

University of International Business and Economics

China Institute for WTO Studies

Master of WTO Law and Economics (MWLE)

Course syllabus

WTO negotiations: recent developments and future prospects

Spring 2022

General information

Professor: Tatiana Prazeres, PhD

Classes will be held via Zoom from 7:00pm - 8:30pm (GMT+8) every Monday from 7 March to 23 May 2022.

Teaching method comprises lectures by the professor, students' short presentations and structured class discussions. External experts may be invited to speak.

Evaluation

Classroom participation: 20%. Seminar: 40%. Written essay: 40%.

a) Seminars

This course has 8 seminars. Each seminar is to be presented by of 1 or 2 students. Presentations shall not exceed 25 minutes in total. Students will be assessed on the quality of their research, their ability to identify the key issues at stake, and the clarity of their presentation. The topics of the seminars are listed below (all topics must be covered by the group).

b) Written essays

All students are expected individually to write an essay containing between 1,200 and 1,500 words about **one** of the topics below, as per their own preferences. **The deadline to submit essays (to tlprazer@yahoo.com) is 9 May 2022.** In writing their essays, students are expected to present the issue in a clear and concise manner, and articulate their views on the specific questions posed under each topic.

Topic 1 - RCEP, CPTPP and other Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs): what value do they add to the existing WTO rules, why do they matter, what are the risks and opportunities that PTAs pose to the WTO? (Students may choose to focus on RCEP, CPTPP or a different PTA. They may wish to select one issue to focus on — for example, digital trade, gender or any other topic covered by the PTA in question).

Topic 2 - Trade and Climate Change. How can trade policy help advance climate action? What are the risks for trade? How to reconcile the trade and climate agendas?

Topic 3 - The 20th anniversary of China's accession to the WTO. How has the WTO benefitted China? And how has China's accession to the WTO benefitted the world?

Students are expected to share their views in class, in a short talk with the professor about each essay topic (see Course Program below).

Course program

Class & date	Subject	Method, activities
Class 1 – 7 March	Introduction to the course. General overview of trade negotiations at the WTO.	<p><u>Lecture</u> by the professor. Introduction to WTO negotiations. Rules, practices, decision-making, mandates, key players, coalitions, the role of the Chair, the Director-General and the Secretariat, nature of the final outcome (multilateral, plurilateral) and other issues.</p> <p>Mandatory reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evenett (2019). Jaw, jaw not war, war: prioritizing WTO reform options. • Bown (2021). To build back better, Biden needs to fix trade: Trump has left a ticking time bomb at the WTO. • Bertelsmann Stiftung (2020). Why do we need a WTO for? • Tinline & Prazeres (2020). 5 reasons why the WTO Director-General position matters. <p>Recommended reading: VanGrasstek (2013). The history and the future of the World Trade Organization.</p>

Class 2 – 14 March	Brief history of WTO negotiations: DDA, recent ministerial conferences.	<p><u>Lecture</u> by the professor. Recent history of WTO negotiations. General overview, law and practice of Ministerial Conferences. Political background, key issues and current state-of-play of the Doha Development Round. Post-Doha Ministerial Conferences and Ministerial guidance to negotiators.</p> <p><u>Group exercise</u> about WTO negotiations</p> <p>Recommended websites: https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/minist_e.htm https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/dda_e.htm</p>
Class 3 – 21 March	Recent developments and potential lessons: Trade Facilitation Agreement, expansion of the Information Technology Agreement and others	<p><u>Lecture</u>. Agreement on Trade Facilitation. Food security at the WTO. The expansion of the Information Technology Agreement. The decision to eliminate agricultural export subsidies. Brief overview of the negotiations leading to the agreements. Potential lessons for future WTO negotiations.</p> <p>Recommended reading: Neufeuld (2014). The long and winding road: how WTO members finally reached a trade facilitation agreement https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/ersd201406_e.htm</p>
Class 4 – 28 March	Recent developments and potential lessons – continued	<p>Highly recommended video (to watch ahead of the class): https://globalgovernanceprogramme.eui.eu/wto-reform-suggestions-from-recent-research-video/</p> <p><u>Debate</u> among students with introduction and guiding questions by the professor.</p>
Class 5 – 4 April	“New issues” – Part 1: ecommerce	<p>Introduction by the professor followed by presentation.</p> <p><u>Seminar 1 – Ecommerce</u>. Current state-of-play of WTO e-commerce negotiations and key issues at stake.</p> <p>Highly recommended website: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/ecom_e/ecom_e.htm</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> among students, guided by questions by the professor.</p>

