
Advanced seminar BA Major
The Complexity of Global Governance
Winter semester 2024/25

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Office C4.004
Office hours Tuesdays, 14.30 am – 16.00 pm, registration via *MyStudy*. In-person or via Zoom.

Time and place

Mondays, starting 14 October	14:15 – 15:45	Weekly seminar	C 14.203
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Course description

This course provides an in-depth examination of the complexity of global governance and the challenges that this complexity poses. Complexity refers to the empirical observation that the density of global governance arrangements – international organizations as well as international agreements and treaties – is increasing, leading to interactions, overlaps and duplication of functions. After introducing basic concepts, we map the field of global governance complexity across different issue areas of world politics and examine its sources, dynamics and consequences. While the course primarily focuses on analytical questions, we will also touch upon normative issues related to the desirability of increasing global governance complexity.

Course objectives

By the end of the semester, students

- understand the concept of global governance complexity and can assess to what extent such complexity exists in a given policy area of world politics;
- can discuss the reasons for the emergence of global governance complexity;
- are able to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of global governance complexity with reference to specific examples.

Course assessment

This advanced course is intended for students who study Political Science as a Major and seek to deepen their knowledge in the field of International Relations in general and global governance in particular. Successful completion of the course Introduction to International Relations is a prerequisite. Assessment is via a combined scientific work (“kombinierte wissenschaftliche Arbeit”) consisting of an oral presentation (33% of the final grade) and an essay (67% of the final grade).

1. Oral presentation (33 percent of the final grade)

Students give an oral presentation on a topic of their choice. Presentation topics are specified in the session outline for each session and will be distributed online through MyStudy (“Gruppen”). Each presentation topic can only be allocated once. There are two types of oral presentations, and you must choose one:

- *Individual presentations:* Presentations are held individually on a given question and based on given literature as outlined in the syllabus (the exception are presentations in sessions 5 & 6, see below!). The goal is to provide a concrete, well-structured and well-reasoned answer to the question. An individual presentation lasts no more than 12 minutes and is accompanied by a handout of ca. 1,5 pages. Handouts are uploaded to the MyStudy page (“Material” > folder for respective session) the day before the session.
- *Group presentations:* presentations on governance complexity in individual issue areas are given in sessions 5 & 6. They are held in groups of two students and last a maximum of 14 minutes. You must research your own literature and provide a handout of 2-3 pages summarizing the main results. You can find more specific instructions in the description of the respective sessions.

2. Essay (67 percent of the final grade)

The essay answers one of the starred (*) questions in the session outline based on the given literature plus four additional pieces of research (journal articles, book chapters, etc.). It uses specific examples of global governance complexity to illustrate its arguments, even if this is not explicitly mentioned in the respective question. Presentation topics and the essay question must differ. Very good essays develop an independent argument based on relevant literature, which is clearly and logically structured; substantiate central steps in the argument with empirical examples and conclude by giving a clear answer to the question raised. In the last seminar session, I give further tips on writing the essay.

Essays are 3000 words long (excluding the cover sheet and bibliography) and are written individually. Submit your essay by **15 March 2025, 11:59 pm** in **Word format** to the respective folder under “Material” in MyStudy. Essays that are submitted late will receive a “fail” (5,0).

Teaching arrangements

This course consists primarily of reading and discussing selected academic literature on the basis of given questions. It is therefore important that you prepare the required reading thoroughly and then actively participate in the seminar discussion. Thorough preparation means that you read the texts carefully, highlight important arguments and ideas, note down your own comments as well as ambiguities and questions of understanding and jot down key points on the respective question(s) in the syllabus. Such preparation is time-consuming, but you will find that it is worth it: the better prepared you are, the more you will take away from the seminar.

The texts to be read (the required reading as well as the texts for the presentations) can either be obtained in electronic form from the Leuphana library (marked “[e-resource]”) or will be provided by me directly in the “Material” folder. To download electronic texts from outside the university network via the library, you will need a VPN client.

The individual seminar sessions consist of a mixture of group discussions in the entire seminar group, short interventions on my part, oral presentations and discussion in small groups.

