Graduate Institute of Political and International Studies
University of Reading, 2013-14

International Relations
(PIM09)

Module Handbook

Course Convenors:
Dr Adam Humphreys & Dr Burak Kadercan
International Relations

Course Aims

- To introduce students to the principal concepts and theories associated with the academic discipline of international relations;
- To enable students to gain an understanding of the major issues and debates in contemporary world politics and the relevance of international relations theory to these questions;
- To strengthen students’ critical and analytical skills through engagement with a diverse literature (theoretical, historical and empirical); the giving of oral presentations and participation in seminar discussions; and the writing of essays and exams;
- To provide the analytic and intellectual basis for further academic research in international relations or for careers which require a sound understanding of international relations.

Organization of Teaching

The course is organized on the basis of weekly two-hour seminars in the Autumn and Spring terms. There are no lectures. The seminars will consist of student presentations followed by discussion of the week’s topic led by the course convenors.

Course Requirements

1. Students must attend all seminars and have completed the required reading for each seminar. Students are also expected to engage the further reading, especially for topics on which they are making presentations and on which they intend to write essays.

2. Students should expect to make at least one presentation each term (topics to be allocated by the course convenors). Presentations should be 10-15 minutes long and address one of the questions set for the week. All presentations must be accompanied by a one-page handout, which summarizes the main points of the presentation.

3. Students will also write two 3500-word essays: the first will be due 11 December 2013 and the second essay will be due 19 March 2014. Students will also submit a 500-word essay proposal on 13 November 2013.

4. Students will also sit a three-hour final exam.

Readings

For the first part of the module, we will regularly use two volumes:

• Chris Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) (*available online via University of Reading library*).

Students should ensure they have access to these volumes, either by purchasing their own copies, by borrowing them from the course collection, or by ensuring that they can access them online. A detailed reading list for each topic can be found below. Articles are normally in the library or can be accessed electronically through the university's electronic journals portal.

**Course Assessment**

Final assessment for the course is calculated on the following basis:

Two long essays 50%
Final exam 50%

Essays must be submitted by the deadline; late work will be penalized in accordance with Department and University regulations.

The final exam will be a closed-book three-hour examination in which candidates will have to answer three questions.

**Essay Topics**

In Autumn term, students must write an essay on ONE of the following:

1. How, if at all, does anarchy shape world politics?
2. Is co-operation amongst states possible? Explain.
3. In what sense is international politics a social realm?
4. What impact do norms have on world politics?
5. Is justice possible in international relations?
6. Do mainstream theories of international relations serve to legitimate inequality?

In Spring term, students must write an essay on ONE of the following:

1. How do territoriality and nationalism play into our understanding of sovereignty in the modern state system?
2. Can the threat of use of force be considered an essential component of diplomacy? Elaborate.
3. "The UN is what great powers make of it". Evaluate this claim in the context of the UN's track record in Syria.
4. Where does Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis stand vis-à-vis neorealism and constructivism?

5. What is the relationship between globalization and environmental challenges such as global warming? Is globalization helping us better cope with these challenges, making no difference, or making things worse? Why?

Seminars

Autumn Term

Week 1 Introductory Lecture
Week 2 Business meeting

International Relations Theory:

Week 3 Classical realism and modern realisms
Week 4 Classical liberalism and modern liberalisms
Week 5 The English School
Week 6 Constructivism
Week 7 Normative theory and the just war tradition
Week 8 Critical theory and Marxism
Week 9 Post-structuralism, post-colonialism, and feminism

Spring Term

International Order and its Institutions:

Week 1 Sovereignty
Week 2 Hierarchy in International Politics
Week 3 The rule of law in international politics
Week 4 The UN and international organizations

Challenges to Contemporary International Order:

Week 5 Globalization
Week 6 Culture and "The Clash of Civilizations"
Week 7 The use of force
Week 8 International cooperation and the environment
Week 9 Nationalism and Self-determination
Autumn Term

Week 1  Lecture: "Why International Relations Theory?"

Required readings (helpful to read in roughly this order):


Week 2 Introductory Meeting

Required readings (helpful to read in roughly this order):

Barnett & Sikkink, 'From International Relations to Global Society', in Reus-Smit & Snidal (eds.), Oxford Handbook of International Relations (2008), ch.3.
Darby, 'A Disabling Discipline', in Reus-Smit & Snidal (eds.), Oxford Handbook of International Relations (2008), ch.5.

