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<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Theories and Concepts in International Relations</th>
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<td><strong>M14022</strong></td>
<td>(20 credits) / <strong>M14072</strong> (15 credits)</td>
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<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>Taught</strong></td>
<td>Autumn Semester <strong>2009/10</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module Convenor:</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Adam D. Morton</td>
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School of Politics and Int. Relations
University of Nottingham
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Summary of Content:

The War on Iraq and the US and British invasion of the country in 2003 has led to huge tensions in geopolitics. At the same time, the supposed ‘threat’ of international terrorism and continuing financial turmoil in the world economy have both brought to the fore the global politics of co-operation and confrontation. Whilst it might be possible to agree on the significance of these events, the explanation and/or understanding of them is dependent on prior theoretical choices. The purpose of this module is to make students aware of the diversity of approaches to international theory. Within International Relations (IR) theory there exist highly divergent interpretations and applications of key concepts (e.g. power, the state, agency, structure, and world order) as well as contested views about the practical purpose underpinning theories of world politics. The overall aim of the module is to provide students with a solid theoretical and conceptual grounding of this diversity. As a result, it will be possible to recognise not only how international theory informs policy-making and practice but also, perhaps, how truly contested the underlying assumptions of world politics are.

Educational Aims:

The aims of this module are:

- to deliver a module that complements the other elements of the degree programme;
- to familiarise students with the contemporary literature and debates;
- to establish competence in a variety of approaches;
- to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of competing approaches;
- to develop an understanding of how key concepts are conceived and applied in international relations;
- to develop a critical comparison of the application of the dominant explanatory models; and
- to understand the reasons for the use of specific approaches.

Learning Outcomes:

These will be:

i) Knowledge and understanding:

On completion of the module, students should be in a position to:

- understand the difference between positivist and post-positivist approaches at a meta-theoretical level;
- outline the core theoretical approaches of International Relations; and
- comprehend core concepts such as agency-structure in relation to different International Relations theories.
ii) Intellectual skills:

- demonstrate a particular knowledge in the area of International Relations theory covering conceptual considerations as well as a range of different approaches (to be assessed by a 3000 word essay and a two-hour exam);
- think about the nature of theory in a reflective and critical way.

iii) Professional/Practical skills:

- absorb and disseminate large quantities of data in a clear and concise manner;
- have the confidence to discuss issues of an abstract theoretical nature as well as linking these debates to concrete empirical examples (to be practised in tutorial discussions);

iv) Transferable & Key skills:

- the capacity to concentrate on core points and the ability to speak freely on the basis of a set of notes;
- the ability to write in a structured and concise way under time pressure (to be assessed in the exam); and
- the skill to write a thought-through, well argued longer piece of work (to be assessed in the 3000 word essay).

v) IT skills:

- able to deliver a professional, word-processed document with accompanying bibliography and footnotes;
- able to draw information and documents from the Nicenet internet website and equally download interviews with key thinkers from the web, included in the module reading list.
Module Evaluation:

Evaluation and feedback are crucial to the success of any module. The School wants students to have their say on Politics modules. Therefore modules are formally evaluated on a biennial basis, so please use this opportunity to have your say. If you have any other comments or queries regarding this module, please contact the Module Convenor.

Film Programme

The Fog of War, Dir. Erol Morris, 107 min., Sony Pictures, 2004, DVD —

Documentary following the insights of Robert S. McNamara, US Secretary of Defense (1961-68) in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations during the Vietnam War and the Cuban Missile Crisis. McNamara was subsequently the President of the World Bank (1968-1981)

Screening: Friday, 9 October 2009, 12 noon to 2 p.m., Room: B63 LASS.

Battle for Haditha, Dir. Nick Broomfield, 93 min., Contender Home Entertainment, 2007, DVD —

A recreation of an incident that occurred in Haditha, when 24 Iraqis were allegedly massacred by US Marines following the death of a Marine in a roadside bombing. Battle for Haditha follows three stories: that of the US troops; the insurgent who planted the bomb; and a civilian Iraqi family.

Screening: Friday, 6 November 2009, 12 noon to 2 p.m., Room: B63 LASS.

Lecture/Seminar Titles:

Under each lecture heading, a selection of literature is presented including recent literature and classic items. It is divided in essential reading and further reading. These should be referred to in connection with both lectures and class work on these topics. You are expected to have read at least two items of essential reading for each class. Students should also make use of the general textbooks mentioned below. The ability to think laterally is necessary, if the module is to make sense as an integrated whole.

