



## World Order under Stress

**Start date** 20 January 2023

**End date**

22 January 2023

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ

**Tutor** Sir Tony Brenton

**Course code**

2223NRX017

**Director of ISP and LL**

Sarah Ormrod

**For further information contact**

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### Tutor biography

Tony Brenton is a distinguished British diplomat, writer on international issues, and Fellow of Cambridge University. He joined the British Diplomatic Service in 1975 and, in the course of a 33-year career, served in the Arab world, the European Union, Russia and the USA. He has dealt with such issues as the Arab/Israel dispute, global climate change, international human rights policy, and the Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq wars. He was a senior official at the British Embassy in Washington DC following 9/11 and at the time of the Iraq war. He served as British Ambassador in Moscow 2004-2008 during as UK/Russian relations became increasingly difficult. He has written a well received book on international environmental diplomacy "The Greening of Machiavelli" and edited a book ("Historically Inevitable") on the Russian Revolution. He is a regular commentator in the "Times" and other British publications and a Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
<b>20:30 – 22:00</b>	<b>The evolution of the current world order</b>
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>The better angels of our nature; democracy and human rights</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Sharing the cage with an angry Bear; Russia</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
<b>16:30 – 18:00</b>	<b>The Eastern Dragon revived; China</b>
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
<b>20:00 – 21:30</b>	<b>Catastrophe (so far) avoided; the Bomb</b>
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
<b>09:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>Climate change; the Planet united?</b>
10:30	Coffee
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>The end of the American Empire?</b>
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### **Aims:**

The course will introduce you to the big geopolitical challenges facing the world today, the shape and working of the international system, the rise of challengers to the US dominance on which it has depended, the big global problems with which it is struggling, and how it is likely to evolve in response to these pressures.

### **Content:**

The world has long been an arena where strong states preyed upon weak ones and war was the habitual way of settling disputes. But, as economic interdependence has grown and war has become more destructive, there have been intensifying efforts to find a less Darwinian, more rules based, way of managing world affairs. These efforts culminated after the end of the Cold War with a global system dominated by the United States and, at least notionally, acting on the basis of multinational agreements, international law and the hope that universal democracy would bring universal peace. That system is now breaking down. Democracy and human rights are on the defensive. Rival powers - notably Russia and China - have begun to challenge US hegemony. Great Power war may be coming back eg in Ukraine or Taiwan. And cooperation to tackle overarching global threats such as nuclear proliferation and climate change is visibly under stress. This course looks at these developments and asks where we may be going.

### **Presentation of the course:**

The course will involve illustrated lectures and group discussion.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. Understand the big forces driving the evolution of world politics over the next few years'
2. Place international political developments in context and judge the likely implications for students' own nations and communities.
3. Bring an informed understanding of the state of the world to their own public and private involvements.

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## Reading and resources list

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The main way to derive the most benefit from this course is to be as up to date as possible with international events and intelligent commentary on them. The sources on which I most rely are the *Financial Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Economist*, the *Carnegie* and *Project Syndicate* websites and (first class if you can lay your hands on it) *Foreign Affairs* magazine. Students will of course have their own preferences.

In addition, a fairly formidable list of books follows. Don't be intimidated! Dip into what is of particular interest to you (Rudd for China, Stent for Russia for example) Kissinger provides his normal magisterial overview, while Holslag and Nye offer interestingly contrasting views on the central question of the challenges to US global dominance.

*World Order*, Henry Kissinger, Penguin 2014

*World Politics since 1989*, Jonathan Holslag, Polity 2021

*Is the American Century over?*, Joe Nye, Polity 2015

*The Avoidable War (China and the US)*, Kevin Rudd, Public Affairs 2022

*The World according to Xi*, Kerry Brown, Tauris 2018

*Putin's World*, Angela Stent, Hachette 2019

*Climate Change and the Nation State*, Anatole Lieven, Penguin 2020

*Bomb Scare (nuclear weapons)*, Joseph Cirincion, Columbia 2007

*The Twilight of Human Rights Law*, Eric Posner, Oxford 2014

*Democracy in Retreat*, Joshua Kurlantzick, Yale 2013

*The Age of the Strongman*, Gideon Rachman, Bodley Head 2022

*A World in Disarray*, Richard Haass, Penguin 2017