PART I: International Relations Theory

Week 3 Classical realism and modern realisms

1) Why, according to classical realists, is international politics dominated by power?
2) Why do neorealists make anarchy their central concept?
3) How relevant is realism today?

Required readings (helpful to read in roughly this order):


Further reading:
Haslam, Jonathan, No *Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (2002).
Keohane, Robert (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (1986).
Lobell, Steven et al (eds.) *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (2009).
Schweller, Randall & William C. Wohlforth, 'Power Test: Evaluating Realism in


**Week 4  Classical liberalism and modern liberalisms**

1) What, if anything, unites the various strands of liberal theory in International Relations?

2) How do (neoliberal) institutionalists explain cooperation?

3) Is Moravcsik right to claim that his approach effectively supersedes realism?

**Required Reading (helpful to read roughly in this order):**


**Further reading:**


Doyle, Michael, Ways of War and Peace (1997), Part II.
Drezner, Daniel, All Politics is Global (2007).
Russett, Bruce, Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post Cold War World (1993).

Week 5  The English School

1) Is the English School closer to realism or liberalism?
2) What role do institutions play in English School thought? How do they differ from neoliberal institutionalist understandings of the role of institutions?
3) What are the main differences between pluralists and solidarists within the English School?

Required Reading (helpful to read in roughly this order):

Dunne, Tim, ‘The English School’, in Reus-Smit & Snidal (eds.), Oxford Handbook of
International Relations (2008), ch.15.

Recommended readings:
Clark, Ian, Legitimacy in International Society (2005).
Keene, Edward, Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics (2002).
Vincent, John, Human Rights and International Relations (1986).

**Week 6 Constructivism**

1) What is the significance of the claim that ‘anarchy is what states make of it’?
2) Do norms matter in international relations? If so, how?
3) What are the limits of a constructivist analysis of international relations?

**Required Reading (helpful to read in roughly this order):**


**Further reading:**

Guzzini, Stefano and Anna Leander (eds.), *Constructivism in International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics* (2006).
Kratochwil, Friedrich, ‘How Do Norms Matter?’ in Michael Byers (ed.), *The Role of Law in International Politics: Essays in International Relations and International Law* (2000), ch. 3.
Wendt, A. (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University


**Week 7  Normative theory and the just war tradition**

1) What is the place of ethics within International Relations theory?
2) What does 'justice' entail in the international context?
3) When can the use of force be considered just?

**Required reading (helpful to read in roughly this order):**

Hurrell, Andrew, ‘Norms and Ethics in International Relations’ in Carlsnaes, Risse and Simmons (eds.), Handbook of International Relations (2002).


Brown, Chris, 'International Relations as Political Theory', in Dunne, Kurki & Smith (eds.), International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity


Walzer, Michael, Arguing about War (2004), esp. Part I.


**Recommended reading:**


Bell, Duncan (ed.), Ethics and World Politics (2010).

Bellamy, Alex, Just Wars: From Cicero to Iraq (2006).

Boucher, David, The Limits of Ethics in International Relations (2009).


Evans, Mark, Just War Theory: A Reappraisal (2005).


**Week 8**  
**Critical Theory and Marxism**

1) What is the significance of Cox’s claim that theory is always ‘for someone and for some purpose’?
2) What do Marxist approaches bring to International Relations that mainstream approaches miss?
3) How can critical theory contribute to the transformation of world politics?

**Required reading (helpful to read in roughly this order):**


**Recommended reading:**


**Week 9 Post-structuralism, post-colonialism and feminism**

1) What lies at the heart of the post-structuralist critique of mainstream International Relations?

2) How is colonialism still relevant to the study of in world politics?

3) Why is feminism necessary in International Relations?

**Required reading (helpful to read in roughly this order)**

*Post-structuralism:*


*Post-colonialism:*


*Feminism:*


Recommended readings


Fanon, F, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1967).


