

Department: International Relations

Faculty: Faculty of Social Sciences

Course Title: International Relations Theory (MA, Compulsory)

Credits: Four

Course objectives: This course familiarises students with some of the major debates within the discipline. It introduces them to key interdisciplinary conversations between IR and other disciplines such as history, philosophy and sociology. Although the course content is largely theoretical, it refers to historical and contemporary developments as illustrative examples. The course would particularly introduce ‘critical frames’ of enquiry to students, to nudge them to critically engage for instance with the broadly ethnocentric and masculinist character of the discipline.

Course structure with units:

Unit 1: Making sense of the ‘International’: Past and Present (Week One)

This unit offers a brief introduction to how ‘international’ has been imagined in the past. It offers two contending views for the twentieth (Mackinder vs Norman) and 21st century (Slaughter and Mearsheimer) and critically introduces the students to the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of the competing debates in International Relations Theory.

Unit II: Introduction to IR Theory (Week Two)

The unit introduces students to the field of IR theory. It seeks to succinctly explain the function of theory and its centrality in the field of international relations.

Unit III: Major Approaches in IR (Week Three—Week Ten)

The unit presents a comprehensive overview of the major theories in IR, covering the entire disciplinary spectrum from mainstream approaches such as realism and liberalism to the critical approaches such as postcolonialism and feminism. A further delineation of certain major theories into sub-schools offers a nuanced understanding of the subject.

Realism

Liberalism

Constructivism

Critical Theory

Feminism

Postcolonialism

Postmodernism

English School

Unit IV: Dialogues with Other Disciplines (Week Eleven)

Unit four presents a critical assessment of IR’s level of engagement with other disciplines such as history and sociology. The scope for deeper inter-disciplinary conversations points to potential avenues for the growth of IR as a discipline in the future.

Interdisciplinarity

Unit V—International Relations Theory and South Asia (Week Twelve)

Student led open house. Back ground readings, will be provided.

Reading Suggestions:

Angell, Norman (1912) 'The Influence of Credit Upon International Relations', in *The Foundations of International Polity* (London: Heinemann).

Guzzini, Stefano (2001), 'The Significance and Role of Teaching Theory in International Relations', *JIRD*, 2001,4(2), 98-117

Kenneth M. Waltz, "Laws and Theories," from Robert O. Keohane, *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 27-46.

Alexander Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations,' *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (1987): 335-370

Cox, Robert (1981) 'Social Forces, States and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium* 10(2): 126-155.

Tickner, J. Ann and Laura Sjoberg (eds.) (2011), *Twenty Years of Feminist International Relations: A Conversation about the Past, Present and Future*. London and New York: Routledge.

Der Derian, James and Michael Shapiro (eds.) (1989), *International/ Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, New York: Lexington Books.

Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber (2002), 'In Defense of Diverse Forms of Knowledge', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35 (2): 193-195