Course overview

Session	Date	Topic
1	14 October	Introduction and overview
Part 1: Basic concepts		
2	21 October	Global governance
3	28 October	Complexity
Part 2: Structures		
4	4 November	Dimensions of global governance complexity
5	11 November	Global governance complexity across issue areas I (presentations)
6	18 November	Global governance complexity across issue areas II (presentations)
7	25 November	Comparison of global governance complexity across issue areas
Part 3: Sources and dynamics		
8	2 December	State preferences and power politics
9	9 December	Institutional dynamics
10	16 December	Division of labour
Part 4: Consequences		
11	6 January	Effectiveness of international cooperation (pessimistic view)
12	13 January	Effectiveness of international cooperation (optimistic view) <i>Course evaluation</i>
13	20 January	Change of international organizations
14	27 January	Concluding discussion and assessment of course evaluation

General readings

Since this is a vibrant field of ongoing academic research, much of the discussion takes place in academic journals rather than books. Here are the most important ones:

- Special issue in *Perspectives on Politics* on “The Politics of International regime complexity”, 7(1), 2009. Editors: Karen Alter and Sophie Meunier.
- Special focus in *Global Governance* on “Regime complexity”, 9(1), 2013. Editors: Armandine Orsini, Jean-Frederic Morin and Oran Young.
- Special issue in the *Review of International Organizations* on “Institutional complexity in global governance”, 17(2), 2022. Editors: Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Oliver Westerwinter.
- Special issue in the *Review of International Political Economy* on “International regime complexity”, 30(6), 2023. Editors: Randall Henning and Tyler Pratt.

Session outline

14 October: Introduction and overview

Part 1: Basic concepts

21 October: Global governance

Questions

- ❖ What does the concept of global governance refer to? Is it a useful concept?
- ❖ To what extent does it capture complexity in global governance arrangements, understood as “clusters of overlapping institutions and actors that govern specific policy issues” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Westerwinter 2022, p. 233)?

Required readings

- Bukve, Oddbjørn. 2019. *Designing Social Science Research*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, chapter 3 (esp. pp. 39-42 on “Concepts”). [e-resource]
- Dingwerth, Klaus and Philipp Pattberg. 2006. Global Governance as a Perspective on World Politics. *Global Governance* 12(2): 185-203. [e-resource]

Presentation topic

What real-world developments does the global governance paradigm respond to? To what extent does it take into consideration the complexity of global governance, understood as “clusters of overlapping institutions and actors that govern specific policy issues” (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Westerwinter 2022, p. 233)? (*)

- Rosenau, James and Ernst-Otto Czempiel. 1992. *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 1.

28 October: Complexity

Questions

- ❖ What does the concept of complexity capture?
- ❖ How do complex systems differ from non-complex ones?

Required reading

- Harrison, Neil. 2006. “Thinking About the World We Make.” In Neil Harrison (Ed.) *Complexity in World Politics: Concepts and Methods of a New Paradigm*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 1-23.

Presentation topic

What are the core characteristics of systemic thinking? How does the presence of complexity complicate social scientific analysis?

- Jervis, Robert. 1997. *Systems Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 2 (also skim ch. 1). [e-resource]

Part 2: Structures

4 November: Dimensions of global governance complexity

Questions

- ❖ What does complexity mean as it relates to global governance? What real-world phenomenon does it capture?
- ❖ What are core analytical dimensions of global governance complexity? How can they be measured? How interesting/relevant do you find them?

Required reading

- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette and Oliver Westerwinter. 2022. The Global Governance Complexity Cube: Varieties of Institutional Complexity in Global Governance. *Review of International Organizations* 17(2): 233-262. [e-resource]

Presentation topics

Topic 1: What is the core *theoretical* puzzle associated with the increasing complexity of global governance? From which theoretical perspective in International Relations is global governance complexity most puzzling? Give real-world examples to illustrate your argument. (*)

- Alter, Karen and Kal Raustiala. 2018. The Rise of International Regime Complexity. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 14: 329-349. [e-resource]

Topic 2: What are the benefits and drawbacks of different analytical dimensions? Think of descriptive, conceptual and theoretical issues, and give specific examples to illustrate your arguments.

- Henning, Randall and Tyler Pratt. 2023. Hierarchy and Differentiation in International Regime Complexes: A Theoretical Framework for Comparative Research. *Review of International Political Economy* 30(6): 2178-2205. [e-resource]
- Abbott, Kenneth and Benjamin Faude. 2022. Hybrid Institutional Complexes in Global Governance. *Review of International Organizations* 17(2): 263-291. [e-resource]

11 November: Global governance complexity across issue areas I

Question

- ❖ What does the regime complex for climate change look like? How has it evolved over time?

Required reading

- Robert Keohane and David Victor. 2011. The Regime Complex for Climate Change. *Perspectives on Politics* 9(1): 7-23.

