Mahidol University
International College

ICIR 321 Political Risk, Business & International Relations

Course Description & Aims:

This course equips students with the ability to understand and analyze the nature and varieties of political risk, how and why it arises, and how to engage and manage it effectively. How political power; interests; values; local culture; systems; technology create risks for international business. Political risk in developed countries; implications for non-western companies overseas. Students will analyze; assess; evaluate how to anticipate; manage; mitigate political risks. How political power; interests; values; local culture; systems; technology create risks for international business. Political risk in developed countries; implications for non-western companies overseas. Students will analyze; assess; evaluate how to anticipate; manage; mitigate political risks.

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Office Hours: TBA (see schedule SSD office)

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course the student will be able:

1. Understand the concept and dimensions of geopolitical risk
2. Understand the application of risk assessment to corporate/business decisions
3. Discuss and deliberate on issues relating to risk and business
4. Analyze case studies and compile risk assessments

Assessment	AI Assessment Level*	% Grade
Participation & Activities	AI-1	10%
Class Work	AI-2	20%
Risk Assessment (Pres & Report)	AI-2	30%
Final Exam	AI-1	40%

Topic No.	Topic
1	Introduction, Rationale & Orientation
2	Corporate Entities, Globalization & Geopolitics
3	Risk in Business; The Risk Society
4	Compiling a Risk Assessment (process & working cases)
5	Political Risk
6	Economic Risk
7	Socio-Cultural Risk
8	Technological Risk
9	Environmental Risk
10	Legal Risk
11	Presentations
12	Review of Course
13	**Final Exam**

Class will be supported through the use of Google Classroom, where announcements will be made and resources uploaded.

WEEK 1 Introduction: Definitions, Frameworks

Topic description: In Week 1 we get an introduction to the course, including an outline of the classes ahead throughout each week, an overview of classroom activities and clarification on assessment. We also get a general introduction to the theme of risk through an annotated video presentation on the Chernobyl accident of 1986.

Expected learning outcomes: This week we are primarily concerned with orientation and introductions.

Sources & Readings There are no readings for Week 1

Activities: There will be an interactive section on the second week of class organized around a short video on the question of risk and environment. This will be an open floor discussion on the relevance of the video to other contemporary risks.

WEEK 2 Corporate Entities and Globalization

Topic description: This week we explore the types of incorporated organizations, both non-governmental, intergovernmental and corporate, with an emphasis on the latter. In particular, we explore the phenomena of multinational enterprises (MNE's) and their impact on the global economy and national economies. In the second half of the week we explore the phenomena of 'globalization' and the possibility of 'de-globalization' along with its potential economic impact.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will gain an understanding of the corporate entities that risk assessments are often done on behalf of.

Sources & Readings:

McKellar 2010 A Short Guide to Political Risk Gower Publishing Limited

Rickli & Lukacs 2024 The Chief Geopolitical Officer: Guiding Business in a Polarized Global Era Geneva Centre for Security Policy [G drive]

Moran, West & Martin 2008 International Political Risk Management: Needs of the present, Challenges for the future, Washington DC The World Bank

Mshelia, James B & Anchor, John R (2019) Political Risk Assessment by multinational corporations in African Markets: A Nigerian Perspective, Thunderbirds International Business Review, 61, pp 133-142

Alon, Ilan et al (2020) The Institutionalization of Political Risk Assessment by Chinese Multinational firms, International Management, 24, pp49-63

Activities: Students are orientated with respect to the connected subject matter of types of businesses and the importance of Globalization.

WEEK 3 Risk in Business & The Risk Society

Topic description: This week students move into the theoretical and conceptual contribution to Ulrich Beck's scholarship on the risk society. We consider the contribution of Beck's thought on the issue of risk in modern societies, including the distinction between natural risk and manufactured risk.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will gain a critical insight into the Risk Society concept and learn about integrating these insights into the wider Risk Assessment exercises.

Sources & Readings:

Beck 1992 Risk Society: Towards a new modernity London Sage

Beck 2009 World at Risk Cambridge Polity Press

Mythen 2004 Ulrich Beck A critical introduction to the Risk Society, London Pluto Press

Murtaza, Sobia (2023) Sovereign Risk Assessment in Changing Political Landscapes: moderating role of financial vulnerability, City University Research Journal, 13 (2), pp257-273

Activities: This will be a theoretically based class, with an emphasis on student understanding of concepts and ideas. There will be lectures and Q&A for students.

