

PROJECT PATHFINDER

CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

Wednesdays, 3:00-4:00 PM ET | Live via Zoom | September 2026 – May 2027

Instructor: Joel Grewe

COURSE OVERVIEW

Current World Affairs is a weekly seminar for Project Pathfinder students, offered live over Zoom during the 2026-2027 academic year. The course is organized into seven monthly thematic blocks, each closing with a project students complete to show what they've learned.

Students may register as full participants (readings, discussion, and a monthly project) or as auditors (welcome to attend and listen without assignments).

MONTHLY PROJECTS

At the end of each monthly block (except December and May), students choose one of three project options to demonstrate what they learned. All three options ask students to research a specific issue within that month's theme and connect it to something discussed in class.

Option A is the same every month: a short research paper. Options B and C change each month to fit the theme and to let students play to different strengths — writing, speaking, or visual/creative work.

Block	Option A — Paper	Option B	Option C
Trade & the U.S. Economy	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2) applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.	Trade Briefing Video (3–5 min): record yourself briefing a small-business owner on how a specific tariff or trade policy affects their business, using a real example.	Supply Chain Map: a labeled poster or digital graphic tracing one everyday product from raw material to store shelf, marking every country involved and where U.S. trade policy touches the chain.
Great Power Competition & Global Order	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2) applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.	National Security Briefing Video (3–5 min): a mock briefing to the U.S. President on one great-power flashpoint (Taiwan, Ukraine, the Arctic, etc.), ending with a clear recommendation.	Alliance Map: an annotated world map of today's major alliances and blocs (NATO, AUKUS, BRICS, etc.) with a short written explanation of how one alliance shapes the balance of power.
Middle Eastern Affairs	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2)	Two-Sided Dialogue: write and perform (recorded or live) a short scripted dialogue between two regional actors debating one specific issue, showing you understand both perspectives fairly.	Op-Ed (500 words): a short opinion piece for a general American reader proposing a path forward on one Middle East issue.

Block	Option A — Paper	Option B	Option C
	applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.		
Religious Liberty	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2) applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.	Advocacy Letter: a letter to a real member of Congress or the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom urging action on a specific documented case of religious persecution.	A Voice for the Persecuted: a short reflective profile (based on a real, cited case) telling one person's or community's story of living out their faith under pressure or persecution.
Human Rights	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2) applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.	Awareness Campaign: a one-page flyer or short social-media campaign (as if for an NGO) raising awareness of one human rights issue, including a clear call to action.	Mock UN Statement (2–3 min): write and deliver a statement as if representing a country before the UN Human Rights Council on one specific issue.
Populism & Democracy	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2) applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.	Campaign Rhetoric Analysis or Ad: annotate a real populist speech/ad for its persuasive techniques, or write and record a short mock campaign ad demonstrating those techniques, with a one-paragraph reflection on why they work.	Democracy Scorecard: a simple scorecard rating one country on 4–5 measures of democratic health (free press, fair elections, rule of law, etc.), compared to the United States.
Asian Affairs	Research & Application Paper (1–2 pages, double-spaced): research a specific issue within this month's topic and write a short paper that (1) explains the issue using at least one credible outside source, and (2) applies at least one concept or discussion from class this month.	Mock Press Conference (3–5 min): a press conference as a government spokesperson (Chinese, Taiwanese, Indian, U.S., etc.) addressing one Indo-Pacific flashpoint, fielding 2–3 prepared questions.	Annotated Timeline: a visual timeline of key events in one Asian affairs issue, plus a short written section on why it matters to the United States.

FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS

Sessions run 3:00–4:00 PM ET on Zoom and generally will alternate between two formats: a short introduction to a current topic followed by discussion and Q and A with teaching staff, or a discussion-driven seminar built around a current event or reading. Specific readings, discussion questions, and project prompts will be posted before each block begins.

QUESTIONS

For questions about registration, the Zoom link, or the schedule, contact Project Pathfinder at info@projectpathfinder.net.