International Political Economy Module

Institution:	Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals
Year:	Year 2
Course type:	Track specific course CEU-IBEI (modular format)
ECTS:	4

Brief description (including learning outcomes): For students on the CEU-IBEI track, a course developing and/or consolidating knowledge of international political economy is compulsory. Students may choose between an intermediate course in international political economy (IPE) for those with a limited background, or another course that develops specific skills related to problem-solving public policy analysis. Students will take one of the four courses listed below to comply with this programme requirement. Additional courses can be taken as elective options.

International Political Economy

The course presents IPE as three complementary social science-inspired perspectives on politics. Firstly, an inter-disciplinary study of international economic phenomena which are at least partly due to politics., such as the current trade war between the USA and China, one of whose causes may be changes in US domestic politics. Secondly, an inter-disciplinary study of international political phenomena which are at least partly due to economic events or circumstances, such as the current tensions between the Italian government and the European Commission, one of whose causes may be the lack of growth of the Italian economy since 2007. Finally, as the use of economic concepts and methods to understand international affairs, such as bargaining between Britain and Iran may be analyzed using bargaining models of vote-maximizing politicians.

Global Trade Governance

Building on the instructor's first-hand experience in European and global economic governance and academic background, and on everyone's knowledge and expertise, we will rigorously review the political economy and institutional framework of global trade and economic governance and gain awareness of behind-the-scenes action. We will critically assess current and past trends and challenges related to international trade and economic flows and consider foreseeable challenges. We will address topics at the intersections of trade and investment, finance, taxation, development, food and health, and geopolitical crises. We will examine the basic blocks of global trade and economic governance, including preferential agreements (bilateral and plurilateral arrangements, currency and economic unions), as well as the multilateral institutions.

Development Finance and Sustainable Development Goals

This course explores the changing role of development finance in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a critical examination of market-based solutions. The SDGs represent a comprehensive agenda for sustainable development, seeking to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. Development finance arguably plays a crucial role in achieving these goals by mobilizing resources, fostering investment, and supporting initiatives that drive sustainable growth. Both approaches are not without critics: some suggest that market-based solutions to development challenges are just a ruse, and others argue that SDGs are a distraction to divert attention away from the perils of neoliberalism. Yet others completely disagree with these critics and highlight the benefits to be gained from mobilizing finance for sustainable development.

Programme Evaluation in Development

Programme evaluations are an area of increasing importance in the field of international development cooperation. This introductory course will familiarize students with the major tools, methodological choices, and practical challenges typically faced by development practitioners when implementing these evaluations. Note that this course aims to provide a non-technical introduction to the field of evaluation. The method of instruction will be practice- and case-study based, with a focus on the feasibility and value-added of different evaluation approaches for specific programme contexts and evaluation purposes.