The University of Edinburgh  
School of Social and Political Studies  

Core Course: International Relations Theory  
Course code: U02400 / PLIT10053  

Autumn Semester 2012  

Course Convenor  
Dr. Andrew Neal  

Lecturers and Contact Details  

Email is the best way to make contact with staff to make appointments outside of set office hours.  

Dr. Andrew Neal: Room 4.22, CMB, tel: +44 (0)131 650 4236,  
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Office hours Tuesday 3:30 pm-5:30 pm.  

Kostas Kostagiannis  
Email: K.Kostagiannis@sms.ed.ac.uk  
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Administrative Support  

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e-mail: Ruth.Winkle@ed.ac.uk  

Time and Location  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>12:10</th>
<th>50mins</th>
<th>Weeks 1-11</th>
<th>Old College</th>
<th>LT183</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>50mins</td>
<td>Weeks 2-10 only</td>
<td>David Hume Tower</td>
<td>12.18</td>
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Please sign up for tutorial groups on Learn.

**Learning objectives**

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the key concepts of international relations theory, and to develop the skills necessary to engage with those concepts critically.

By focusing on classic texts that express the key *problems, principles* and *practices* of the discipline, the aim is to understand how international relations theory arose as a body of thought politically, historically and philosophically.

The course emphasises the *relationship* of international relations theory to deep-seated problems in modern political thought; for example, how did IR theory emerge in relation to problems of modernity, liberty, equality, law, development and imperialism?

We will critically consider IR theory as a *product, effect* and *symptom* of modern history and politics, rather than as a form of detached rational reflection.

We will discuss the text and theme of each week in relation to contemporary debates in the theory and practice of international relations, in order to foster an appreciation of the central dilemmas of international thought.

The course is as much about developing critical faculties and transferable skills as it is about substantive content. It is designed to complement the subsequent ‘Approaches to politics and international relations’ course. It will give students a solid grounding in the conceptual and political history of international relations before they study more specialised methodologies and perspectives in the spring.

**Learning outcomes**

It is expected that all students, on completion of this course, will have achieved a number of learning outcomes:
• Knowledge of many of the key texts and thinkers of political and international thought.
• Critical appreciation of the implications of key concepts in political and international thought.
• Close reading skills and a critical approach to the interpretation of theoretical texts.
• Theoretical skills for evaluating the political assumptions and implications of competing ideas and claims in international relations theory.
• A historical appreciation of the origins of international relations theory.
• An appreciation of the complex relationship between theory and practice.
• Development of analytical skills in theoretical research.
• Development of oral and written skills through tutorial participation and essay preparation.

Course organisation

The course is based on a weekly lecture and tutorial.

The lecture will introduce and contextualise each text and explore the questions it raises. The tutorials will be used to discuss and expand upon those questions.

This is a text-based course. Each week will usually centre on the close reading of a key text. Nearly all of these key texts will be available on Learn and are compulsory reading for the seminar. When sources are not on Learn there will be sufficient copies in the library or online elsewhere.

Some of the journal articles can be accessed directly from a university computer or account. For others you will need to go through the E-journals section on the library website.

The further readings should be used to supplement tutorial participation and for essay and exam research. The reading list is only a starting point; it is by no means meant to be prescriptive or comprehensive. You will be expected to look further afield for books, articles and sources in the library, in bookshops and on the internet.

Lecture Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>International relations theory: introduction</td>
<td>AN</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hobbes</td>
<td>AN</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kant</td>
<td>AN</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Clausewitz</td>
<td>AN</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The ethics of evil (Morgenthau)</td>
<td>SM</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Theorising international society (Wight and Bull)</td>
<td>SM</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>International law (Kelsen)</td>
<td>AN</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Neo-realism (Waltz)</td>
<td>SM</td>
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Assessment

Assessment for the course will be based on two pieces of work: one essay and one exam.

The Exam

The exam will be held at the end of Semester 1 and will represent 60% of the grade for the course. It will be designed to test knowledge and understanding acquired throughout the course, in course readings, class lectures and tutorial discussions.

