

POLI 369J - The Theory and Practice of Unipolarity

University of British Columbia

Winter 2024/25 Term 1

Instructor: Barnard Choi, PhD

E-mail: bchoi07@mail.ubc.ca

Office Hours: Tues & Thurs at 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM in Buchanan C 311

Course Description:

This course examines the international security implications of the post-Cold War transition from a bipolar distribution of power to unipolarity. After an introduction to the theoretical literature on the durability and peacefulness of unipolarity, the course will explore its effects on the management of key international security issues (including those with second-order security effects) such as (1) major power relations; (2) horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation; (3) transnational terrorism, civil wars, and insurgencies; (4) order-defying minor powers; (5) international trade and finance; and (6) the global environment. Finally, the course will inquire whether international politics is reverting back to either bipolarity or multipolarity and explore the possible consequences of such a transition. Outline

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Gain an overview of the academic and policy debates around the concept of unipolarity and its implications for international politics.
2. Identify and analyze the factors that sustain unipolarity versus those that destabilize it.
3. Reinforce prior exposure to leading IR theories and concepts that help to better understand international politics, or introduce them if newer to the field.
4. Gain an understanding of how unipolarity impacts important, substantive areas of international security and economics such as major power relations, nuclear proliferation, and the international trading and monetary regimes.
5. Produce theoretically informed, evidence-based written works on several aspects of international politics under unipolarity.

Course TA:

Thelma Munoz Barajas

thelmamb@student.ubc.ca

Course Format:

The format of the course will be 2 lectures a week.

Required Texts:

All readings are available on the course canvas site.

Course Assignments, Due Dates and Grading:

Students are responsible for material covered in lectures and class discussions as well as in the assigned readings. Regular attendance in class is required.

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Participation (Attendance)	10%
In-Class Midterm (Oct 15)	25%
5-Page Response Paper (Due Nov 20)	30%
In-Class Final Exam (TBA)	<u>35%</u>
	100%

Top Hat is a classroom response software that works with your smartphones, tablets and laptops. Top Hat usually requires a paid subscription but that is being waived thanks to UBC, so there will be no cost to you for using Top Hat; please do not pay for a subscription as students who purchase subscriptions cannot be refunded. To sign up:

1. Go to <https://tophat.com/>
2. [Links to an external site.](#)
- 3.
4. Click on **Login** if you have an existing account or **Sign-up > Student sign-up**
5. Follow the prompts; look for POLI369J (Course Name: Unipolarity).
6. Join Code is 111388.

Late assignments will be penalized 2% for each 24-hour period late. To be considered for extensions for papers, exams, and/or being excused for an absence (and thus missing Top Hat responses or tutorial participation), Arts Students must contact Arts Advising (Buchanan D111) as soon as you are aware you may need an in-term concession. Please review their website for concession criteria as well as process to follow. Students in other Faculties should contact their faculty advising office for direction. Re-grading of marked work by the teaching assistant will only take place if accompanied by a one-page memo indicating in detail the grounds for re-grading; students should note that a re-grading of a paper or exam may result in the lowering of grade upon further review. If this procedure does not resolve the matter, it may be appealed to the professor, who, again, may raise or lower the grade upon further review.

Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

General Academic Policies

Regular attendance in lectures and tutorials and participation (in tutorials) is expected. All assignments must be completed and handed in. Students who do not attend regularly or fail to hand in an assignment may be disallowed from writing the final exam.

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you.

Students who wish to appeal grades assigned to their academic work may do so. The initial appeal should be made to the TA or course instructor. If the student remains

unsatisfied with this process, he/she may proceed to the head of the department or further to a formal committee established in accordance with University policies.

Religious holidays – UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructor in advance of these days and their wish to observe them by absenting themselves from class or examination. Instructors provide opportunity for students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty. (Policy # 65.)

UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC's policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to university services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Students with a disability should first meet with an Centre for Accessibility advisor to determine what accommodations/services you are eligible for.