True, Jacqui, ‘The Ethics of Feminism’, in in Reus-Smit & Snidal (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (2008), ch.24,


Spring Term

PART II: International Order and its Institutions

Week 1  Sovereignty

1) Can there be 'International Relations' without sovereignty?
2) Does state sovereignty protect or undermine international order?

Required Reading:

Carl Schmitt, Concept of the Political.


Further Reading:

Bartelson, Jens, A Genealogy of Sovereignty (CUP, 1995).

Week 2 Hierarchy in International Politics

1) Is hierarchy in international relations a predominantly social concept?
2) Does hierarchy pose a fundamental challenge to an international order of sovereign states?

Required Reading:


Further Reading:

Dunne, Tim ‘Society and Hierarchy in International Relations’ International Relations 17/3 (2003)
Wight, Martin, Systems of States (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977)
Week 3  The Role of Law in International Politics

1) Why do most states obey most law most of the time?
2) Does law tame power, or is it a source of power, in international relations?

Required Reading:

Hugo Grotius,
Higgins, Rosalyn, *Problems and Processes: International Law and How We Use It* (1995), chapters 1, 2, and 3

Recommended Reading:

Franck, Thomas, *The Power of Legitimacy among Nations* (1990), especially first two chapters
Goldstein, Judith, Robert Keohane, and Anne Marie Slaughter, Legalization and World Politics (2001). [See also the review of this book by Finnemore and Toope in *International Organization* 55/3 (2001)]

Week 4  The UN and International Organisations

1) Which theoretical approach can best explain the role of international organizations in the contemporary international order?
2) Is the United Nations an effective or ineffective organisation for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security?

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:
Baehr, Peter; Leon Gordenker, The United Nations in the 1990s (Macmillan: 1994)
Claude, I.L., Swords into Plowshares (McGraw-Hill, 1984)
Roberts, Adam and Benedict Kingsbury, United Nations, Divided World (Oxford: 1983)

PART III: Challenges to Contemporary International Order

Week 5 Globalisation

1) How has globalisation affected the role of the state in international society?
2) Has globalization only benefitted the already powerful?

**Required Reading:**

Evans, Peter, “The Eclipse of the State?”, *World Politics* 50 (October 1997).

**Recommended Reading:**

Held, David (ed.), *Global Transformations* (1999)

**Week 6 Culture and the ‘Clash of Civilisations’**

1) Is the ‘clash of civilizations’ an overstated claim? If so, why? If not, why not?
2) To what extent do relations between the West and the Islamic world suggest that culture is a cause of conflict in world politics?

**Required Readings:**

Baylis, Smith, and Owens, chapter 24.
Huntington, S. “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), Summer 1993. (to be read as a summative and digestible version of, and not as a substitute for, the book).

**Further Readings:**
Week 7  

 Violence and the use of force

1) Why have the rules restricting the use of force by states been increasingly undermined?

2) How ‘new’ are ‘new’ wars?

Required Reading:


Further Reading:


**Week 8**  
**International Cooperation and the Environment**

1) ‘Little or no progress has been made in the past 40 years in addressing the most pressing problems of the environment’. Do you agree or disagree and why?

2) What particular challenges does the study of international environmental issues pose for international relations theory?

**Required Reading:**


T. Salmon and M. Imber (Eds) *Issues in International Relations* (2008), chapters by Brown and Kutting, also Imber.

**Further Reading:**


P. Christoff, “Post-Kyoto, Post Bush ? Towards and effective climate change ‘coalition
Week 9 Nationalism self-determination vs. Sovereignty

1) In what ways has the idea of national self-determination shaped international relations?
2) Does it stand in contradiction to the principle of the sovereign state?

Required Readings:

John Bayliss, et.al (eds), The Globalisation of World Politics. Chapter 21.
James Mayall, Nationalism and International Society, CUP 1990, Chapter 4;

Further Readings:

Bishai, Linda S. Forgetting Ourselves : Secession and the (Im)possibility of Territorial Identity (Lexington Books, 2004)
Hutchinson, John; Anthony Smith (eds.), *Nationalism* (Oxford, 1994)
*International Affairs*, July 1996: special issue on ethnicity and international relations
Margaret Moore (Ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession*. OUP, 1998
Mayall, James, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge, 1990)
Mortimer, Edward; Robert Fine (eds.), *People, Nation and State* (Tauris, 1999)