



## Course information 2020-21

# IR2083 International political theory

### General information

**COURSE LEVEL:** 5

**CREDIT:** 30

**NOTIONAL STUDY TIME:** 300 hours

### Summary

This course develops, extends and deepens theoretical topics covered in *IR1011 Introduction to international relations*, as well as introducing students to a range of new texts, theories and concepts. International political theory is about different ways in which the nature of international politics may be explained, understood and judged. As a topic it is focused on theoretical texts and concepts (rather than empirical, historical material).

### Conditions

**Prerequisite:** If taken as part of a BSc degree, the following course(s) must be passed before this course may be attempted:

- IR1011 Introduction to international relations.

### Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the course are to:

- give an account of different frameworks of thinking about international politics
- acquaint students with ideas, concepts and texts in international political theory, both classical and modern, in their historical context
- introduce students to issues of methodology in the study of international politics
- enable students to think critically about alternative ways of explaining, understanding and judging international politics in the early 21st century.

### Learning outcomes

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

- demonstrate knowledge of different frameworks for thinking about international politics
- demonstrate knowledge of a range of ideas, concepts and texts in international political theory and the historical contexts in which they arose
- distinguish and evaluate different methodological approaches within the study of international politics

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.

- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative ways of explaining, understanding and judging contemporary international politics.

## Essential reading

For full details please refer to the reading list.

Baylis, John and Steve Smith (eds) *The Globalization of World Politics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) seventh edition [ISBN 978-0198739852]

Brown, Chris, Terry Nardin and Nicholas Rengger (eds) *International Relations in Political Thought: texts from the Ancient Greeks to the First World War*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) [ISBN 978-0521575706]

Brown, Chris *Understanding International Relations*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2019) fifth edition [ISBN 978-1137611703]

Burchill, S., Andrew Linklater et al *Theories of International Relations*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013) fifth edition [ISBN 978-0230362239]

Williams, H., M. Wright and T. Evans (eds) *A Reader in International Relations and Political Theory*. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 2001) second edition [ISBN 978-0335156689]

## Assessment

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

## Syllabus

Contributions to theorising international politics in the tradition of Western political theory. This will include examining the ideas of Thucydides, Augustine, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Grotius, Rousseau, Kant, Marx and Weber.

### **Dominant theories of international politics from the foundation of international relations as a discipline in 1919 to the end of the Cold War:**

- Liberalism (liberal internationalism, pluralism, interdependence, neo-liberalism);
- realism (classical political realism and neo-realism);
- international society;
- Marxism/ structuralism (dependency, world-systems theory).

### **Critical theories of international politics:**

- critical theory;
- post-structuralism;
- feminist theory.

### **Methodological debates:**

- can IR be a science?
- structure and agency in explaining international politics;
- constructivism.

### **Theorising international politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:**

- normative discourse in international politics;
- unipolarity and the question of empire;
- cultural bias in IR theory.

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