week 9 | Great Power Rivalry: Hegemonic Decline and Systemic Disruption

Module 3: Contestation, Disruption, and Reordering

Week 10 | Civil Society and the Power to Set Agendas: Transnational Movements and NGOs

Week 11 | Humanitarianism as Governance

Week 12 | Governing the Future and Reimagining Global Systems

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to

Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.03 of the [Handbook](#)