



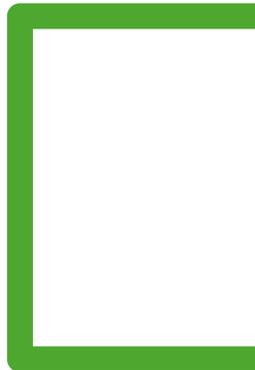
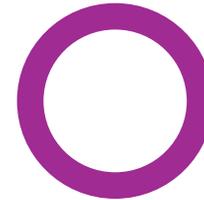
Global Supply Chains: Making an (Un)Sustainable World

Taught by:

Professor Benjamin Selwyn

About your Teacher

Benjamin Selwyn is a professor of international relations and international development. He is the author of *The Struggle for Development* (2017), *The Global Development Crisis* (2014), *Workers, State and Development in Brazil* (2012). His latest book, co-authored with Christin Bernhold is [Capitalist Value Chains: Labour Exploitation, Nature Destruction, Geopolitics](#) (2025).



Module Overview

Global Supply Chains (GSCs) are the arteries of global capitalism, accounting for around 70% of international trade. This course asks a central question: do GSCs promote sustainable development through job creation, poverty reduction, social inclusion, and environmental protection?

Formulating policies to establish sustainable GSP's requires knowledge of the origins and evolution of these industrial structures and an understanding of the dimensions through which GSP's impact upon society, economy and environment. This course:

- Presents theoretical perspectives that enable students to conduct GSP analysis and research.
- Provides an historical overview of the formation of the system of GSP – focussing on development, geopolitics, the natural environmental, and labour.
- Discusses policies that can facilitate GSP for development and environmental protection.

Weekly Topics on Global Supply Chains (GSPs)

1) What are Global Supply Chains ?

2) Global Supply Chains, Upgrading and Development

3) Geopolitics and the Making of GSPs

4) Geopolitics: Critical Minerals and the Future of GSPs

5) The Eco-Social Foundations of GSPs

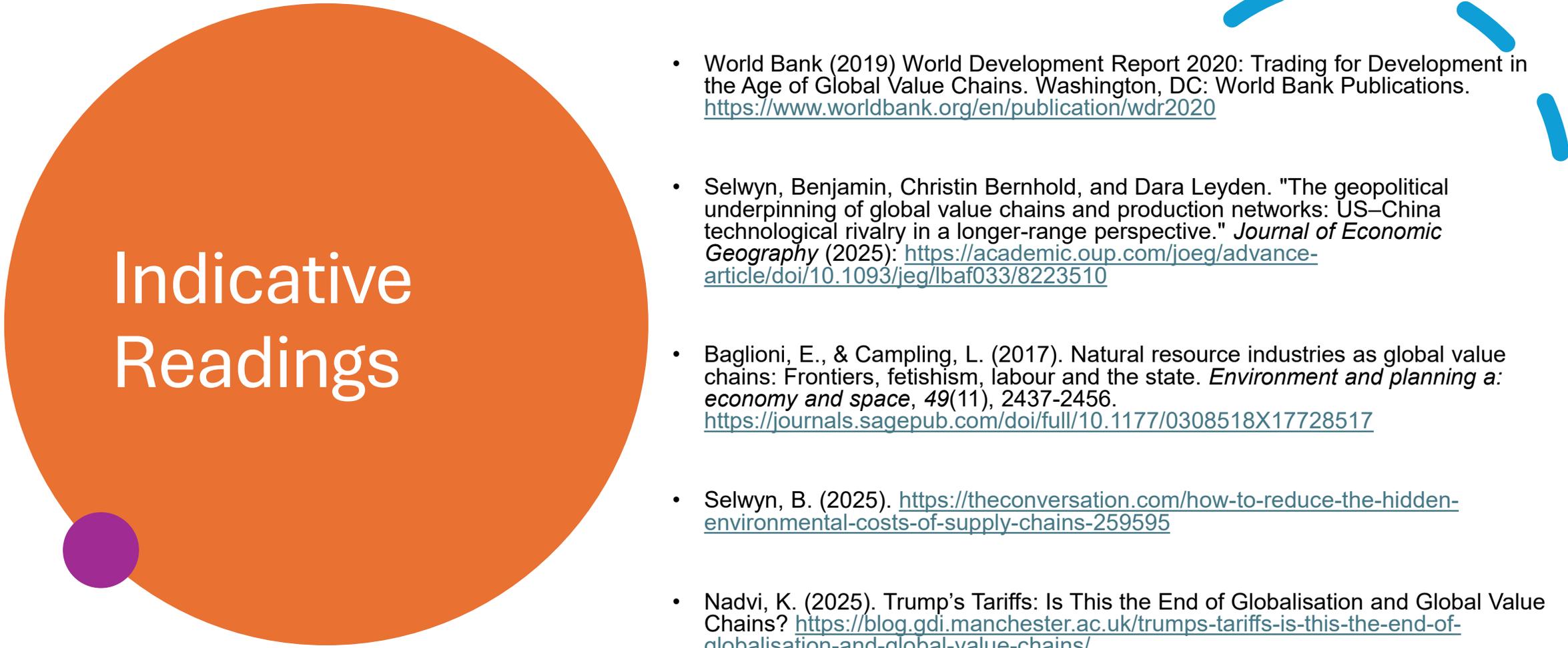
6) Environmental Upgrading in GSPs

7) Digitalisation, GSP's and The Environment.

8) GSP's and Food Security

9) GSP's and the World of Work

10) The Circular Economy, Sustainability and GSPs



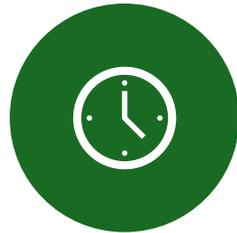
Indicative Readings

- Fernandez-Stark, Karina, and Gary Gereffi. "Global value chain analysis: A primer." *Handbook on global value chains*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019. 54-76. <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781788113762/9781788113762.0008.xml>
- World Bank (2019) World Development Report 2020: Trading for Development in the Age of Global Value Chains. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2020>
- Selwyn, Benjamin, Christin Bernhold, and Dara Leyden. "The geopolitical underpinning of global value chains and production networks: US–China technological rivalry in a longer-range perspective." *Journal of Economic Geography* (2025): <https://academic.oup.com/joeg/advance-article/doi/10.1093/jeg/lbaf033/8223510>
- Baglioni, E., & Campling, L. (2017). Natural resource industries as global value chains: Frontiers, fetishism, labour and the state. *Environment and planning a: economy and space*, 49(11), 2437-2456. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0308518X17728517>
- Selwyn, B. (2025). <https://theconversation.com/how-to-reduce-the-hidden-environmental-costs-of-supply-chains-259595>
- Nadvi, K. (2025). Trump's Tariffs: Is This the End of Globalisation and Global Value Chains? <https://blog.gdi.manchester.ac.uk/trumps-tariffs-is-this-the-end-of-globalisation-and-global-value-chains/>

Details and Assessment:



SPRING TERM
2026



1 HOUR LECTURE
+ 2 HOUR
SEMINAR



ASSESSMENT:



GROUP
PRESENTATION



ESSAY – 3,500
WORDS

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