WEEK 4 The Risk Assessment

Topic description: This week, students will be introduced to the practical dimension of compiling a risk assessment for industry. The classes will clarify the main elements of a risk assessment, approaches to finding information, adopting a matrix, and using templates. This will prove critical for the rest of the course.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will understand the process of compiling a risk assessment.

Sources & Readings: Examples and templates will be provided in the G Drive for the class on risk assessment, including industry standard (ISO 31000)

Alon, Ilan et al (2020) The Institutionalization of Political Risk Assessment by Chinese Multinational firms, International Management, 24, pp49-63

Sottilotta, Cecilia Emma (2015) Political Risk Assessment and the Arab Spring: What can we learn?, Thunderbird International Business Review 57 (5), pp 379-390

Al Khattab, Adel Abed Rabbo, et al (2011) The use of Political Risk Assessment Techniques in Jordanian Multinational Corporations, Journal of Risk Research, 14 (1), pp 97-109

Hashmi, M Anaam & Baker, James C (1988) Political Risk Assessment Models and Techniques: Analysis of the Experience of MNC's, International Trade Journal, 3 (2), pp187-202

Activities: Students will reflect on the elements of a risk assessment and prepare for practical exercises.

WEEK 5 Political Risk

Topic description: This week students begin engaging with the first of six key domains in risk analysis. First we look at Political Risk. This includes all of the political factors that need to be considered by businesses relative to a particular context. We examine political institutions, political parties, stability, accountability and political processes.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will acquire a critical perspective on elements of political risk relative to business decisions.

Sources & Readings

Stapenhurst 1992 Political Risk Analysis around the North Atlantic, Basingstoke St Martin's Press

Rice & Zegart 2018 Political Risk: How businesses and organizations can anticipate global insecurity, New York Twelve Publishing

Ramady 2014 Political, Economic and Financial Country Risk: Analysis of the Gulf Cooperation Council London Springer

Gould-Davies 2019 Tectonic Politics Global Political Risk in an Age of Transformation Washington DC Brookings Institute Press

Hashmi, M Anaam & Guvenli, Turgut (1992) Importance of Political Risk Assessment Function in US Multinational Corporations, Global Finance Journal 3 (2), pp137-144

De Mortanges, Charles, Pahud & Allers, Vivien (1996) Political Risk Assessment: Theory and the Experience of Dutch Firms, International Business Review, 5 (3), pp 303-318

Activities: In the second class of the week students will begin brainstorming any Political Risks evident in the class case study and their respective Group Case Study.

WEEK 6 Economic Risk

Topic description: This week we engage with the second major framework of risk analysis – Economic Risk. Here we consider the economic factors that may be risk factors relative to business decisions. We look at national policies around tax, fiscal policy and patterns of public consumption and demand.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will gain exposure and knowledge on the economic factors that contribute to risk in business operations and decisions.

Sources & Readings

Moschella 2010 Governing Risk: The IMF and global financial crises, Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan

Moran, West & Martin 2008 International Political Risk Management: Needs of the present, Challenges for the future, Washington DC The World Bank

Erol, Cengiz (1985) An exploratory model of political risk assessment and the decision process of Foreign Direct Investment, International Studies of Management and Organization 15 (2) pp 75-90

Nguyen, Tran Binh (2024) Political Risk Impacts on Foreign Direct Investment in Vietnam, Economic and Business Quarterly Review 7 (1), pp14-26

Casson, Mark & da Silva Lopes Teresa (2015) Foreign Direct Investment in High Risk Environments: an historical perspective, Business History 55 (3) pp 375-404

Activities: In the second class of the week students will begin brainstorming any Economic Risks evident in the class case study and their respective Group Case Study.

WEEK 7 Socio-Cultural Risk

Topic description: Socio-Cultural Risk examines aspects of a context that affect a greater number of actors with potential impacts on business operations. Under this rubric, we examine a comprehensive list of elements that affect corporate interests. Everything from demography, education levels, cultural diversity, attitudes, etc are risk factors for businesses operating in any context.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will acquire a firm grasp of the Socio-Cultural factors that have the potential to impact business operations in any context.

