

**PP5182**  
**Economic Diplomacy in the Age of Strategic Interdependence**  
**AY2026/2027 Semester 1**

Last updated: 2026 Aug 05

**Teaching Staff**

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**Class Details**

**Class Meeting Time:** Mon 2pm-5pm

**Class Location:** MM.SR2-1

**Canvas:** <https://canvas.nus.edu.sg/courses/98197>

**Course Description**

As power-asymmetric unilateralism and strategic interdependence reshape the global economy, small states see pressing need for strategies that go beyond price-taking and rule-following. This course examines how Asia's policymakers can use economic diplomacy to address the challenges of geoeconomics. Combining conceptual analysis with policy practice, students engage in case studies, negotiations, simulations, and strategy design exercises to develop actionable responses to contemporary geoeconomic challenges. To complete the course, students co-write a policy white paper that proposes practical economic diplomacy strategies for Asia's leaders to strengthen resilience, promote prosperity, and sustain rules-based multilateralism in an increasingly contested world.

**Prerequisites**

The course has no prerequisites in terms of technical background. However, students will feel the course better serves them if they have, for the last couple years, taken general interest in global developments in geopolitics or international economics.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. frame the contemporary geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges of power-based unilateralism and strategic interdependence that face Asian states using advanced conceptual frameworks;
2. evaluate alternative response strategies, balancing incentives, institutions, and mechanisms rather than drawing solely on power politics;
3. formulate actionable economic diplomacy strategies and negotiate differing national interests across multiple governments to strengthen collective resilience, promote joint prosperity, and sustain rules-based multilateralism in Asia;
4. write professional-grade economic diplomacy policy papers;
5. communicate evidence-based trade policy and economic diplomacy proposals to senior policymakers.

### **Pedagogy**

The course combines conceptual analysis with policy practice. Anchored by a 20-min lecture each week, students engage in case studies, negotiations, simulations, and strategy design exercises to develop actionable responses to contemporary geoeconomic challenges. Over the term there will be roughly equal proportions of lecture, student participation, and Canvas and paper writing.

Students will learn economic diplomacy both through new conceptual architectures and through simulated practice. Over the semester students will progressively develop a policy proposal for economic policy, moving from problem analysis to national strategy, international negotiation, and finally regional policy design.

This course is built around one evolving policy project. Every assessment is a different milestone, another stage in developing the same professional product. Nothing is discarded. Each milestone becomes part of the product.

### **Course Material**

Fast and reliable connection to Canvas and the Internet generally will be essential. All readings and other study materials (including podcasts, videoclips) will be publicly available online.

## Course Assessment

| Assessment                                            | Weight (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| General class participation                           | 15         |
| Policy briefing (team; weekly)                        | 05         |
| Policy memo (individual; 1,200 words; Fri COB week 5) | 15         |
| Country strategy presentation (team; weeks 9, 10)     | 20         |
| Negotiation performance (team; week 11)               | 15         |
| White paper (team; 6,000 words; Fri COB week 12)      | 30         |

For fairness on the writing assignments (the policy memo and white paper) no late submission will be permitted.

### Participation

Participation means contribution to collective learning. That is, for our class discussions, success will come not from talkativeness or by dominating the conversation but from your improving the quality of the discussion. Listen to the flow of the conversation, identify disagreements, summarise opposing views, find points of agreement; seek broader consensus. Did your intervention advance the conversation? Connect ideas? Respond constructively to classmates' comments? Ask an insightful question? Introduce new relevant data? Help develop good ideas from classmates?

What works well is constructive intellectual engagement, not performance.

### Workflow

The course project to keep in mind is the 6,000-word white paper due at the end of term. There are a number of assessments along the way. But think of those not as individual assignments but consider each a milestone that marks the respective build stages of your overall project. Each assessment turns into the next, and all your work cumulatively adds up. There is just one project, and things handed in along the way just keep things on track. The one course project to keep in mind is the 6,000-word white paper due at the end of term. Along the way you will be asked to undertake a number of assessments. Think of those not as individual assignments but consider each a milestone that marks the successive build stages of your one evolving project. Each assessment turns into the next, and all your work cumulatively adds up. There is just one project, and things you hand in along the way simply keep things on track.