University Values and Priorities:

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

Academic Accommodations and Concessions:

If you experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with your ability to accomplish your academic coursework, you may be eligible for academic concession. For more information on concessions, please see Arts Advising:

<https://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/academic-performance/help-academic-concession/>

If you miss marked coursework (assignment, quiz) and you are an Arts student, review the Faculty of Arts' academic concession page and then complete Arts Academic Advising's online academic concession form, so that an advisor can evaluate your

concession case. If you are a student in a different Faculty, please consult your Faculty's webpage on academic concession, and then contact me where appropriate.

If your situation is related to an experience of sexual violence, you have the option of contacting UBC's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) (604 822 1588) who can assist you with your academic concession.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC's policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to UBC services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the Centre for Accessibility. The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with Policy 73: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

Academic Accommodations for Religious or Spiritual Experiences

The University is obligated to comply with the BC Human Rights Code in accommodating students observances of sincerely held religious beliefs. If you would like to request an academic concession because of a conflict with a religious observance, please see your academic advisor. To learn more visit:

<https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources/academic-concessions>

Academic Integrity and Responsibility

As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on essays, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you

decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor or TA.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: how you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Academic communities also depend on their members' living up to the commitments they make. By enrolling in this course, you make commitments to an academic community: you are responsible for meeting deadlines, attending class, and engaging in class activities. If you find that you cannot meet a deadline or cannot participate in a course activity, discuss your situation with your instructor or TA before the deadline or before your absence.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor's prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

Illness and Absence

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family

obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Please reach out and ask for help if needed.

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer student's support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors can access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record. For more information: <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>

For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>

Respectful University Environment

UBC recognizes that “the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued.” The full UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff can be found at

<http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf>. Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0>

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office (<http://equity.ubc.ca>), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students: <https://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca>

Equity and Harassment

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC's Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: "unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behavior is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents." Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression, and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life. Resources are available at:

Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC)

249M, Student Union Building, UBC

604-827-5180

sasc@ams.ubc.ca

<http://amssasc.ca>Links to an external site.

Equity and Inclusion Office

2306 – 1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)

604.822.6353

equity@equity.ubc.ca

<http://equity.ubc.ca>

Outline of Lectures and Readings

September 3 - Course Introduction

September 5 - Defining and Conceptualizing Unipolarity

- Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," *International Security* Vol. 25, No. 1 (2000): 5-41.
- Nuno Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapter 2.

September 10 - Realist Perspectives on the Post-Cold War Order

- Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 78, No. 2 (1999): 35-49.
- John Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 80, No. 5 (2001): 46-61.

September 12 - Liberal Perspectives on the Post-Cold War Order

- G. John Ikenberry, "Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order," *International Security* Vol. 23, No. 3 (1998/99): 43-78.
- Charles Lipson, *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1-16.

September 17 - Rebuttals to the Liberal Perspective on Post-Cold War Order

- Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," *International Security* Vol. 19, No. 2 (1994): 5-49.
- Sebastian Rosato, "Explaining the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 99, No. 3 (2005): 467-72

September 19 - Is Unipolarity Durable?

- Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion," *International Security* Vol. 17, No. 4 (1993): 5-51.
- William Wohlforth and Stephen Brooks, "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in the 21st Century: China's Rise and the Fate of America's Global Position," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2015/16): 7-53.

September 24 - Is Unipolarity Peaceful?

- Nuno Monteiro, "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful," *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2011/12): 9-40

September 26 - Major Power Relations Under Unipolarity

- Michael Mastanduno, "Partnership Politics: Russia, China, and the Challenge of Extending US Hegemony After the Cold War," *Security Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2019): 479-504.

October 1 - Major Power Relations Under Unipolarity (Continued)

- Evelyn Goh, "Contesting Hegemonic Order: China in East Asia," *Security Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2019): 614-644.

October 3 - Nuclear Proliferation Under Unipolarity

- Francis Gavin, "Strategies of Inhibition: US Grand Strategy, The Nuclear Revolution, and Non-Proliferation," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2015): 9-46.

October 8 - Nuclear Proliferation Under Unipolarity (Continued)

- Nuno Monteiro and Alexander Debs, "The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation," *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2014): 7-51.