Each of the sections contains at list of issues to be covered in the lecture and the related tutorial and an essay question that can also serve as themes for class discussion together with other relevant issues selected by the members of each class in conjunction with us.
The weekly lecture/seminar titles are as follows:

1) Introduction: What is Theory?

- the nature of theory in international relations: positivism vs. critical theory;
- the role of theory in international relations: explaining, understanding, predicting;
- the development of international relations as a social science: the great debates;

Key Reading:


Additional Readings:


Essay title:

‘A theory of international relations needs to perform four principal tasks. It should describe, explain, predict, and prescribe’ (Kegley). Discuss!
2) The Anarchy Problematique and Sovereignty: Neo-Realism and State Power

- classical realism (Morgenthau, Carr);
- the rise of neo-realism (Waltz);
- the differences between realism and neo-realism;
- latest developments: offensive versus defensive realism;

Key Reading:


Additional Readings:


http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people7/MearsheimerWalt/mearsheimerwalt-con0.html.


**Essay title:**
Is there a “timeless wisdom” to neorealism?

**3) Transnationalism and Interdependence: Neoliberal Institutionalism**

- roots in classical liberalism;
- interdependence and transnationalism;
- regime theory/neo-liberal institutionalism;
- international co-operation: absolute versus relative gains;

**Key Reading:**


**Additional Readings:**


**Essay title:**

Two what extent are the theories of neo-realism and neo-liberalism similar to “two bald men fighting over a comb”?

**4) Good Girls, Little Girls, and Bad Girls? Feminist International Relations**

- Gender and IR theory;
- Empirical feminism;
- Gender as constitutive of International Relations;
- Gender as transformative of International Relations;
Key Reading:


Additional Readings:


Essay title:

How does feminism trouble International Relations?

M14022/M14072 Theories and Concepts in IR

2009/10
5) Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Constructed World of Sovereignty

- the constructivist turn in IR theory;
- constructivism as the *via media* of rationalist and interpretive approaches?
- the importance of ideas;

**Key Reading:**


**Additional Readings:**


**Essay question:**

What are the key claims of constructivism and does it provide a more satisfactory explanation of International Relations?
6) Uneven and Combined Development: Marxism and International Relations

- uneven and combined development;
- social relations of production and class struggle;
- social forces in the struggle over hegemony;

**Key Reading:**


[ALSO REPRINTED IN ROBERT W. COX WITH TIMOTHY SINCLAIR (EDS.) APPROACHES TO WORLD ORDER. CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, PP. 85-123].

**Additional Readings:**


Essay question:
What are the essential key features of a Marxist theory of IR?

7) Writing Security: Poststructuralism and War

• post-modern deconstruction in IR theory;
• the method of double reading;
• the relationship between power and knowledge.

Key Reading:

Additional Readings:


**Essay question:**
What are the consequences of the poststructural critique of international theory?

**Contesting the Canon:**

8) The State and Modernity

- what is the state?
- the emergence of the international state-system;
- the state as a performative act;

**Key Reading:**


**Additional Readings:**


Essay question:
What are the problems and promises of contending approaches to the state?

9) History, Agency and Structure

- the interplay of structure and agency;
- structuration theory;
- structure and agency in IR theory;

Key Reading:

Additional Readings:


**Essay question:**
Do we have to prioritise either agents or structures in the explanation of international politics?

**10) The Social Function of Ideology**

- organic intellectuals;
- intellectuals of statecraft;
- the material structure of ideas;

**Key Reading:**

**Additional Readings:**


**Essay question:**
Assess in what ways ideas may be constitutive of international politics?

**11) Conclusion: cui bono?**

**Key Reading:**

**Additional Readings:**


**Essay question**
How does posing the question *cui bono?* (who benefits?) help in revealing the value-laden assumptions in International Relations Theory?
Seminar discussions will be based on readings listed above, please ensure that you have familiarised yourself with the relevant required readings before the seminars.

Please note that registers will be taken in seminars, should you be unable to attend, please email the Module Convenor.
Method and Frequency of Class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Sessions</th>
<th>Duration of a Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1h</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1h</td>
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Location of Lecture: UP-CLIVEG-A39+
Day: Thursday
Time: 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Location of Seminar: Several seminar slots
Day: Thursday and Friday
Time: Depends on particular seminar slot

After each lecture, the lecture notes will be posted on WebCT, which can be accessed at http://webct.nottingham.ac.uk using your University network username and password. This will allow you to compare your own notes with the lecture notes and to go through the material learned in the lecture in an organised and systematic way. Once registered you can access the class at any time from any PC with an internet connection. You are expected to connect to the classroom at least once a week.

