Department: International Relations          Faculty: Social Sciences

Course Title: Advanced International Relations Theory (MPhil / PhD, Compulsory)

Number of Credits: Four

Course objectives: The intent of this course is to invite research scholars (M.Phil/PhD during the Monsoon Semester) to reflect on the state of the art theorizing of International Relations (IR) drawing on a range of contemporary concerns. These encompass Anglo-American ethnocentrism in IR, decoding race, class and gender in IR, the play of emotions and collective memories and the significance of specific contexts and issue areas in determining the lenses through which we view world politics. While critically interrogating mainstream IR theories, it seeks consciously to acknowledge the politics and sociology of IR knowledge production in order to foster more critical and anchored theoretical inquiry.

Course structure with units, if applicable:

Unit 1: Politics and Sociology of Knowledge in International Relations – Rethinking the Canon in IR (Week One to Three)

The objective of this unit is to examine the history of International Relations as a discipline. It deconstructs the ‘great debates’ account of the evolution of the discipline, recognizes race as an important early marker in the construction of a distinctive discourse as well as re-evaluates what we have come to regard as ‘classics’ in International Relations by opening up the global South as an alternative site for theorizing International Relations.

a. Historiography of IR as a discipline (exploring ‘race’ as a category in International Relations)
b. Re-visiting what we treat as 'classics' in International Relations

Unit 2: Theorizing International Relations (WeekThree-Week Six)

The current unit seeks to critique mainstream approaches to International Relations theorizing. It also simultaneously examines the resilience of theories like Realism and Liberalism within the contemporary study of International Relations. Going beyond critique, it also critically engages a whole range of alternative theoretical positions and approaches that can contribute meaningfully to the study of International Relations.

a. The resilience and limitations of mainstream theorizing (Realism(s) and Liberalism(s) in International Relations)
b. Critical approaches (Marxism(s), Feminism(s), Constructivism(s), Postcolonialism(s), Critical Geopolitics

Unit 3: Theorizing Spatiality and Temporality: Context matters (Week Six-Ten)

How does context (ontology) have a bearing on epistemology? This unit engages this question in some depth as it explores how different vantage points generate different sets of interpretations both relating to processes and outcomes in world politics. The attempt is also to break from any form of ‘methodological nationalism’ and encourage curiosity about IR theorizing in other parts of the world.

a. The world as viewed from Asia (with a special emphasis on South Asia)
b. The world as viewed from Africa
c. The world as viewed from Latin America
d. Perspectives from the Arab world

**Unit 4: International Relations theory as applied to specific issue-areas (with illustrations drawn largely from South Asia (Week Ten-Twelve)**

This unit applies theoretical thinking to specific issue-areas, trade, security and the environment. Our effort here is to study illustrations particularly from South Asia (though not exclusively from the region) with regard to these important domains. It encompasses questions of political economy, security (both traditional and non-traditional) and ecological questions which compel one to look outside the borders of any single nation-state. This is student led Unit, where perspectives of International Relations in South Asia are brought to the forefront.

**Reading Suggestions:**


