



## Global politics in the 21st century

Objective, critical, optimistic, and with a global focus, this textbook combines international relations theory, history, up-to-date research, and current affairs to give students a comprehensive, unbiased understanding of international politics. It integrates theory and traditional approaches with globalization and research on newer topics such as terrorism, the rise of new economic superpowers, and the impact of global communications and social networking to offer the ideal breadth and depth of coverage for a one-semester undergraduate course. Student learning is supported and enhanced by box features and “Close Up” sections with context and further information; “Critical Case Studies” that highlight controversial and complex current affairs topics and show how the world works in practice; and questions to stimulate discussion, review key concepts, and encourage further study. It brilliantly demonstrates the significance and interconnectedness of globalization and new security challenges in the 21st century and illuminates the role of leadership in transnational crises.

**Dr. Robert J. Jackson** is the Fletcher Jones Professor of Government at the University of Redlands in California. He is a Senior Associate at St. Antony's College and Visiting Fellow at the Changing Character of War Programme at the University of Oxford. He also holds the positions of Distinguished Research Professor of Political Science at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, and Life Member and Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall and the Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge, England. He is an Associate Fellow in International Security at Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs), London.

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**ROBERT J. JACKSON**

University of Redlands, California



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## Preface

With the advent of modern mass communications, readers are bombarded with colorful images of the world's political events. They can ascertain quickly from international news the changing realities around them. However, to make sense of these ad hoc, seemingly disparate events, students need conceptual clarifications, interpretative tools, and a basic understanding of the world and how their own country fits into it. They need to understand global politics as a whole.

Individuals today are no longer isolated but are active participants connected to the world through Internet and social networking technologies. The vocabulary has changed. Words such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Apps*, and *Cloud* have meanings today that differ entirely from those less than a decade ago. In other words, at a low level students are already engaged, and to some extent knowledgeable, when they begin to study global politics. They need, however, to be encouraged to understand that making good choices requires being informed and reflective. To do this, they need to read, inquire, debate, and consider; not push facts and ideas into convenient boxes if they do not belong there. As well, the study of global politics is not simply moralizing. Political affairs certainly have an ethical dimension, but they are not solely about morality. And keeping thoughts clear and straightforward and avoiding jargon is vital. As one wag put it, "What did you have for breakfast – the upper part of a hog's hind leg with two ovals encased in a shell laid by a female bird?" Or bacon and eggs?

With the new world situation in view, *Global Politics in the 21st Century* has two goals. The first is to introduce students in universities and colleges to the field of global politics. To do this, by stock taking and analysis, the book maps how the world works, making an effort to be objective and dispassionate about the systems of politics – inclusive not exclusive, critical not sensational, optimistic not pessimistic. The second goal is to introduce theories and methods. With the world as a laboratory, the challenge is to understand the basic concepts, themes, and ideas about global politics and apply them to the world's diverse problems.

This volume does not set out to teach readers *what* to think about the push and pull of conflicting ideas about global politics but *how* to think. As they encounter new ideas, individuals need to learn to be averse to absolutes and understand that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to questions of global politics. This approach was appreciated by the great French writer Voltaire, who said that he



honored the man who seeks truth but despised the many who claimed to have found it! It is in this vein that the book tries to avoid political correctness, to be fair in commenting on the reigning orthodoxies that compete for attention, and to look fairly at the assumptions and biases of both questions and answers. Students need to openly ponder questions even when they cannot resolve them. They may find that the disagreements are actually often over definitions and forms of framing questions.

If, as this author believes, the purpose of a liberal education is to unsettle assumptions and reveal what is going on behind appearances, students need to learn about key historical events and processes of global politics. They also need to learn alternative approaches and theories of the discipline and world issues, engaging facts and theories with critical and challenging thinking. Not all students will take up the “question-driven” life of academics, but an eclectic understanding of theory will enable them to examine the strengths and weaknesses of claims about the world in which they live. Perhaps, following Winston Churchill, they will at least appreciate that fanatics are those who cannot change their minds and will not change the topic.

Since the approach of this text is not dominated by any single paradigm that would force the analysis into a straitjacket, it does not attempt to fit each theory to every case and problem. Applying ideas from international relations theory into problems they cannot appropriately address is akin to using constitutional law principles to discuss parties and electoral behavior. Even in physics there is not an agreement on *one* fundamental theory of reality, so it is not surprising that political scientists have disagreements and jousting matches about interpretations, theories, and judgments. In this book, therefore, theories are employed when they are pertinent. As one French scholar mockingly questioned, “I know this works in practice, but does it work in theory?”

University students sometimes complain that professors too often shunt aside the “real world” in a quest for certainty about theory. Conceptual rigor is valuable, but academic authors often do talk to and about one another rather than engaging students’ concerns. Writers and political theorists, on the whole, tend to be contrarians, comfortable sorting out and balancing opposing principles and conflicting theories. Their debates sometimes leave students nonplussed because they do not pose concrete problems to solve. Have political scientists been relinquishing the role of intelligent commentator on global affairs too much to journalists and others? Have academics relegated themselves to scholarly infighting rather than competing in the public world of ideas and clashes of opinion over policy? These are fair questions and implied criticisms.