Sources & Readings:

Gould-Davies 2019 Tectonic Politics Global Political Risk in an Age of Transformation Washington DC Brookings Institute Press

Mshelia, James B & Anchor, John R (2019) Political Risk Assessment by multinational corporations in African Markets: A Nigerian Perspective, Thunderbirds International Business Review, 61, pp 133-142

Sottilotta, Cecilia Emma (2015) Political Risk Assessment and the Arab Spring: What can we learn?, Thunderbird International Business Review 57 (5), pp 379-390

Activities: In the second class of the week students will begin brainstorming any Socio-Cultural Risks evident in the class case study and their respective Group Case Study.

WEEK 8 Technological Risk

Topic description: This week students are introduced to the element of risk that involves technology. This is closely related to Beck's 'Risk Society' concept as it is technology that has simultaneously transformed our lives in many ways but that also carries with it the risk of over-reliance and technological failure, as well as unintended consequences of technology use.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will grasp and understand the impact of technology in terms of risk for corporate operations.

Sources & Readings

Yudkowskey, E 2008 'Artificial Intelligence as a Positive and Negative Factor in Global Risk', *Global Catastrophic Risks* in ed Nick Bostrom & Milan M Cikovic, New York: Oxford University Press [in G drive]

Bostrom & Cirkovic 2008 Global Catastrophic Risks, New York Oxford University Press

Mastroeni, Michele, et al (2021) Political Influences on biotechnology-based innovation for European agriculture: risk assessment and risk management, Technology Analysis & Strategic Management, 33 (3), pp271-282

Rausch, Christian et al (2021) Vaccine Hesitancy: when political miscommunication replaces scientific benefit/risk assessment, Journal of Commercial Biotechnology, 26 (3), pp3-4

Yudkowskey, E 2008 'Artificial Intelligence as a Positive and Negative Factor in Global Risk', *Global Catastrophic Risks* in ed Nick Bostrom & Milan M Cikovic, New York: Oxford University Press [in G drive]

Rausch, Christian et al (2021) Vaccine Hesitancy: when political miscommunication replaces scientific benefit/risk assessment, Journal of Commercial Biotechnology, 26 (3), pp3-4

Activities: In the second class of the week students will begin brainstorming any Technological Risks evident in the class case study and their respective Group Case Study.

WEEK 9 Environmental Risks

Topic description: Students will gain insight into the impact of the environment in terms of business operations. As environmental degradation continues to gather pace, the impact on normal business operations will become more pronounced. This class explores the various possible problems business decision-makers might encounter as a result.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will be exposed to the major risks associated with the environmental element of risk analysis

Sources & Readings

Revet & Langumer 2015 Governing Disasters: Beyond risk culture, Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan

Activities: In the second class of the week students will begin brainstorming any Environmental Risks evident in the class case study and their respective Group Case Study.

WEEK 10 Legal Risks

Topic description: Students consider and reflect on the question of legal constraints and risks with regard to corporate operations in a given context. Knowledge and understanding of the legal landscape in terms of incorporation of a business venture as well as regulations on production or service provision, along with labour practices and commercial relations, are critical elements of legal risk.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will have a clear grasp of the constraints and associated risks with respect to the legal landscape of a given context.

Sources & Readings

McKellar 2010 A Short Guide to Political Risk Gower Publishing Limited
Moschella 2010 Governing Risk: The IMF and global financial crises, Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan
Rice & Zegart 2018 Political Risk: How businesses and organizations can anticipate global insecurity, New York Twelve Publishing
Beck 2009 World at Risk Cambridge Polity Press

Activities: In the second class of the week students will begin brainstorming any Legal Risks evident in the class case study and their respective Group Case Study.

WEEK 11 Group Presentations

Topic description: In this week, students will be tasked with presenting their preliminary findings for their respective group case study. This involves identifying risks within the parameters of the main headings encountered on the course and providing an overall risk assessment through oral presentation by groups. This will give the groups an opportunity to benefit from tutor and peer feedback as the prepare their final risk assessment for grading at the end of Week 11.

Expected learning outcomes: Students will practice presentation skills as well as apply their acquired understanding of conducting risk analysis.

Sources & Readings N/A

Activities: Students will present the aggregate of their findings on their group cases to the class.

