



Global politics

Global politics is an exciting new addition to the individuals and societies subject group of the Diploma Programme (DP). The course explores fundamental political concepts, such as power, equality, sustainability and peace, in a range of contexts and through a variety of approaches. It allows students to develop an understanding of the local, national, international and global dimensions of political activity, as well as allowing them the opportunity to explore political issues affecting their own lives. This course has been piloting since 2012 and will be made available as a mainstream subject to all DP schools in 2015.

Curriculum

Common core— people, power and politics

All standard level and higher level students complete a common core entitled “people, power and politics”. This consists of four core units

- Power, sovereignty and international relations
- Human rights
- Development
- Peace and conflict

“It’s hard to think of a subject more perfectly suited to an IB student: the combination of an introduction to challenging theoretical concepts and immersion in dynamic real-world political events is both fascinating and enjoyable”.

*—Jo Barnes, year two DP student,
The Abbey School, Reading, UK*

Key concepts and prescribed content are specified for each core unit. Suggestions of suitable theoretical foundations and possible examples are provided to support teachers' planning. However, the context in which global politics is studied determines which contemporary political issues are most relevant to explore and which examples and case studies best engage students.

HL extension – global political challenges

Higher level students also examine two contemporary global political challenges through self-selected case studies. Two challenges must be studied from the following six options:

- environment
- poverty
- health
- identity
- borders
- security.

Assessment

All standard level and higher level students complete a common internal assessment task, which gives them an opportunity to explore the central unifying theme of the course—"people, power and politics"—in practice. Students undertake an engagement activity, such as interviewing policymakers on a development theme, participating in a simulation game or organizing an awareness-raising campaign on human rights. In their assessed written report, they examine a political issue they learned about through the activity, their study of global politics and further reading.

The standard level course is assessed through a stimulus paper (paper one), an essay paper (paper two), and the internal assessment exercise. Higher level students also answer an additional essay question in paper two. They

also submit for external assessment a video-recorded oral presentation where they discuss a political issue embedded in each of their case studies.

Pilot experiences

A relevant and engaging course

Thirty DP schools have been selected to pilot global politics from 2012 to 2015. Their experiences with the pilot course have been very positive and have highlighted the following aspects of the course.

- Developing international mindedness and an awareness of multiple perspectives is at the heart of this course. It encourages critical thinking, listening, dialogue and debate, and it nurtures the capacity to interpret competing and contestable claims.
- Students get to learn about and understand issues they care about. The regular movement between big ideas of global politics embodied in the key concepts, on the one hand, and the real world examples and case studies that exemplify these concepts, on the other, makes the course relevant and engaging.
- Students experience the way political issues are connected across different levels of global politics. Global issues have local ramifications, and local issues are often a part of a wider societal phenomenon.
- The course gives teachers and students great freedom to focus on the contemporary political issues that are most relevant in their locale.
- The internal assessment engagement activity and the higher level oral presentation are new and exciting assessment tasks.

Further information

Please visit the online curriculum centre (OCC) or contact dpdevelopment@ibo.org.

