



Weekend Courses 2023-24

World Order under stress

Start date: 1 December 2023 **End date:** 3 December 2023

Venue: Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Sir Tony Brenton **Course Code:** 2324NRX014

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

Course programme

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
20:30 – 22:00	The evolution of the current world order
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	The better angels of our nature; democracy and human rights
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Sharing the cage with an angry Bear; Russia
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	The Eastern Dragon revived; China
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	The Middle East: Endless Conflict (changed session topic)
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

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

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

- become familiar with the big geopolitical challenges facing the world today
- become familiar with the shape and working of the international system
- consider 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

Summary of 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 (which never worked perfectly, as in the Middle East) 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, for example, in Ukraine or Taiwan. And cooperation to tackle overarching global threats such as 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, you should be able to:

- understand the big forces driving the evolution of world politics over the next few years'
- place international political developments in context and judge the likely implications for your own nation and community
- bring an informed understanding of the state of the world to your own public and private involvements

Reading and resources list

There are no compulsory readings for this course. However, you may find the below recommended reading list of interest to supplement your course.

Black, Ian, *Enemies and Neighbours, Arabs and Jews in Palestine and Israel, 1917-2017*, Penguin (2017)

Bowen, Jeremy, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, Picador (2022)

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

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

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

Kissinger, Henry, *World Order*, Penguin (2014)

Kurlantzick, Joshua, *Democracy in Retreat*, Yale (2013)

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

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

Mandelbaum, Michael, *The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy*, Oxford (2022)

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

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

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

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

Note: Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of 25 October 2023)