The Essay

The essay should be 2,000 words in length, not including footnotes and bibliography (+/-10% is acceptable), and is worth 40% of the final grade. Essays more than 10% over or under the word limit will lose 5 marks.

The deadline is Week 8, Friday 9 November at 12 noon. The late penalty takes effect immediately after 12 NOON.

Students should choose their essay topic from the list of questions supplied below. No alternative topics or titles will be accepted.

Please see the essay writing advice at the end of this handout.

Essays should be word-processed or typed in a standard typeface with 1.5 or double line spacing on A4 paper with page numbers.

Essays should be submitted anonymously. Each copy of the essay should begin with a title page containing your examination number, degree, title of course, title of essay, and the date.

Please note: You must submit your essay both in hard copy and electronically.

Essay questions

1. Is international anarchy a good thing, a bad thing, or neutral?

2. Which is more dangerous for international politics: liberalism or classical realism?

3. Can international law overcome the problems of international anarchy?

4. Is there any justice to be found in IR?
5. Is progress a desirable aim in IR?

6. What is the role of reason in IR?

7. Should we abandon the Leviathan as a model of power?

**Submitting your essay**

Students must deposit two hard copies of their essay in the Politics and IR Honours Essay Box, located in the wall outside room 1.11, Chrystal Macmillan Building. When doing so, students must complete a Politics IR Honours coversheet (available outside room 1.11), indicating their examination number and tutor’s name, and signing a plagiarism form.

*Please see the ‘Honours Handbook’ for further information on submission of coursework; ‘Late Penalty Waivers’; plagiarism; learning disabilities, special circumstances; common marking descriptors, re-marking procedures and appeals.*
Reading list and tutorial questions

General reading

This course does not require the use of textbooks but students may find the following helpful:

[Of the three here, this one is recommended]

S. Burchill, A. Linklater et al. Theories Of International Relations (London: Palgrave, 2005)


Topics and readings

1. Introduction

The introductory lecture will explain how the course is organised, with particular reference to the compulsory core readings and the E-Reserve system. It will then introduce the aims and objectives of the course as outlined above.

The second part of the lecture will introduce students to some of the key problems, principles and practices associated with international relations. In particular the lecture will pose the questions: What is at stake in claims about the international? What is at stake in claims about relations? And what is at stake in claims about theory?

Required reading:

2. Hobbes

Themes: modernity, sovereignty, the state, liberty, equality.

Seminar questions:
- Who or what is Hobbes arguing against?
- Why is Hobbes important for international relations?
- What are the implications of international anarchy?
- Is international anarchy ‘good’ or ‘bad’?

Required reading:


Many other editions are available, and there are also online versions on the internet if you are really stuck.


Further reading:


3. Kant

Themes: history, development, liberal government, cosmopolitanism

Seminar questions:
- Why is Kant important for IR?
- What is the relationship of IR to theories of history?
- Why must all the world become Republican?
- Is Kant an imperialist?
- What is the relationship between reason and IR?

Required reading:
Learn

or


Further reading:


George Cavallar, Kant and the Theory and Practice of International Right (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999)


4. Clausewitz

Themes: - the nation state vs. empires, the emergence of the modern state system, the relationship of war to politics

Seminar questions:
- What is the ‘trinity’?
- What is the place of war in IR?
- Is war rational?
- What are the lessons of Clausewitz for IR?

Required reading:


Learn


Further reading:


Michael Howard. *Clausewitz: a very short introduction, Very short introductions; 61*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983 (2002 printing)). [this is the same text as the above - AN]


Rogers, C. J. (2002). "Clausewitz, genius and the rules (Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz


5. The ethics of evil (Morgenthau)
Themes: - progress, development, technological advancement, reason, power politics

Seminar questions:
- What is wrong with a scientific approach to international problems?
- What is the ‘classical approach to international relations?’
- Is there a role for ethics in international relations?
- Is an ethical foreign policy possible?

Required reading:


Learn


Further reading:


Also in:


6. Theorising International Society (Wight, and Bull, and the English School)

Themes: international systems, international structures

Seminar questions:
- What is the English school?
- What does ‘anarchy’ mean for international relations?
- Is justice possible in international relations?