Presentation topics (up to 5)

In **14 minutes**, describe the contemporary complexity of an issue area of your choice in global governance along **three dimensions: scale, diversity, density** (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Westerwinter 2022, pp. 238-43). Try to visualize the complexity of your chosen issue area as a network along the lines of Keohane and Victor (2011). Your presentation will be accompanied by a **handout of 2-3 pages** containing the most important results. Upload these handouts to MyStudy in the session folder under “Material” the day before the presentation (Sunday, 10 November). Note your sources in the handout; this includes at least three peer-reviewed articles or book chapters.

These presentations are held in groups of **two students**.

Potential issue areas include: trade, security, humanitarian intervention, the environment (and its various sub-fields), food security, migration and refugees, energy, taxation, maritime piracy, human rights, development assistance, intellectual property rights, etc.

18 November: Global governance complexity across issue areas II

Presentation topics (up to 6)

In **12 minutes**, describe the complexity of an issue area of your choice in global governance along **three dimensions: scale, diversity, density** (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Westerwinter 2022, pp. 238-43). Try to visualize the complexity of your chosen issue area as a network along the lines of Keohane and Victor (2011). Your presentation will be accompanied by a **handout of 2-3 pages** containing the most important results. Upload these handouts to MyStudy in the session folder under “Material” the day before the presentation (Sunday, 17 November). Note your sources in the handout; this includes at least three peer-reviewed articles or book chapters.

These presentations are held in groups of **two students**.

Potential issue areas include: trade, security, humanitarian intervention, the environment (and its various sub-fields), food security, migration and refugees, energy, taxation, maritime piracy, human rights, development assistance, intellectual property rights, etc.

25 November: Comparison of global governance complexity across issue areas

Question

- ❖ How does global governance complexity vary across different issue areas of world politics?

Required readings (read or re-read)

- Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette and Oliver Westerwinter. 2022. The Global Governance Complexity Cube: Varieties of Institutional Complexity in Global Governance. *Review of International Organizations* 17(2): 233-262. [e-resource]
- Hand-outs to the various oral presentations in the previous two sessions (sessions 5 & 6).

Part 3: Sources and dynamics

2 December: State preferences and power politics

Questions

- ❖ Why do states create overlapping and partly competitive international institutions? (*)
- ❖ What theory of International Relations best captures these dynamics?

Required reading

- Keohane, Robert and Julia Morse. 2014. Contested Multilateralism. *Review of International Organizations* 9(4): 385-412. [e-resource]

Presentation topics

Topic 1: How do different conceptions of regime shifting vary? To what extent does this influence the conclusion of scholars regarding the sources of global governance complexity?

- Helfer, Laurence. 2009. Regime Shifting in the International Intellectual Property System. *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 39-44 [e-resource]
- Kreuder-Sonnen, Christian and Bernhard Zangl. 2016. Varieties of Contested Multilateralism: Positive and Negative Consequences for the Constitutionalization of Multilateral Institutions. *Global Constitutionalism* 5(3): 327-343. [e-resource]

Topic 2: Are there distinct regional brands of Keohane and Morse's (2014) 'contested multilateralism'? If so, how would you characterize them?

- Rüländ, Jürgen und Michael Arndt. 2019. Overlapping Regionalism and Cooperative Hegemony: How China and India Compete in South and Southeast Asia. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32(2): 178-200. [e-resource]
- Panke, Diana and Söre Stapel. 2022. Architects of Regional Regime Complexity: States and Regional Organizations in Europe. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 30(2): 387-404. [e-resource]

9 December: Institutional dynamics

Question

- ❖ How do institutional dynamics shape the ways in which state preferences and power politics shape global governance complexity? When are they particularly likely to arise? (*)

Required reading

- Hofmann, Stephanie and Andrew Yeo. 2024. Historical Institutionalism and Institutional Design: Divergent Pathways to Regime Complexes in Asia and Europe. *European Journal of International Relations* 30(2): 306-332. [e-resource]

Presentation topic

How useful is a macro perspective that centres broad tendencies in modernity to account for the rise of global governance complexity? (*)

- Zürn, Michael and Benjamin Faude. 2013. Commentary: On Fragmentation, Differentiation and Coordination. *Global Environmental Politics* 13(3): 119-130. [e-resource]
- Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez. 1997. World Society and the Nation-State. *American Journal of Sociology* 103(1): 144-181. [e-resource]

16 December: Division of labour

Questions

- ❖ Under what conditions do overlapping international institutions create a division of labour between them?
- ❖ What drives such a division of labour? Do international organizations' autonomy, member state preferences or something else best account for this outcome? (*)

Required reading

- Gehring, Thomas and Benjamin Faude. 2014. A Theory of Emerging Order within Institutional Complexes: How Competition Among Regulatory Agencies Leads to Institutional Adaptation and Division of Labour. *Review of International Organizations* 9(4): 471-498. [e-resource]

Presentation topics

Topic 1: How contextual are the dynamics described by Gehring and Faude (2014)? How do they compare between the policy fields of economics and security?

