INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES

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HUSS 2024
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Office hour: Sundays and Wednesdays, 3.30-4.30pm

The study of international relations allows you to make (more) sense of the world we live in. In contrast to many other disciplines in social science, international relations lacks a single dominant paradigm and therefore developed as a pluralistic set of theories that look at events such as wars, peace agreements and the emergence of international organizations through different “lenses”. The study of international relations will develop your analytical skills to high standards and will allow you to engage with history and current events with a more rigorous and critical attitude.

The structure of the course is designed to guide you through this discipline gradually but without neglecting some of the most recent and cutting-edge theoretical approaches and themes. The course has also been given an “Egyptian flair” by including references to the ancient and contemporary history of Egypt.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will:

1) know definitions of key concepts in international relations, such as "international society", "balance of power" etc., and the main debates around them;
2) know the main theoretical assumptions and implications of the three mainstream IR theories and of some more advanced approaches, and be able to assess critically their validity;
3) be able to apply these theoretical approaches to understand key dynamics in contemporary politics, such as international cooperation and security, by comparing and contrasting their analytical perspectives and predictions;
4) be able to understand and assess critically the significance of specific historical events, such as the peace of Westphalia and the two World Wars, for the evolution of the international system.
5) lay the foundations for taking more advanced courses in the field of international relations, by becoming familiar with the main theories, concepts and themes that will be further developed in them.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

The course is organized in three main sections:

Section 1 (lectures 2-6) provides an overview of the history of international relations. Note that this section is not a short history course; it assumes that you know at least most of the events that will be discussed* and will use them to introduce a number of concepts and ideas that are central in international relations theory.

Section 2 (lectures 9-15) introduces the three mainstream international relation theories (realism, liberalism and classical / ontological Marxism) and presents one thematical case
study for each, explaining how they can be applied to understand real-world international politics.

Section 3 (lectures 18-25) introduces three more recent and advanced critical international relation theories (Gramscianism/critical theory, social constructivism, post-structuralism) and presents one or two thematical case studies for each, explaining how they can be applied to understand real-world international politics.

* If you struggle to follow the historical section of the course you should contact the course instructor as soon as possible and meet him by the end of week 2. The instructor knows that not all students have the same academic background and is happy to help. Good introductions to modern and contemporary history include Nye/Welch, Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation and Young/Kent, International Relations since 1945; these are not essential readings (except for one chapter from Nye/Welch – see below) but can be useful for revision.

ASSESSMENT

Important note: More detailed information on assessment (especially on the structure of the exams) will be provided in due course. Any further information will be mentioned in the lectures and added to the Blackboard website of the course, which you must check at least weekly.

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<th>Assessment Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>History test</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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History test: a short history test will be taken in class in module 8 to test your knowledge of the concepts and key historical events discussed in Section 1.

Mid-term exam: the mid-term exam will be taken in class in module 17 to test your knowledge and understanding of mainstream IR theories (section 2).

Research paper: students will be required to submit a 2,500-words (including bibliography and footnotes) research paper by Monday 5 December (the date is provisional and subject to change depending on whether the term will proceed without interruptions).

A list of questions related to the themes introduced in the second and third sections of the course will be circulated in early November. Your paper must answer one of these questions employing at least TWO of the theoretical approaches discussed in the second and third sections of the course. You will be allowed to propose your own question, provided that it is related to the themes covered in the course and that your answer is based on at least two theoretical approaches, as mentioned above; in this case, you MUST also obtain the approval of the instructor by Monday 7 November.

You are encouraged (but not obliged) to submit one 500-words written outline of the paper to receive early feedback on structure and content. This must be submitted by Monday 14 November; outlines received after this date will not be looked at.

The penalty for late assignments is 5 per cent per day, including weekends. The first page of the paper must include the student’s name and ID number, and the essay body must be 12-point font, double-spaced and include page numbers.

The essay must also include a bibliography and acknowledge sources appropriately. Any academic referencing style is acceptable provided that it is used consistently throughout the paper. Useful information on some widely used referencing styles can be found at: http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

**Final exam**: the final exam will test your knowledge and understanding of the themes introduced in section 3. The format of the final exam will be confirmed by the instructor at a later stage.

**Grade scale:**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93+</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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**TEXTBOOKS**

There is no single textbook for this course. The essential readings for each module are listed below. Access to all the essential readings is provided online via Blackboard. Most of the readings for the course, however, are taken from the following textbook:

John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: OUP, 8th edition)

Note that this textbook also includes a useful glossary, lists of further readings (which can be useful when you are planning your research paper) and questions that help you self-test your understanding of the material:

**LECTURE SCHEDULE AND ESSENTIAL READINGS**

**Lecture 1 – Introduction to the course** (no readings)

**Lecture 2 – “International society” from Amarna to the Peloponnesian War**
- Extracts from Cohen/Westbrook (eds.), *Amarna Diplomacy* (pp. 6-12; 42-43; 45-48; 50-53)

**Lecture 3 – Westphalia and the modern balance of power**

**Lecture 4 – World War I and “levels of analysis”**

**Lecture 5 – The Short 20th Century: collective security and bipolar balance**
Baylis/Smith/Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics* [from now on B/S/O], chapter 3 “International History of the Twentieth Century”, pp. 54-69.