WEEK 12 Review of the Course

This final week will see the result of the advocacy strategies of each group. The designated groups will present **deliverables** for assessment.

Appendices

***MUIC Policy for AI Use in Assessments**

To align with MUIC's AI Policy on Teaching and Learning, this course follows a structured approach to AI usage in assessments to promote responsible engagement with technology while maintaining academic integrity. The permitted level of AI use is specified for each assessment activity:

AI Assessment Level		**Description**
1	*No AI*	The assessment is completed entirely without AI assistance in a controlled environment. Students rely solely on their existing knowledge, understanding, and skills.
2	*AI Planning*	AI is used for pre-task activities like brainstorming, outlining, and initial research. The focus is on using AI effectively for planning, synthesis, and ideation, while students independently refine and develop ideas.
3	*AI Collaboration*	AI is used to assist in completing tasks, including idea generation, drafting, feedback, and refinement. Students critically evaluate and modify AI outputs to demonstrate understanding.
4	*Full AI*	AI can be extensively used to complete tasks, with students directing AI to achieve assessment goals. Critical thinking and engagement with AI for problem-solving are essential.
5	*AI Exploration*	AI is employed creatively to solve tasks, generate novel insights, or explore innovative solutions. This level encourages students and educators to co-design unique AI-driven assessment approaches.

Lecturer's responsibility for course work grading

The responsibility for grading coursework lies solely with the course lecturer. All grades awarded reflect the professional judgment, academic expertise, and independent evaluation of the lecturer to ensure fairness, accuracy, and integrity in the assessment process.

Student's Acknowledgment of AI Use

For any assessment permitting AI (Levels 2-5), students must include an AI Acknowledgment Statement when submitting their work. Failure to disclose AI use where applicable may result in penalties or an F grade:

I acknowledge the use of ……. [provide AI tool used here] to

- *Generate ideas, outline, and for initial research*
- *Data analysis and visualization*
- *Language and grammar assistance*
- *Programming and coding*
- *Design graphics, layouts, or presentations with AI design tools*
- *Generate visual or multimedia elements*
- *Customize content formatting*
- *Create music, sound effects, or other audio elements*
- *Generate citations or bibliographies*
- *Others (please specify) …………………………………………*

……………………… [Student's Signature]
……………………… [Student's Full Name]

Assessment Criteria:

1. Classroom Participation 10%

Classroom participation is based on attendance, preparation for class and the quality of students' participation in class discussions.

The student regularly attends class and can provide relevant documentation for any absences. The student is always prepared for class with assignments and required readings. The student proactively contributes to class on a regular basis by offering ideas and/or asking relevant questions, demonstrating an exceptional understanding of the assigned readings.	9-10 points **Excellent** **(A)**
The student regularly attends class and can provide relevant documentation for most absences. The student is often prepared for class with assignments and required readings. The student actively contributes to class frequently by offering ideas and/or asking relevant questions, demonstrating a good understanding of the assigned readings.	8 points **Good** **(B)**
The student usually attends class and can provide relevant documentation for some absences. The student is sometimes prepared for class with assignments and required readings. The student occasionally contributes to class by offering ideas and/or asking relevant questions, demonstrating a fair understanding of the assigned readings.	7 points **Fair** **(C)**
The student usually attends class and can provide relevant documentation for some absences. The student is only rarely prepared for class with assignments and required readings and does very rarely contribute to class by offering ideas and/or asking relevant questions.	6 points **Poor** **(D)**
The student misses class frequently and cannot provide relevant documentation for absences. The student is never prepared for class with assignments and required readings. The student does very rarely contribute to class by offering ideas and/or asking relevant questions.	4-5 points **Fail** **(F)**
The student misses most classes and cannot provide relevant documentation for absences. The student is never prepared for class with assignments and required readings. The student does not contribute to class by offering ideas and/or asking relevant questions.	1-3 points **Fail** **(F)**
The student is absent from all classes.	0 points

2. **Class Work (Group) 20%**

Students will undertake group work on the basis of a weekly category in Risk Analysis (PESTEL) with respect to a chosen case study. These will be brainstorming sessions with respect to how a specific element of risk is relevant to a pertinent example of corporate decision making, which they should then use to reflect on their chosen case study for the Risk Assessment Submission (see below). This will also include group case study presentations scheduled for Week 11.