- Hofmann, Stephanie. 2009. Overlapping Institutions in the Realm of Security: The Case of NATO and ESDP. *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 45-52. [e-resource]
- Dersso, Solomon. 2012. The Quest for Pax Africana: The Case of the African Union's Peace and Security Regime. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 12(2): 11-47. [e-resource]

Topic 2: What are strategies other than division of labour by which international organizations seek to cope with the competition between overlapping institutions? When are they likely to emerge?

- Pratt, Tyler. 2018. Deference and Hierarchy in International Regime Complexes. *International Organization* 72(3): 561-590. [e-resource]

Part 4: Consequences

6 January: Effectiveness of international cooperation (pessimistic view)

Questions

- ❖ Why does regime complexity undermine the effectiveness of international cooperation?
- ❖ Can you think of scope conditions for these negative consequences?

Required reading

- Raustiala, Kal and David Victor. 2004. The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources. *International Organization* 58(2): 277-309. [e-resource]

Presentation topics

Topic 1: How does international cooperation under complexity differ from 'traditional' international cooperation from a functionalist perspective? Under which scenario is successful international cooperation more likely to be achieved? (*)

- Abbott, Kenneth and Duncan Snidal. 1998. Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42(1): 3-32. [e-resource]

Topic 2: What are the commonalities and differences in the consequences of regime complexity for cooperation at the global and regional levels? Are the negative effects more severe regionally than globally? If so, why?

- Gómez-Mera, Laura. 2015. International Regime Complexity and Regional Governance: Evidence from the Americas. *Global Governance* 21(): 19-42. [e-resource]

- Yeo, Andrew. 2018. Overlapping Regionalism in East Asia: Determinants and Potential Effects. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 18(2): 161-91.

13 January: Effectiveness of international cooperation (optimistic view)

Questions

- ❖ Why may the consequences of global governance complexity for the effectiveness of international cooperation not be as negative as previously thought? (*)
- ❖ How can it be that scholars come to fundamentally divergent assessments regarding the consequences of regime complexity for the effectiveness of international cooperation? (*)

Required reading

- Kelley, Judith. 2009. The More the Merrier? The Effects of Having Multiple International Election Monitoring Organizations. *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 59-64. [e-resource]

Presentation topics

Topic 1: Summarize the arguments made in the articles by Faude and Große-Kreul (2020) and Faude (2020) and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Does Faude overestimate the positive consequences of regime complexity for the effectiveness and legitimacy of international cooperation?

- Faude, Benjamin and Felix Große-Kreul. 2020. Let's Justify: How Regime Complexes Enhance the Normative Legitimacy of Global Governance. *International Studies Quarterly* 64(2): 431-439.
- Faude, Benjamin. 2020. International Institutions in Hard Times: How Institutional Complexity Increases Resilience. *Complexity, Governance & Networks* 6(1): 46-54.

Topic 2: To what extent are the consequences of regime complexity for the effectiveness of international cooperation dependent on the policy field under study? Does the policy field determine whether consequences are positive or negative?

- Davis, Christina. 2009. Overlapping Institutions in Trade Policy. *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 25-31. [e-resource]
- Hafner-Burton, Emilie. 2009. The Power Politics of Regime Complexity: Trade Conditionality in Europe. *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 33-37. [e-resource]

20 January: Change of international organizations

Questions

- ❖ How does global governance complexity shape individual international organizations? And how do individual international organizations adapt to increasing competition with other international organizations?

Required reading

- Lenz, Tobias, Dan Eran, Mona Saleh, Yoram Haftel. 2023. How Overlap Shapes Delegation: The African Complex of Economic Organizations. Unpublished manuscript.

Presentation topic

How do international organizations react to the increasing complexity of global governance? Discuss with reference to the global refugee regime.

- Betts, Alexander. 2009. Institutional Proliferation and the Global Refugee Regime. *Perspectives on Politics* 7(1): 53-58. [e-resource]

27 January: Concluding discussion and assessment of course evaluation