October 10 - Case Study: North Korea's Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs

- Bruce Cumings, "A Murderous History of Korea," *London Review of Books*, Vol. 39, No. 10 (May 2017).
- Vipin Narang and Ankit Panda, "North Korea Defied the Theoretical Odds: What Can We Learn from Its Successful Nuclearization?" *Texas National Security Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (March 2018): 58-75.

October 15 - In-Class Midterm

October 17 - Managing Insurgency, Terrorism, and Civil War

- Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (2003): 343-361.
- Ahsan I. Butt, "Why Did the United States Invade Iraq in 2003?" *Security Studies*, Vol. 28, Issue 2 (2019): 250-285.

October 22 - Managing Insurgency, Terrorism, and Civil War (Continued)

- David Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2004): 49-91.

- Austin Long, “Whack-A-Mole or Coup de Grace? Institutionalization and Leadership Targeting in Iraq and Afghanistan,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 23, Issue 3 (2014): 471-512.

October 24 - Major Power Challengers to the Unipolar Order

- Margaret M. Pearson, Meg Rithmire, and Kellee S. Tsai, “China’s Party-State Capitalism and International Backlash: From Interdependence to Security,” *International Security*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2021): 135-176.
- David Kang, “Still Getting Asia Wrong: No ‘Contain China’ Coalition Exists,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2022): 79-98.

October 29 - Major Power Challengers to the Unipolar Order (Continued)

- Matthew Evangelista, “A Nuclear Umbrella for Ukraine? Precedents and Possibilities for Post War European Security,” *International Security*, Vol. 48, Issue 3 (2024): 7-50.

October 31 - Unipolar Responses to the Challengers

- Dong Jung Kim, “The Perils of Geoeconomics,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2019): 153-170.

November 5 - Unipolar Responses to the Challengers (Continued)

- Ian Bowers and Øystein Tunsjø, “The Implications of Contemporary US-China Hypercompetition,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2023): 83-102.

November 7 - Intl Trade, Investment, and Finance Under Unipolarity

- Robert Pape, “Why International Sanctions Do Not Work,” *International Security*, Vol. 22, Issue 2 (1997): 90-136.
- Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman, “Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion,” *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2019): 42-79.

November 12 - Midterm Break

November 14 - Intl Trade, Investment, and Finance Under Unipolarity (Continued)

- Carla Norrlof, “Dollar Hegemony: A Power Analysis,” *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 5 (2014): 1042-1070.
- Carla Norrlof and William C. Wohlforth, “Raison de l’Hégémonie (The Hegemon’s Interest): Theory of the Costs and Benefits of Hegemony,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2019): 422-450.

November 19 - Intl Trade, Investment, and Finance Under Unipolarity (Continued)

- Victor Cha, “Collective Resilience: Deterring China’s Weaponization of Economic Interdependence,” *International Security*, Vol. 48, Issue 1 (2023): 91-124.
- Ling S. Chen and Miles M. Evers, “Wars without Gun Smoke: Global Supply Chains, Power Transitions, and Economic Statecraft,” *International Security*, Vol. 48, Issue 2 (2023): 164-204.

November 21 - Global Environmental Politics Under Unipolarity

- Graham ER, Serdar A. Power, “Control, and the Logic of Substitution in Institutional Design: The Case of International Climate Finance,” *International Organization*, Vol. 74, No.4 (2020):671-706.

- Jianfeng Jeffrey Qi and Peter Dauvergne, “China’s Rising Influence on Climate Governance: Forging a Path for the Global South,” *Global Environmental Change* 73 (March 2022): 1-13.

November 28 - Unipolar Decline, Power Transition, and Global Rebalancing

- John Mearsheimer, “Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order,” *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2019): 7-50.
- Judith Goldstein and Robert Gulotty, “America and the Trade Regime: What Went Wrong?” *International Organization*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (2021): 524-557.

December 3 - Unipolar Decline, Power Transition, and Global Rebalancing (Continued)

- Stefanie Walter, “The Backlash Against Globalization,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 24 (2021): 421-442.

December 5 - Final Exam Review