### Milestones

1. (week 5) Define the problem. Three-page individually-written policy memo.

2. (weeks 9-1) Establish your PP5182-nation's position. Team presentation on country strategy.
3. (week 11) Test it. Negotiation simulation: International bargaining.
4. Final output (week 12) 6,000-word white paper (Team). The output is already a field-tested product, not an academic draft. It contains the lessons your research, your presentations on the road, your negotiations with others, and feedback from the different audiences. Be sure to note how far you got on regional consensus or small-nation cooperation.

Nothing you do is discarded or disconnected. You are assembling the project paper, not writing it.

### **Teamwork**

In the first meeting the cohort will form teams of three each. This team is yours for the rest of the semester. Each team will focus on one ongoing policy problem and will represent one nation throughout (for concreteness, let's choose from ASEAN +), allowing your perspective by the end of the course to converge closer towards that of your PP5182-country.

Policy problems include trade tariffs; export restrictions; semiconductor dependence; critical minerals supplies; digital trade; AI governance; regional payment systems; food security; maritime logistics; energy transition; and so on.

Your PP5182-country is ideally one of the ASEAN nations—just to keep things under control. No one gets to be the US or China. Economic diplomacy is about what small states have to do.

Team assignments will be made by week 2, so that thereafter on every discussion you should be asking “What does my PP5182-country think?”

(Random device to partition.)

### **Weekly policy briefings**

The first 15 minutes of each class meeting will be a weekly policy briefing, “This happened this week” (since our class is Monday of course what we mean is “this past week”). What you brief is not tied to your white paper but what actually happened in the world that affects your PP5182-nation.

Each week a different team of three students gives a five-minute ministerial briefing (the 5 minutes is a strict upper bound). You were called by the Minister's office just one hour ago; you have five minutes to speak. Your task is not to tell the Minister everything. It is to tell the Minister what they most need to know.

1. The class plays Minister's staff and queries the team after.
2. Good marks for being clear; prioritise well; make good judgement; emphasise precision and brevity — don't overspeak.
3. This is intended to be light-touch. Don't make it a polished presentation, preferably no slides at all but at most just two: What happened? Why does it matter? What should policymakers be watching on this?

### Writings

A **policy memo** is written for busy decision-makers. Think of an email message, only formal and on the record. A distilled summary of a larger problem and no longer than 1,200 words, the policy memo must contain:

1. Header: Standard To, From, Date, and Subject lines (like email).
2. Summary: Quick opening statement of the problem and its main fix. This needs to be short and punchy.
3. Background: Say why this is the top priority now.
4. Analysis/Options: List possible options; give short pros and cons on each.
5. Recommendation: Next steps supported by data and evidence. What are the specific action points?

The policy memo identifies a specific problem, analyses evidence, and proposes a concrete solution. The focus is on an immediate problem that needs to be solved.

A **white paper** is an official Government document written to explain or discuss specific government policies, national strategies, or broad, systemic trends important to the general public. A white paper is often tabled for formal Parliamentary debate and forms the direct basis for a formal bill to be introduced subsequently.

The white paper is not an academic essay. It is a professional policy document. It seeks to persuade policymakers to adopt a coherent programme of action.

(A white paper stands in contrast to a green paper which this course doesn't do but is a non-binding preliminary consultative document meant to generate open discussion and gather feedback.)

In PP5182 the policy memo is the first step in assembling the white paper. Choose a policy problem (green supply chains; critical minerals; semiconductors; food security;

digital trade; tariffs). Address the question "What is the policy problem? Why does it matter?" Your white paper will grow out of your policy memo. No work is wasted.

### **Country Strategy Presentation**

How would Country Y (your country) approach the policy problem? Present that country's strategy. Do it in eight minutes after which a 7-minute discussion follows.

