UNIVERSITY OF LONDON | INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Course information 2023-24
IR1198 International relations theories concepts and debates

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

Aims and objectives

The main aim of the course is to introduce students to IR theories and approaches and enable them to assess their contributions and shortcomings.

By the end of the course, students will:

- Discuss critically, and write knowledgeably about, major IR theories and paradigmatic debates
- Use key IR concepts to think, talk and write persuasively about historical processes and contemporary events.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the 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.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour unseen written examination.

Essential reading

Baylis, J. and S. Smith (eds) *The Globalization of World Politics: an Introduction to International Relations*. **8^{8h} Edition**. (Oxford: Oxford University Press). 2019. ISBN: 9780198825548

Griffiths, M., T. O'Callaghan and S.C. Roach *International relations: the key concepts*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) third edition [ISBN 9780203748206].

R Jackson & G Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). 2018. 9780198803577

Syllabus

This is a description of the material to be examined. On registration, students will receive a detailed subject guide which provides a framework for covering the topics in the syllabus and directions to the essential reading

This course provides a wide-ranging introduction to International Relations (IR) as a field of study. It surveys theories and approaches to the subject, and puts these approaches into conversation with each other. We also explore the character of contemporary international order, and debate the relationship between theories of international relations, and its practice. Along the way, we ask whether IR represents a particular (Anglo-American/European) viewpoint, or whether it can – and should – become more global in terms of its histories, concepts and theories.

Key topics to be considered include:

1. The emergence of the discipline and the nature of its subject matter.
2. Key theories in IR: realism; liberalism; constructivism; English School, critical theories.
3. Key agential concepts in IR: state; empire; international and subnational agents; foreign policy.
4. Key structural concepts in IR: the states system; Euro-centrism, globalisation, post-colonialism; feminism; global governance; security.
5. Key institutional concepts in IR: international society; great powers; diplomacy; war; balance of power; international law and human rights.
6. Key sociological concepts in IR: power and sovereignty; intervention; gender; anarchy.
7. Contemporary applications: Is conflict between the US and China inevitable? Could the international community have saved Syria?; Would a UN parliament strengthen global governance?

Students should consult the appropriate *EMFSS Programme Regulations*, which are reviewed on an annual basis. The *Regulations* provide information on the availability of a course, where it can be placed on your programme's structure, and details of co-requisites and prerequisites.