



Course information 2023-24

IR1011 Introduction to international relations

General information

COURSE LEVEL: 4

CREDIT: 30

NOTIONAL STUDY TIME: 300 hours

Summary

This is the level 100 course on which subsequent and more specialised courses in the area of international relations are based.

Conditions

None

Aims and objectives

The objectives of this course are to:

- explore the evolution of the discipline of International Relations (IR) over the past century by examining our changing understandings of *order* in the modern world;
- consider the impact of major historical events on the evolution of IR, including the treaties of 1648, Europe's imperial expansion, the First World War, and the ongoing influence of globalization;
- introduce students to a range of theoretical tools that will help them to analyse the behaviour of international actors and the nature of international systems;
- define and discuss some main concepts within the discipline, including war, peace, the state, and power; and critically assess challenges facing contemporary international society, including security, global governance, and the rise of East Asian actors.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to:

- Describe the evolution of International Relation as an academic discipline;
- Explain the relevance of key terms in International Relations;
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of IR's various theoretical approaches; and
- Analyse contemporary and historical international events from a variety of theoretical viewpoints.

Essential reading

For full details, please refer to the reading list

Please consult the current EMFSS Programme Regulations for further information on the availability of a course, where it can be placed on your programme's structure, and other important details.

Baylis, J. and S. Smith (eds) *The Globalization of World Politics: an Introduction to International Relations*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) seventh edition.

Griffiths, M., T. O'Callaghan and S.C. Roach *International relations: the key concepts*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) second edition

* Galtung, Johan 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research'. *Journal of Peace Research* (6:3). 1969. Pp. 166-91.

* Hirst, Paul. 'The eighty years' crisis, 1919-1999 – power'. *Review of International Studies* (24:5). 1998. Pp. 133- 148.

* Hobbes, Thomas, and Edwin Curley. *Leviathan: with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*. Vol. 8348. Hackett Publishing, 1994.

* Human Security Report Project. *Human Security Report 2009/2010: the causes of peace and the shrinking costs of war*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) [ISBN 9780199860814].

* Medcalfe, R & R. Heinrichs. *Crisis and Confidence: major powers and maritime security in Indo-Pacific Asia*. (Double Bay, Australia: Longueville Media, 2011) [ISBN 9780987057051]

* Xiang, L. 'China and the "Pivot"', *Survival* 54(5) October-November 2012, pp. 113-128.

Sources marked with an asterisk (*) are freely available to students online via the VLE or the University of London's electronic journals collection

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour and fifteen-minute closed-book written examination.

Syllabus

This course introduces students to the study of International Relations (IR), focusing especially on the international actors and systems at the heart of the discipline. In doing so it considers several topics of interest. These include:

the evolution of IR during the twentieth century; the impact of key historical events on the development of the discipline, including the Peace of Westphalia, European Imperialism, and the First World War; changes to the international system since end of the Cold War; the history of globalization and its influence on the evolution of the discipline's main theories and concepts; the meaning of anarchy and systems in IR's understanding of the world; some of the similarities and differences between mainstream approaches to IR – particularly Liberalism, Realism, and Marxism; alternative theories of world politics presented by some of IR's newer theoretical schools – particularly Constructivism, Post-colonialism, and International Political Economy; the difficulties implicit in defining and limiting *war* between and within states; the contentious place of *peace* in international society; the role and responsibilities of the *state* as one actor amongst many in the international system; our changing understanding of international *power*; the impact of globalization and the end of the Cold War on actors' definitions of *security*; the difficulties of global governance in an anarchic international society; and the likely impact of Asia's (especially China's) rise on the units, processes, and structures of the international system.

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