<p>Class 6 – 11 April</p>	<p>“New issues” – Part 2: investment facilitation, small and medium enterprises, women and trade. Current state of play and prospects</p>	<p>Introduction by the professor followed by presentation.</p> <p><u>Seminar 2 – Investment facilitation.</u> Current state-of-play of WTO IF negotiations and key issues.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> among students, guided by questions by the professor.</p> <p>Recommended readings: http://ccsi.columbia.edu/files/2018/10/No-243-Sauvant-FINAL.pdf http://ccsi.columbia.edu/files/2016/10/No-202-Hees-and-Cavalcante-FINAL.pdf</p> <p><u>Lecture</u> on the other issues, including state-of-play and prospects (by the professor)</p> <p>Recommended reading: SMEs - WTO World Trade Report 2016 – Levelling the Trading Field for SMEs: https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/wtr16_e.htm</p> <p>Women and Trade - https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/womenandtrade_e.htm</p>
<p>Class 7 – 18 April</p>	<p>Discussions about a WTO reform: political context and overview of substantive issues</p>	<p><u>Lecture</u> by the professor. The rationale for a WTO reform now. Key players, developing countries’ perspectives. Overview of the issues at stake. Risks and opportunities for the WTO.</p> <p>Mandatory readings (documents to be sent to students): public papers under discussion (China, EU, Canada and possibly others).</p> <p><u>Seminar 3 – China’s perspective on WTO reform</u></p> <p><u>Seminar 4 - EU’s perspective on WTO reform</u></p> <p>Presentations will be followed by <u>discussion</u> among students, guided by questions by the professor.</p>

Class 8 – 25 April	WTO reform: substantive issues	<p><u>Lecture</u> by the professor. SOEs, technology transfer, industrial subsidies.</p> <p><u>Seminar 5 – Development and S&D treatment</u></p> <p><u>Mandatory reading:</u> https://www.t20italy.org/2021/09/08/trade-and-development-in-the-wto-toward-a-constructive-approach-to-the-issue-of-development-status-and-special-and-differential-treatment/</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> among students, guided by questions by the professor.</p>
Class 9 – 2 May	WTO reform: the AB crises	<p>Introduction by the professor. Background to the blocking of the nominations of the WTO Appellate Body members. Impact and risks. Current state-of-play.</p> <p><u>Seminar 6 - the US perspective on the AB crises</u></p> <p><u>Seminar 7 - Opposing views on the AB crises</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> among students, guided by questions by the professor.</p>
Class 10 – 9 May	Trade & National Security. Future of the WTO & WTO of the future	<p>Introduction to Trade & National Security.</p> <p><u>Seminar 8 - The National Security argument as a basis for trade restrictions: legal and political aspects</u></p> <p><u>Recommended reading:</u> Prazeres (2020). Trade & national security: rising risks for the WTO.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> among students, guided by questions by the professor. How to make the WTO work in light of the US-China rivalry.</p>
Class 11 – 16 May	PTAs and the WTO.	<p>Introduction by the professor.</p> <p><u>Group exercise</u> to discuss Essays (Topic 1)</p>
Class 12 – 23 May	Trade & Climate change. The 20th anniversary of China in the WTO	<p>Introduction by the professor.</p> <p><u>Group exercise</u> to discuss Essays (Topics 2 and 3). Course wrap-up.</p>

Overview of Seminars

Seminar 1	4 April 2022	New issues – E-commerce
Seminar 2	11 April 2022	New issues – Investment Facilitation
Seminar 3	18 April 2022	WTO reform – China’s perspective
Seminar 4	18 April 2022	WTO reform – The EU perspective
Seminar 5	25 April 2022	WTO reform - Development & S&D
Seminar 6	2 May 2022	WTO reform – US perspective on the Appellate Body
Seminar 7	2 May 2022	WTO reform – Opposing views on the crises of the Appellate Body
Seminar 8	9 May 2022	The National Security argument as a basis for trade restrictions: legal and political aspects

Reading recommendation

The WTO website is an excellent source of information on WTO negotiations. Students are highly encouraged to dedicate time to explore the WTO website, including the pages of Ministerial Conferences (under About the WTO), the DDA (under Trade Topics) and official documents and working papers (under Documents, Data and Resources).