### **Negotiation**

This is a simulation that is the consultation exercise for your White Paper. On the basis of the negotiations you encounter, you'll have collected the empirical evidence on your final report. Watch out in particular for concessions (that you make, that others give on); sticky disagreements; coalitions (who's on your side); implementation challenges (what's the difficulty for making your proposals happen)? The outcomes from these negotiations can be recorded as your report's empirical evidence.

### **Academic Integrity**

Please read and familiarize yourself with the [NUS Code of Student Conduct](#). NUS and LKYSPP regard academic integrity as a very important value. To avoid giving the impression that you are passing off other people's work as your own, you will need to acknowledge conscientiously the sources of information, ideas, and arguments used in any of your assignments. The NUS online course you took during the Orientation Programme outlined what counts as plagiarism and why it is wrong. LKYSPP takes pride in maintaining a strong culture of academic integrity.

Compare this with the saying "Good artists copy, great artists steal". Copying is "passing off other people's work as your own". As the NUS Code of Student Conduct says, that's not even being a good artist. That's being a lousy rule-breaking pretender. Instead, what you want to aspire towards is what Steve Jobs meant every time he used that saying about what great artists do, that you build so much on the best that it becomes your own creation. Sometimes that means starting from scratch. Sometimes it means recognizing when someone else has produced the best ... so far.

### **AI Policy**

NUS policy on AI in Teaching and Learning is on [public record](#); please familiarize yourself with it. I would just add that as far as I'm concerned you are free to make use of whatever AI you wish to help your learning. I ask only that you don't copypaste whole chunks of

output unmodified into whatever your produce for me. Use what AI provides you and make it better.

### **Respect for People**

Please read and familiarize yourself with the [NUS Code of Student Conduct](#). LKYSPP is committed to maintaining a culture in which everyone is treated with respect, regardless of gender, race, language, values, religion, and disabilities. Together, we can strive to treat others with respect and consideration, embrace diversity, and foster an inclusive community.

I want our classroom is a safe space that encourages inclusive and diverse learning.

### **Accessibility Support**

LKYSPP is committed to offering classes that are accessible. If you anticipate or encounter disability-related barriers in a course, please contact the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) for accessibility support. OSA will establish and communicate reasonable accommodations to Academic Affairs, who will assist with approved arrangements for the course.

### **Other Information**

I am fine with our class sessions being recorded. However, if any student feels they would prefer otherwise, they can explain to me why, and provided it's reasonable, I will ask our sessions to be not recorded.

### **Course Outline and Schedule**

| Week    | Date   | Topic                                                             |
|---------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1  | 10 Aug | (National Day Holiday; no class meeting)                          |
| Week 2  | 17 Aug | Geoeconomics                                                      |
| Week 3  | 24 Aug | Globalisation to strategic interdependence. 3S                    |
| Week 4  | 31 Aug | Economic Security                                                 |
| Week 5  | 07 Sep | Industrial policy. And messing trade about generally              |
| Week 6  | 14 Sep | Multilateralism: What future.                                     |
| Week 7  | 28 Sep | Economic diplomacy in a G-minus world.                            |
| Week 8  | 05 Oct | Basic toolkit for economic diplomacy. 3A                          |
| Week 9  | 12 Oct | Making cooperation ordinary. Strategic competition                |
| Week 10 | 19 Oct | New international institutions. Country strategy presentations, 1 |
| Week 11 | 26 Oct | Actionable economic diplomacy. Country strategy presentations, 2  |
| Week 12 | 02 Nov | Asia 2035 Policy Summit.                                          |

|         |        |                                              |
|---------|--------|----------------------------------------------|
| Week 13 | 09 Nov | (Deepavali Public Holiday; no class meeting) |
|---------|--------|----------------------------------------------|

**Course Readings:**

To be provided soon.

**Week 1**

**Week 2**

**Week 3**

**Week 4**

**Week 5**

**Week 6**

**Week 7**

**Week 8**

**Week 9**

**Week 10**

**Week 11**

**Week 12**

**Week 13**