**Lecture 6 – The end of the Cold War and beyond**

**Lecture 7 – Revision** (no readings)
Lecture 8 – History test (no readings)

Lecture 9 – Introduction to IR theories
Dunne/Kurki/Smith (eds.), International Relations Theories, chapter 1 “International Relations and Social Science”, pp. 14-23

Lecture 10 – Realism
B/S/O, Chapter 8 “Realism”, pp. 130-144.

Lecture 11 – Theory in practice: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Lecture 12 – Liberal internationalism

Lecture 13 – Theory in practice: The United Nations

Lecture 14 – Marxism I (Marxist ontologies)
B/S/O, chapter 7 “Marxist theories of international relations”, pp. 115-121

Lecture 15 – Theory in practice: Global political economy
B/S/O, Chapter 16 “Global political economy”, pp. 256-270.

Lecture 16 – Revision (no readings)

Lecture 17 – Mid-term exam (no readings)

Lecture 18 – Marxism II (Gramscianism and Critical theory)
B/S/O, chapter 8 “Marxist theories of international relations”, pp. 121-129

Lecture 19 – Theory in practice: Humanitarian intervention in world politics
B/S/O, Chapter 16 “Global political economy”, pp. 256-270.

Lecture 20 – Social constructivism

Lecture 21 – Theory in practice (I): Environmental issues

Lecture 22 – Theory in practice (II): Race in world politics

Lecture 23 – Post-structuralism

Lecture 24 – Theory in practice (I): Terrorism

Lecture 25 – Theory in practice (II): Refugees and forced migration

Lecture 26 – Revision (no readings)
RELEVANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Code of Ethics/Academic Integrity:
Students are expected to commit to the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in, or tolerate, acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons’ work as one’s own, using Internet or other sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students’ acts of academic dishonesty, etc. Plagiarism for assignments and/or reports will result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or the report in question. Cheating during an examination will result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, will also be implemented. Students need to be familiar with, and committed to, the University’s policy on academic integrity. Students should be aware that all written work might be submitted to “Turnitin.com”. By enrolling in AUC, students acknowledge that they have understood that any detected plagiarism will have to be reported to the Academic Integrity Office. Faculty are required to report all academic integrity violations.

- The Code of Academic Ethics which is available here: [https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/about_Policies/Code%20of%20Academic%20Ethics.pdf](https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/about_Policies/Code%20of%20Academic%20Ethics.pdf)
- The AUC Academic Integrity Sanction Matrix provides detailed consequences for specific violations: [https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/academic-integrity/processes-handling-academic-integrity-violations/sanctions-matrix](https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/academic-integrity/processes-handling-academic-integrity-violations/sanctions-matrix)

Attendance:
Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Students are also expected to maintain awareness of their records of attendance and avoid excessive absences, thereby avoiding circumstances in which it may become difficult or impossible for an instructor to evaluate and assess them properly. A student who misses more than the three-week equivalent of class sessions (one-fifth of sessions) for any reason, may be assigned a reduced grade for the course, including a failing grade, on the basis of their inability to meet course outcomes.

- Please review the full AUC policy on Class Attendance here: [https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1333](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1333)

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment:
The American University in Cairo is committed to maintaining learning and working environments that are free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. Discrimination and harassment based on sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, religion, gender identity or expression, or any other protected characteristic under Egyptian law are prohibited. The University will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation in the workplace or educational environment whether committed by students, alumni, staff, faculty, vendors, or by visitors to AUC while they are on campus.

- The Title IX coordinator can be contacted at: equity@aucegypt.edu.
Accommodations/Students with Special Needs:
AUC has numerous facilities available to ensure that your educational endeavors will be successful. Students with special needs/disabilities who want to request special accommodations, should contact the Student Disability Services unit at the Center for Student Well-being during the first few days of the semester: sds@aucegypt.edu. AUC complies with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- More information can be found here: https://www.aucegypt.edu/student/well-being/disability-services

University Writing Center:
AUC’s Writing Center provides a place where all University students, faculty, and staff are welcome to discuss their writing with trained writing consultants. Students with specific writing needs are recommended to contact the Writing Center for information and advice.

- More information can be found here:
  https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/mohamed-taymour-writing-and-communication-center/writing-center-reservation-system

Technology:
Students will need internet access and a PC computer or a Macintosh with the latest version of a web browser. Students can access Blackboard anywhere Internet access is available. Firefox or Google Chrome browser work best with Blackboard. If wireless connectivity problems are encountered, please switch to a hardwired connection.

- The student Blackboard link can help answer questions here:

Student and Faculty Communication:
Student and faculty meetings will be conducted during established office hours. In the event that the student has another course scheduled during the scheduled office hours, another meeting time can be requested, but this needs to be set and agreed upon by both parties at least 2 working days in advance.

During the work week, student emails and queries will generally be answered by faculty within 24-48 hours. During weekends students can expect a typical response time of 48-72 hours. Email correspondence that is professional, considerate and well written will lead to more effective communication and clearer answers. Students need to take the time to formulate and proofread well thought out emails. Students should look for answers to their questions in the syllabus and on Blackboard before emailing the faculty using their AUC email accounts.

When there is an issue, the student’s first line of communication must be with the faculty member.

Important University Dates, Fall 2022:
First day of classes: September 4
Closing date of Drop/Add: September 8
Armed Forces Day (university closed): October 6
Drop courses deadline: October 27
Withdrawal deadline for undergraduate students: November 23
Thanksgiving (university closed): November 24
Withdrawal deadline for graduate students: December 5
Last day of classes: December 12
Study day: December 13
Final Exams: December 14-20