In this regard, throughout the book, up-to-date graphs, tables, photos, and contemporary “Close-Ups” and “Critical Case Studies” are used to illustrate concepts, theories, and events. Carefully chosen and stimulating examples are in every chapter; for example, the Iranian nuclear problem is used to illustrate the importance of applying various levels of analysis to study issues and the Afghanistan war is



analyzed from the point of view of different theories in international relations. A great number of timely and significant issues are examined, including the role of social networking; the nuclear crisis in Fukushima, Japan; the Arab Awakening in the Middle East and North Africa; the internal wars in Somalia, Sudan, and Congo; and the use of children in armed conflict. The section on war provides a deep analysis of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is only a small sample of the relevant and dramatic use of examples to illustrate general principles and significant arguments about global politics.

The book invites students to explore the exciting world of global politics, to pursue areas of interest, and to expand their knowledge while building their understanding of world events on a historical and theoretical foundation. Those who take up the challenge will be rewarded by a deep understanding of the complexity of global issues, driven as they are by the forces of globalization and the changing nature of security.

## Organization of the book

This book is organized into five parts and sixteen chapters. Part I covers the foundations of global politics. It comprises three chapters that outline important fundamentals. Chapter 1 provides an overview of three significant issues that interact to create a pattern of world politics: the perpetual quest for security, the march of globalization, and the ongoing role of states and identities on the world stage. To learn how we ended up with six major power centers today, Chapter 2 traces the rise and fall of the world's most important powers and extended empires from the earliest recorded history in Babylon until the end of the Cold War. Chapter 3 discusses levels of analysis and methods and outlines the best-known theories of international relations and their offshoots – realism, liberalism, political economy (Marxism and public choice), social constructivism, feminism, and critical approaches.

Part II on institutions and actors in global politics consists of five chapters. It outlines the role of states, their leaders, and their challengers in international affairs. The first two chapters in this part describe political authority, global power, and the importance of the six major powers, placing them in the context of contemporary international discussions. Chapter 4 outlines the role of states and their leaders, assessing them in terms of their power, capabilities, and decision making. Chapter 5 maps the distribution of power and influence in the modern world, paying particular attention to the United States, China, Russia, India, Japan, and the European Union. Chapter 6 focuses on important aspects of global governance in our interdependent but disordered world. Chapters 7 and 8 depart from discussing states, concentrating instead on the role of other actors, social movements, the media and social networking, and forces such as identity and religion in global politics.

Part III on global conflict and war examines violent conflict in global politics. The character of war has changed dramatically over the centuries not only in terms

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of technology and strategy but also in terms of the security dilemmas posed as states try to protect themselves and their citizens. Chapter 9 focuses on international war and its causes, conduct, and consequences. The advent of the nuclear era changed the basic concepts of national security and brought new issues of arms control to the fore and the establishment of new security organizations. With the end of the Cold War, the nature of war began to change again; civil war became more typical, and international terrorism erupted with a new intensity. The chapter examines issues such as weapons of mass destruction, alliance formation, and the ethics of war. Chapter 10 changes the focus to internal or civil wars and insurgencies, in particular the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. It deals with the failing states of Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan and the 2011–13 Arab uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. Private armies and new technologies such as robots and drones are also examined in the context of the changing nature of war, in particular targeted killing. Chapter 11 focuses on terrorism and counterterrorism, including nuclear terrorism and al-Qaeda.

Part IV on the politics of global economics introduces the reader to the international aspects of economics. Chapter 12 outlines and assesses the various concepts and theories essential to understanding this field. It considers the importance of liberal internationalism, economic nationalism, neo-Marxism, and state capitalism. Problems of global economic governance are discussed in terms of the benefits and criticisms of such organizations as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the recent global economic downturn, the European financial crisis, and current issues of government debt and economic reform. Chapter 13 deals with global inequalities. It assesses the winners and losers among states and peoples in the global economy and discusses the issues of poverty and how they are being addressed by the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Part V on global challenges and prospects examines how, as globalization continues, more and more issues have both domestic and international ramifications and implications. Many of the major issues of the 21st century are “intermestic” in nature and cannot be solved by single states, no matter how powerful. Chapter 14 addresses human rights concerns such as ethnic group persecution, genocide, and the abuses of women and children in war situations. It debates the role of international institutions in providing human security for all. Chapter 15 focuses on threats related to the global environment, population, and health. The degradation of the earth’s air, soil, and water, as well as the reliance on dirty, nonrenewable energy to power our economies, combined with demographic issues such as aging, massive international migration, and world health issues such as pandemics are pressing and critical issues that involve the entire globe. Chapter 16 draws our study of global politics together with a discussion of crises and ethics based on the issues that have been presented throughout the book and points us toward the future.



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While acknowledging my debt to all these individuals, I accept full responsibility for any errors, omissions, and interpretations in the book. If you have comments, suggestions, or questions about this book, or simply want to carry on a dialogue about global politics, contact the author at [Robert\\_Jackson@redlands.edu](mailto:Robert_Jackson@redlands.edu).