Required reading:


Learn


Richard Little, “The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations”, European Journal of International Relations September 2000 vol. 6 no. 3 395-422

Further reading:


7. International law
Themes: international law, recognition, positivism and formalism, taming nation-states

Seminar questions:
- How did international law emerge?
- What has been the relationship between states, the states system, and international law?
- Is state sovereignty compatible with international law?

Required reading:


Further reading:


Selected chapters:
- "Natural Law," 34-37
  Kelsen, Hans "The Nature of International Law," 60-74

Hilary Charlesworth, Christine Chinkin & Shelly Wright, "Feminist Approaches to International Law:" 256-286

Wendt, Alexander *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge University Press: 1999)

Wilson, Eric Michael *The savage republic: De Indis of Hugo Grotius, republicanism, and Dutch hegemony within the early modern world-system* (c. 1600-1619) (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: 2008)

Austin, John "Lectures on Jurisprudence"


8. Neorealism (Waltz)
Themes: neo-realism, IR today

Seminar questions:
- How has international relations been turned into a system?
- What kind of international politics does neo-realism imply?

Required reading:

Learn


Learn


Further reading:


See the man himself discuss Neorealism @ http://www.uctv.tv/library-test.asp?showID=7386


R. Keohane, ‘Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics,’ In R. Keohane (ed.) Neorealism and its Critics, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). [ In addition to some critical essays and a reply by Waltz, this also contains the essential parts of Waltz’s Theory of International Politics]


9. **Power, society and war (Foucault)**

**Themes:** sovereignty, the nature of power, the modern human

**Seminar questions:**
- How should we understand power?
- What are the implications of Foucault for international relations?

**Required reading:**


**Further reading:**
Andrew Neal and Michael Dillon (eds), *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*, (Palgrave, 2008).

Michel Foucault. "**Society Must Be Defended**": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76. Translated by David Macey. (New York: Picador, 2002).


Julian Reid. *The biopolitics of the war on terror: life struggles, liberal modernity and the defence of logistical societies, Reappraising the political*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).


10. Hardt and Negri
Themes: empire, capital, post-modern structure and agency

Seminar questions:
- Is there a contemporary empire?
- What are the roles of forces of production in international relations?

Required reading:

Learn

Further reading:


P. Green, ‘The Passage from Imperialism to Empire’, Historical Imperialism (vol. 10, no. 1, 2002).


Writing IR theory essays

- It is always useful to provide a clear introduction, in which you outline the broad objectives of your essay, how you will approach the essay topic and what you are hoping to establish/show.
- Demonstrate both knowledge of the theories in question as well as an ability to evaluate their utility in assessing international relations.
- Consider the structure of your essay, often it is very useful to divide your argument into different subsections and provide subheadings indicating the order of things. It is also useful to use linking phrases and provide very brief summaries of what you have said so far.
- Proofread your essay prior to submission so as to rid it of unnecessary spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
- Don’t be afraid of placing yourself in the academic debate and critically take on board the ideas of established scholars. However, in doing so avoid being too personal. Use phrases such as this paper, this essay, the argument developed here.
- Make sure that you reference properly. Sometimes students do not provide full references i.e. the author’s name, page number and year.
- Even if you are writing a conceptual/theoretical essay it can be very useful to illustrate your conceptual arguments by providing some empirical evidence/examples.
- Make sure that you stick to the word limit.
- While it is a good idea to do individual research (find suitable articles and other materials relating to your essay topic), you should also demonstrate awareness and knowledge of the recommended texts. Furthermore, if you, for example, write an essay on Kenneth Walz’s neorealism make sure that you consult his original texts.
- If you are asked to compare and contrast a particular social phenomena or set of theories you need to think of how to structure your argument, so as to avoid confusion or too much “jumping back and forth”.
- Make sure that the marker is not left to guess what your argument is. For example, make sure that you introduce your main argument early on in the essay and that you build upon it throughout the essay. Make sure that the argument is clear throughout and revisited.
- Make sure that you use the conclusion effectively in order to pull out the core arguments of your essay. Play to your strengths and identify what seems to be the key findings of your work.