Syllabus

Multinational Corporations in World Politics - 58892

Last update 27-10-2015

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: international relations

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Thauer Christian

Coordinator Email: christian.thauer@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Sunday, 13-14.30pm

Teaching Staff:
Dr. christian thauer
Course/Module description:
Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are a dominant feature and structuring element of world politics today. This course is an introduction to the debates about MNCs in International Relations and Political Economy. We will discuss the nature, importance and emergence of MNCs, and how and why they matter and exert influence.

The seminar draws on a diverse set of literature and sources: academic books and journal articles, interviews, clips, and documentaries. I recommend in particular one book as a good introduction:


Course/Module aims:
Good knowledge of MNCs and FDI in the context of globalization today; good understanding of the theoretical approaches in the context of which these phenomena are explained; analytical skills: relating empirical observations and historical data and narratives to theoretical arguments and discussions; independent research with a variety of sources

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
Critically discuss and relate theoretical approached to FDI and MNCs to empirical observations; conduct independent research on specific topics related to MNCs in world politics; practical application of knowledge to problem-solving from the perspective of policy makers.

Attendance requirements(%):
min. 80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Text discussion, group work, student presentations, lectures

Course/Module Content:
Part I: Introduction
Week 1 (19 October 2015) Introduction

1st part: Introduction to the topic; requirements; expectations of participants; questions; introduction to research task

2nd part: Research task: VW and the emissions fraud – what is this scandal about?

Week 2 (26 October 2015) FDI and MNCs: The nature of the beast and its relevance

1st part:
- a.) Conceptual clarifications and methodological challenges: What are MNCs? What is FDI? Why should we care?
- b.) Recent trends and developments — some statistics

2nd part:
- a.) Group work — you are a taskforce installed by the CEO of a major domestic corporation specialized in the production and development of security technology/cars, textiles, oil&gas. Should you go multinational? And if so, why? And if not, why not? What parameters define your decision?
- b.) Discussion: Has the VW fraud scandal anything to do with the firm being a multinational corporation?

Requires readings:

Research material:
- Behre Dolbear’s where to invest in mining-report: http://www.dolbear.com/latest-happenings/2015-where-to-invest
- Global Regulation-project: http://www.global-regulation.com/; Username: christian.thauer@mail.huji.ac.il; PW: christian

Part II: The Institutional-Political Context — Theories and Approaches

Week 3 (02 November 2015) Globalization

1st part:
Text discussion
Scenario play – a race to the bottom?

2nd part:
- Discussion 1: of race to the top
- Discussion 2: Does globalization/do competitive regulatory dynamics play a role in the VW scandal?
- Presentation: What is Globalization?
- Presentation: Max Schrems vs. Facebook – the European Court decision and its implications

Required readings:

Presentation materials:
- Max Schrems vs. Facebook – the European Court decision and its implications:
  - Media analysis
  - Court decision
- What is Globalization?

Week 4 (09 November 2015) Transnational networks

1st part:
- Text discussion
- Presentation: The evolution and transformation of a terrorist network: Al Qaeda

2nd part:
- Presentation(s): a.1) global value chains and their governance; a.2) the structure of production of the global textile industry
- Discussion 1: How do global value chains relate to transnational actors and networks?
- Discussion 2: What role do value chains play in the VW scandal?
Required readings:


Presentation materials/sources of research:

Case study Al Qaeda:
- Own research: how did al Qaeda develop since 2009 and how can this be characterized in terms of the network-approach?

Global value chains and their governance and the structure of production of the textile industry:
- Other sources: Industry and association reports

Week 5 (16 November 2015) Limited statehood and shared sovereignty in a post-Westphalian world

1st part:
- Text discussion
Presentation 1: The Structure of Production of the Global Car Industry

2nd part:
Movie: The Coca Cola Case (1h30min)
Discussion of Movie

Required readings:

Presentation materials/sources of research:
- Industry and association reports, and PWC strategy analyses:
  http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/perspectives/2015-auto-trends

Week 6 (23 November 2015) Varieties of Capitalism

1st part
Text discussion;
Group work: Design an ideal-typical LME (CME) corporation. Who owns it, what is its incentive structure, what its relationships to stakeholders and shareholders, what is the structure of the board, what is the role of labor in the organization, how does it organize innovation, what is the role of skills and how does it retain them?

2nd part
Presentation of work of the groups
o Movie: American Dream

Required readings:

Part III: The (Multinational) Firm — Theories and Approaches

Week 7 (30 November 2015) Why Do Firms Exist? The Theory of the Firm

1st part
• Text discussion;
• Presentation: Illustrating example of VoC: Greening the Car Industry

2nd part: Movie: The Corporation (2h45min) — part 1

Required readings:

Presentation materials/sources of research:

Week 8 (07 December 2015) Theory of the Multinational Firm
1st part
- Text discussion;
- Presentation: Illustrating example of asset specificity

2nd part: Movie: The Corporation (2h45min) | part 2

Required readings:

Presentation materials/sources of research:

Part IV: How MNCs influence their political contexts, and how political contexts influence MNCs

Week 9 (14 December 2015) Going global: domestic and international factors

1st part
- Text discussion;
- Presentation: The Structure of Production of the Global Mining Industry

2nd part: Movie: The Corporation (2h45min) | part 2
Required readings:


Presentation materials/sources of research:
- Association and industry reports, such as: http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/energy-utilities-mining/mining/publications.html

Week 10 (21 December 2015) Corporate social responsibility

- 1st part
  - Text discussion;

- 2nd part: Presentation: David Vogel’s The Politics of Precaution

Required readings:


Presentation materials/sources of research:
Week 11 (28 December 2015) California Effects: Diffusion and the Spread of Global Standards

Required readings:


Movie: The Inside Job.

Required readings:

Week 13 (11 January 2016) Presentations and one of the following topics: Resource Curse, Lobbying, NGOs as businesses, organized crime and terrorism

Week 14 (18 January 2016) Presentations and final discussion

Required Reading:


University Press, ch. 1.

- Kahler: Collective Action and Clandestine Networks: The Case of Al Qaeda.

Additional Reading Material:


Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 35 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 65 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %
Additional information:
N/A