



# Course information sheet 2023-24

## IR2209 International political theory

### General information

**MODULE LEVEL:** 5

**CREDIT:** 30

**NOTIONAL STUDY TIME:** 300 hours

### Summary

IR2209 offers an introduction to international political theory (IPT). The course adopts a global, comparative, and historical approach exploring how international thought within and beyond Europe sits within global intellectual history, responding to world events, frequently shaped by patterns of imperialism, violence, and resistance. Students will be introduced to the main debates on the purposes and value of international thought; its relationship with international theory; and methods of interpretation and critique, including juxtaposing texts from different places and times. The course deals with debates and themes prompted by individual thinkers and key texts, and considers their location within the disciplinary history of International Relations, and the prevailing IR 'canon' including realism, liberalism, and critical theory. Students will develop in-depth knowledge of individual thinkers and key texts. Topics covered include: sovereignty, empire, law, and war; revolution, violence, decolonisation, and justice; race, gender, class, and ecology.

### Conditions

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

- IR1198 International relations: theories, concepts and debates.

### Aims and objectives

The aim and objectives of the course are to:

- To develop student knowledge of international political theory beyond the 'isms' (realism, liberalism, constructivism, post-colonialism) towards individual thinkers, key texts, and themes.
- To cultivate a critical awareness of how International Relations theory intersects with and borrows from international political theory and international political thought.
- To broaden the field of international political theory to thinkers beyond men from Europe and North America

### Learning outcomes

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

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- describe and compare some of the existing texts in International Political Theory, and discuss themes, concepts, and ideas contained within them.
- recognise prominent themes in the historical development of international political thought relating to (for example) questions of order, power, community, race, gender, or subjecthood.
- differentiate between International Political Theory and the International Relations discipline, as well as identify connections between IPT and IR Theory.
- demonstrate deeper knowledge of key thinkers who have written on international thought, including an ability to interpret and critique some of their ideas.
- use IPT to analyse and interpret historical and contemporary issues in world politics.

## Employability outcomes

Below are the three most relevant skill outcomes for students undertaking this course which can be conveyed to future prospective employers:

1. Complex problem-solving
2. Persuasion and negotiation
3. Creativity and innovation

## Essential reading

Armitage, David. *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

De Carvalho, Benjamin, Julia Costa Lopez and Halvard Leira. (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Historical International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2021).

Jahn, Beate, Steve Smith, and Thomas Biersteker. *Classical Theory in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Keene, Edward. *International Political Thought: A Historical Introduction* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005).

Owens, Patricia, S. Dunstan, K. Hutchings, and K. Rietzler. *Women's International Thought: Towards A New Canon*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022)

Shilliam, Robbie. *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism, and Investigations of Global Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

## Assessment

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

## Syllabus

### Topics covered include:

1. International Relations Theory and International Political Theory
2. Sovereignty, law and war: Grotius in the colonies
3. Hobbes, the state, anarchy, and savagery
4. Kant and perpetual peace

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5. Global revolutionary thought: Marx, Hegel, Haiti
6. J. S. Mill, liberalism, and empire
7. Interwar internationalism and the first great debate
8. Empire, race, and anti-colonial thought
9. Realism as an intellectual project
10. Decolonisation: Fanon, Césaire
11. Concerning violence
12. The international thought of the Cold War: Modernisation theory and dependency theory
13. Gender, sexuality, and social reproduction
14. Planetary crisis: Environmentalism and the end of International Relations?
15. The future of International Political Theory

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