Introduction
This is an advanced level undergraduate course designed to introduce students with the theories of international relations (IR) as defined within the disciplinary studies of international politics. The central aim is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth overview of major scholarly traditions as well as the major debates in IR Theory. Through this venture, it seeks to familiarize students with debates over the key concepts and themes (i.e., sovereignty, violence, war, power, security, equality, law, justice among others). The course explores the ontological, epistemological, methodological problematics in theorizing IR and probes the ongoing debates on International Political Theory in the 21st century.

Aims
This course aims to:
- to introduce students to different perspectives or intellectual frameworks for making sense of what conventionally has been called international relations (though many prefer terms like international, transnational, global, or world politics) and to cultivate skills in applying perspectives in aid of understanding events, processes, and/or practice
- to examine the basic assumptions, conceptual and theoretical insights offered by theories of IR, relating these both to contemporary events and historical processes, and assess their contributions as well as their shortcomings
- Enable students to develop a critical understanding of the ways in which the subject/object of the discipline of IR—the international—is constructed as a field of study
- Probe the theory/practice relation and grapple with the disciplinary, political stakes in theorizing “the international”
- in sum, the lessons learned from the class will be (a) sociological/theoretical, in that we will better understand how the world works; (b) meta-theoretical, in that we will reflect a bit on how we study the world; and (c) practical, in that we will think about how we are to live in the world as it is and might be.

Objectives/Outcomes
The objectives and outcomes of this course are:
- Learn how to think and write critically about key debates in contemporary IR theory
- Explain different frameworks for thinking about international politics
- Discuss a range of ideas, concepts and texts in international political theory and the historical contexts in which they arose
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative ways of explaining, understanding and judging contemporary international politics.

Course Structure
The course is composed of lectures and class discussions. The lectures are designed to provide a broad overview of that week’s topic, offer contesting views on the topic and contextualize it within wider debates. The discussions aim to encourage students to do textual exegesis, think critically and independently on the conceptual and theoretical questions while remaining firmly grounded in the assigned readings.

A good and fruitful class discussion depends on serious preparation by students. It is critical that students come to class having assigned texts carefully, reflected on them and ready to take active part in class discussions. This is important not only for your intellectual development, but also because it will constitute one fifth of your overall grade.

Course Requirements

Grading

• Exams 1 and 2 50% (25% each)
• Critical Essay 1 and 2 30% (15% each)

Each student will write two 3-4 page critical essays (12 font, typed, double-spaced, proof-read) on a general theoretical question, problem or issue based on the course material and write an essay directly addressing the question in the light of the assigned literature making an which defends or supports a thesis about some text(s), author(s), or school(s) of thought. What is meant by each of these terms (an argument, a thesis, a critical essay) will be discussed during the first session of the course.

Students are not expected to do additional research and reading beyond the course material. Essays will be evaluated according to the depth of insight, the clarity and care of argument, and the quality of writing. The essays will be submitted electronically before the class. No late papers are accepted.

• Class Participation 20%

Class attendance and active participation in classroom discussions are required. Students who miss more than three classes without a valid excuse that is documented to the satisfaction of the instructor will automatically fail the course. Engaged attention and active participation will both be weighed in your favor, with special emphasis on the quality of student participation. It is important to be engaged on a daily basis, but comments should be to the point. Weight is given to comments that extend discussions by pointing to deeper insights or integrating earlier comments. Or, importantly, that launch new lines of discussion when the previous one has become exhausted.
**Important Dates**

- **Critical Essay 1**
  - WEEK 4
  - October 11
- **Exam 1**
  - WEEK 7
  - November 1
- **Critical Essay 2**
  - WEEK 11
  - November 29
- **Exam 2**
  - WEEK 13
  - December 13

**Readings**

There are two main textual resources we will use for the course. The first one is a textbook which provides a broad overview of different theoretical approaches in IR. We will use the following textbook:


The second source will be journal articles and excerpts from books, which will allow us to deepen our discussions as we grapple with prominent theories of IR.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Introduction and Overview**

Griffiths, M (2007) “Chapter 1: Worldviews and IR Theory: Conquest or Coexistence?” in IRT

- **Further Reading:**

  - Special Issues: Dealing with Difference: Problems and Possibilities for Dialogue in IR” *Millennium:*
Week 2: Doing Theory, Theorizing the International

Wright, M (1960) “Why is there no international theory?” International Relations, 2(1)


- Further Reading:


Theories of IR: Mainstream Approaches

Week 3: Realism(s) – Classical, NeoRealism/Structural Realism, NeoClassical Realism

Elman, C (2007) “Chapter 2: Realism” in IRT


• Further Reading:

Guilhot, N (Ed.) The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation and the 1954 Conference on Theory.

Week 4: The English School

ESSAY 1 DUE

Bellamy, A J. “Chapter 7: The English School” in IRT


• Further Reading:


Week 5: Liberalism(s) -- Liberalism, Neoliberal Institutionalism, Liberalism 3.0


• Further Reading:
  Doyle, M et al (Eds.) Debating the Democratic Peace. CambRidge; CUP.
Week 6: Social Constructivism(s)


- Further Reading:


Week 7: Exam 1
Theories of IR: Critical Approaches

Week 8: Historical Materialism(s): Marxist, Gramscian, NeoGramscian Approaches

Rupert, M (2007) “Chapter 4: Marxism” in IRT

Cox, R (1996[1985]) “Realism, Positivism, and Historicism” in Cox, R and Sinclair, T (Eds.) Approaches to World Order. Cambridge: CUP.


• Further Reading:


Week 9: Critical Theory


- **Further Reading**


**Week 10: Poststructuralism(s)**

Edkins, J (2007) Chapter 8: Poststructuralism in IPT


Shapiro, M (1989) “Textualizing Global Politics” in Der Derian and Shapiro (eds.) *International/Intertextual Relations: PostModern Reading of Global Politics*


- **Further Reading**


Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.


**Week 11: Gender Studies, Feminism and Queering of IR**

**ESSAY 2 DUE**


• Further Reading

(2013) Special Issue: Feminism in International Relations International Studies Perspectives 14(4)

Week 12: Postcolonial, Decolonial Approaches


Further Reading


Week 13: Exam 2