

# POL 486H1-S: Networks in International Politics

## FALL 2025

PREREQUISITES:

**Lecture:** Thursday, 9–11 am

**Instructor:** Professor Olga Chyzh, olga.chyzh@utoronto.ca

**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 11–12 pm

## Overview and Objectives

Students will learn how international political behavior is shaped by complex networks of relationships among states, organizations, and individuals. From alliances and trade ties to conflict patterns and transnational movements, networks structure the flow of power, resources, and influence in global affairs. Students will learn to analyze these relational patterns using core concepts and methods from network science. Topics include alliance formation, diffusion of norms and policies, international cooperation, and the spread of conflict. Emphasis is placed on how to represent political phenomena as networks and how to interpret network metrics and structures. The course equips students with both theoretical understanding and practical skills to apply network analysis to problems in international politics.

## Grading Scale

Students will demonstrate their mastery of the course materials by contributing to the course discussion (20% of the grade) and taking two exams (40% each). Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances that may prevent them from completing an assignment should contact the instructor as soon as possible. The final grade will be calculated using University of Toronto grading scheme.

## Course Policies

*Student Responsibilities in the Learning Process:* Students are expected to complete any assigned readings prior to completing that topic's assessment. Students are also expected to complete all assessments on time. This means accessing the materials with sufficient time to complete assessments prior to deadlines. In the event that a student has questions concerning the material, they should formulate specific questions to ask the professor via office hours or email with sufficient time for a response prior to assessment deadlines (i.e. emailed questions should be sent at least 24 hours prior to a deadline, excluding weekends).

*Classroom Conduct:* Students are expected to participate in class in a thoughtful and respectful manner while in the pursuit of knowledge accumulation. Generally, this means engaging with one another's ideas and treating others as you would like to be

treated as well as *not* treating others how you would *not* like to be treated. Please see university policies on freedom of speech (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/freedom-speech-statement-may-28-1992>) and discrimination and harassment (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/harassment-statement-prohibited-discrimination-and-discriminatory-harassment>).

*Accommodations:* Please discuss any special needs with the instructor start of the semester, for example, to request reasonable accommodations if an academic requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should complete the appropriate documentation with Student Life Programs and Services (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>).

*Academic Misconduct:* All acts of dishonesty in any work constitute academic misconduct. The Student Disciplinary Regulations (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

A special note on plagiarism: plagiarism is the act of representing directly or indirectly another person's work as your own. It can involve presenting someone's speech, wholly or partially, as your; quoting without acknowledging the true source of the quoted material; copying and handing in another person's work with your name on it; and similar infractions. Even indirect quotations, paraphrasing, etc., can be considered plagiarism unless sources are properly cited.

*Copyright:* Course materials, including recorded lectures and slides, are the instructor's intellectual property covered by the Copyright Act, RSC 1985, c C-42. Course materials posted on Quercus or the class website may not be posted to other websites or media without the express permission of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction, copying, or use of online recordings will constitute copyright infringement.

## Course Schedule

The schedule below gives the required reading. The readings listed for a particular day should be read before class time that day.

- Week 1: Course Overview and Introduction to Network Analysis
  - Olga V. Chyzh. Network analysis in international relations. In Cameron G. Thies, editor, *Handbook of International Relations*, pages 158–170. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025.
- Week 2: Network Centrality
  - John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell. Robust action and the rise of the Medici, 1400-1434. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(6):1259–1319, 1993.
- Week 3: Weak Ties
  - Scott L. Feld. Why your friends have more friends than you do. *American Journal of Sociology*, 96(6):1464–1477, 1991.
  - Mark S. Granovetter. The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6):1360–1980, 1973, **Trigger Warning:** This article uses racial and gendered language common at the time of its writing.
- Week 4: Communities
  - Wayne W Zachary. An information flow model for conflict and fission in small groups. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 33(4):452–473, 1977.
  - Marina G Duque. Recognizing international status: A relational approach. *International Studies Quarterly*, 62(3):577–592, 2018.
- Week 5: Communities II
  - Roger V Gould. Multiple networks and mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871. *American Sociological Review*, pages 716–729, 1991.
  - Cesi Cruz, Julien Labonne, and Pablo Querubin. Social network structures and the politics of public goods provision: evidence from the philippines. *American Political Science Review*, 114(2):486–501, 2020
- Week 6: **Midterm Exam, October 9**
- Week 7: Social Networks
  - Jennifer M Larson, Jonathan Nagler, Jonathan Ronen, and Joshua A Tucker. Social networks and protest participation: Evidence from 130 million twitter users. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(3):690–705, 2019.

- Karthik Rajkumar, Guillaume Saint-Jacques, Iavor Bojinov, Erik Brynjolfsson, and Sinan Aral. A causal test of the strength of weak ties. *Science*, 377(6612):1304–1310, 2022
- Week 8: Leader Networks
  - Reyko Huang, Daniel Silverman, and Benjamin Acosta. Friends in the profession: Rebel leaders, international social networks, and external support for rebellion. *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(1), 2022
  - Mark David Nieman and Maxwell B Allamong. Schools of thought: Leader education and policy outcomes. *The Journal of Politics*, 85(4):1529–1547, 2023
- Week 9: Elite Networks
  - Josef Woldense. The ruler’s game of musical chairs: Shuffling during the reign of ethiopia’s last emperor. *Social Networks*, 52:154–166, 2018
  - Jérôme Doyon and Franziska Barbara Keller. Knowing the wrong cadre? networks and promotions in the chinese party-state. *Political Studies*, 68(4):1036–1053, 2020
- Week 10: Terrorist Networks
  - Sarah Elizabeth Parkinson. Organizing rebellion: Rethinking high-risk mobilization and social networks in war. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3):418–432, 2013.
  - Michael Kenney, Stephen Coulthart, and Dominick Wright. Structure and performance in a violent extremist network: The small-world solution. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(10):2208–2234, 2017
- Week 11: Repression
  - Howard Liu. Dissent networks, state repression, and strategic clemency for defection. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 66(7-8):1292–1319, 2022.
  - Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E Roberts. How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American political science Review*, 107(2):326–343, 2013.
- Week 12: Conflict Networks
  - Mark JC Crescenzi. Reputation and interstate conflict. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(2):382–396, 2007
  - Daniel Masterson. Refugee networks, cooperation, and resource access. *American Political Science Review*, 118(3):1398–1414, 2024
- **Final Exam:** Date and Time TBD