Method of Assessment:

This 20 credit/15 credit module will be assessed on the following basis:

<table>
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<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>50 per cent</td>
<td>Two-hour exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coursework 1</td>
<td>50 per cent</td>
<td>3000 words for 20 credits</td>
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<td>2000 words for 15 credits</td>
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You must submit an electronic copy of your essay via the module’s WebCT site, taking note of the individual ID number that will be generated once you have successfully uploaded it. This process is self-explanatory.

After you have done that – and only then - you must submit two hard copies of the essay to the School Office by Friday 20th November 2009. A submission sheet should be completed and attached to both copies of the essay. You are required to enter the WebCT ID number on the cover sheet, as proof that you have already electronically submitted the essay. The submission sheet and the top of page of each copy of your essay should then be date stamped, and submitted in person to the School Office where you will be issued with a receipt. Please note that the School Office will be open from 10am till 4pm (Monday to Friday) on submission days.
handed in after 4pm will be stamped as late and the usual University penalties will be applied.

**The electronic copies will be scanned to detect plagiarism.** It is therefore imperative that you consult the Student Handbook, which outlines what is counted as plagiarism and advises you how to avoid it. Failure to submit an electronic copy even if you submit two hard copies on time will mean that the essay will be counted as having not been submitted.

Any essay handed in after the deadline will have 5% of the original mark deducted per working day, unless an extension has been approved in advance. Applications for extensions will not normally be considered retrospectively. Any student wishing to apply for an extension should collect and complete the necessary forms from the School Office and submit these to the relevant Year Tutor together with any necessary documentary evidence.

**Reading Information:**

You are strongly advised to purchase one of the following texts:


There are also a number of new introductory texts and more advanced volumes that you can consult as library copies, or consider as additional purchases as supplementary texts, or as book shares:


**Journals**

The major analytical journals are *International Organization, International Studies Quarterly* and *Review of International Studies*. All journal articles referred to in this
module guide are in the Library, either as a printed copy or in an electronic version online. You may have to search both the Online Catalogue (UNLOC) and the electronic journals in order to find them.

**Coursework Support:**

The Hallward Library and Halls of Residence have a number of networked PCs to facilitate access to information on holdings.

As Module Convenor please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any difficulties with the module or assessed work. I will be available without appointment during my office hours. Appointments to meet at other times can be made by calling me on my direct line or via email. My contact details together with office hours are noted at the front of this module outline.
Guidance to Essay Writing:

A short guide for students on essay writing skills and an outline of the marking criteria used by staff is available from the School Intranet.

Assessed Essay Titles:

1. ‘A theory of international relations needs to perform four principal tasks. It should describe, explain, predict, and prescribe’ (Kegley). Discuss!

2. Is there a “timeless wisdom” to neorealism?

3. Two what extent are the theories of neo-realism and neo-liberalism similar to “two bald men fighting over a comb”?

4. How does feminism trouble International Relations?

5. What are the key claims of constructivism and does it provide a more satisfactory explanation of International Relations?

6. What are the essential key features of a Marxist theory of IR?

7. What are the consequences of the poststructural critique of international theory?

8. What are the problems and promises of contending approaches to the state?

9. Do we have to prioritise either agents or structures in the explanation of international politics?

10. Assess in what ways ideas may be constitutive of international politics?

11. How does posing the question cui bono? (who benefits?) help in revealing the value-laden assumptions in International Relations Theory?

Reminder: submission date is 4pm on 20 November 2009
Example of Past Exam Paper:

This is a re-launched and thoroughly revised module running in its second year. Reliance on past exam papers is therefore not a recommended practice as there is only one such example (see below). For indicative exam questions, also see essay questions.

Please answer two of the following eight questions:

1. 'A theory of international relations has the task of formulating empirically testable hypotheses.' Discuss.

2. 'Neo-realist theory is theory of, by, and for positivists’ (Richard Ashley). Discuss.

3. Is co-operation between states possible in international relations?

4. How does “doing” feminist-informed analysis of gender and international politics contribute to the “undoing” of the discipline of International Relations?

5. What does historical materialism bring to International Relations with its focus on the social relations of production as its starting-point of analysis?

6. How does the poststructuralist method of ‘double-reading’ assist in deconstructing power/knowledge relations in international politics?

7. Are there always “two stories to tell” in relation to the agent-structure debate in International Relations?

8. What does a focus on ideas contribute to our understanding of international politics?