Student has demonstrated excellent group participation and collaboration efforts during class work.	18-20 points **Excellent (A)**
Student has demonstrated very good group participation and collaboration efforts during class work.	16-17.8 points **Good (B/B+)**
Student has demonstrated fair to adequate group participation and collaboration efforts during class work.	14-15.8 points **Fair (C)**
Student has demonstrated poor group participation and collaboration efforts during class work.	12-13.8 points **Poor (D)**
The student has demonstrated inadequate group participation and collaboration efforts during class work.	<12 points **Fail (F)**
The student is absent from all classes.	0 points

3. **Group Risk Analysis (30%)**

   Students are required, using the general framework of the course, to compile a risk assessment of their chosen case study. This should include all the elements of a Risk Assessment as outlined on Week 3. The presentation will allow groups to revise their final written assessment report before submission.

Assessment Criteria – Group Presentations

The risk report clearly and convincingly summarizes the main issues of the assigned case study. The presentation is based on an excellent understanding of the theoretical framework assigned. The presentation is clearly structured and freely delivered in a convincing and confident manner. The handout and the use of visual aids (if any) support the purpose of the presentation and are not distracting. No AI use has been detected.	27-30 points **Excellent** **(A)**
The risk report clearly summarizes the main issues of the assigned case study. The presentation is based on a very good understanding of the theoretical framework assigned. The presentation is structured and freely delivered in a convincing manner. The handout and the use of visual aids	24-26.7 points **Good**

(if any) support the purpose of the presentation and are not distracting. No AI use has been detected.	**(B/B+)**
The risk report summarizes the main issues of the assigned case study. The presentation attempts to base the analysis on decent understanding of the theoretical framework assigned. The presentation is mostly well-structured and freely delivered. The handout and the use of visual aids (if any) support the purpose of the presentation and are usually not distracting. No AI use has been detected.	21-23.7 points **Fair** **(C/C+)**
The risk report summarizes some of the main issues of the assigned case study. However, the presentation does not base the analysis on a competent understanding of the theoretical framework assigned. The presentation is mostly well-structured and freely delivered. The handout and the use of visual aids (if any) generally support the purpose of the presentation. Occasional AI use has been detected.	18-20.7 points **Poor** **(D/D+)**
The risk report fails in its attempt to summarize key issues from the assigned case study. The material presented is off-topic and does not contain relevant factual information. The presentation lacks structure and is fully read-out from a prepared script and delivered in an unsatisfactory manner. No handout has been prepared. Extensive AI use has been detected.	<18 points **Fail** **(F)**
	0 points

4. **Final Exam 40%**

The final exam is a timed examination one Week 13. This will be a written examination without the use of computer. The exam will follow an essay answer format on subject matter encountered throughout the course. This is an individual exercise.

The written answer demonstrates an exceptional level of awareness of the issues studied in class. It is well structured and written in a clear and unambiguous style of English. Argumentative claims are convincingly substantiated with examples and references to relevant concepts and theories from class and associated readings.	36-40 points **Excellent** **(A)**
The written answer demonstrates a reasonably good level of awareness of the issues studied in class. It is well structured and mostly written in a clear and unambiguous style of English. Argumentative claims are often substantiated with examples and references to relevant concepts and theories from class and associated readings.	32-35.6points **Good** **(B/B+)**
The written answer demonstrates a satisfactory level of awareness of the issues studied in class. It is reasonably structured and mostly written in a clear and unambiguous style of English. Argumentative claims are	28-31.6 points **Fair** **(C/C+)**

sometimes substantiated with examples and references to relevant concepts and/or theories from class and associated readings.	
The essay demonstrates only a basic level of awareness of the issues studied in class. However, some attempts have been made to structure the essay and it is mostly written in comprehensible English. There are occasional attempts to substantiate argumentative claims with examples or references to concepts and/or theories from class and associated readings.	24-27.6 points **Poor** **(D/D+)**
The essay demonstrates only a vague level of awareness of the issues studied in class and it lacks structure. However, the essay is written in a more or less comprehensible style of English. The essay is mostly descriptive and lacks argumentative qualities.	<24 points **Fail** **(F)**
No essay has been submitted.	0 points