



**The American University in Cairo
Department of Political Science**

POL3620-01 Introduction to International Relations Theories

Spring Semester 2021

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Class sessions

Sunday

10:00-11:15 Watch the pre-recorded lecture and student presentations on blackboard (or at another time that is convenient for you but before our Wednesday zoom session)

Wednesday

10:00-11:15 Class discussion on zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://aucegypt.zoom.us/j/97665646716>

Meeting ID: 976 6564 6716

Teaching Assistant

Nourhan Ibrahim

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Course Resources

Available on Blackboard

I also set-up a Slack channel so we can all share news items and ideas. Sign-up via this link:

<https://auc-opr9548.slack.com/join/signup>

(You will have to sign-up with your AUC email address)

Office Hours

Virtual office hours are Sundays 11:15-12:15pm and Wednesdays 11:30-1:30pm.

Please email me to make an appointment. I will then send you a zoom link for a 15-minute time slot. Please be on time and cancel if you cannot make it.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

International Relations is the study of how states interact with one another. This course is designed to give students a more informed and analytical way to make sense of the world around you. The course aims to give you the theoretical framework to analyze and critique the practices and events of global politics. Major theories and approaches as well as the formative academic debates that form the core of the discipline are introduced. The course will also introduce students to the practice of international relations through a simulation, in

which student groups represent various countries and work together to draft a proposal on an important issue area such as conflict, health or economic integration. Thus, the course strives to introduce students to *both* the theory and practice of IR. Students will thus need to be engaged with international news stories during the course of the semester and will be applying the theories to in analyze those events.

This course is useful for any political science major, but is especially useful to those specializing in IR.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, you will:

- Understand the key definitions and concepts in IR such as the prisoner's dilemma and the balance of power.
- Understand the main theoretical schools of thought in the discipline, the events that gave rise to the different theories, and the explanatory power of each theory.
- Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each theory.
- Apply the theoretical approaches to some of the key historical events of the 20th century as well as contemporary events.
- Apply theory to case studies and current events.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will be taught in a “flipped classroom” format. I will make short (max 20 minutes) pre-recorded lectures available for students to view online, then we will use our virtual zoom classroom time on **Wednesday** for discussions.

1. During asynchronous learning (outside class)
 - Pre-recorded lectures will be uploaded onto Blackboard using Panopto
 - Each student will prepare one presentation and send it ahead of the zoom class (Power Point slide with audio at a minimum)
 - It is very important that you watch these materials before the discussion in the zoom class along with your weekly reading.
2. Real time engagement (during class time, synchronously via zoom)
 - Classes are expected to be heavily interactive.
 - Students are expected to attend all classes and come prepared having done the required reading and watched the weekly presentations/lectures.
 - Please note that there will be quizzes to ensure these have been done.
 - During zoom sessions we will use features such as polling function/breakout rooms to foster discussion and critical thinking.
 - Students are encouraged to ask questions in class. No question is a bad question!
 - Students are encouraged to schedule Zoom meetings (acting as Office Hours).

COURSE MATERIALS

All course materials can be found on blackboard.

Each week we will focus on one article/chapter according to the key topics and cases of the course (outlined below). These are the required reading for the week.

The texts under recommended reading will be useful as you write your essay.

Textbooks

Two key textbooks will be used throughout the course:

Baylis, John, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, 2011, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 5th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dunne, Tim, Milija Kurki and Steve Smith, 2010, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADES

The final assessment for this course will be based on the following:

Assignment	% of final grade	Due Date
Active class participation	10%	Over whole course
Presentation	10%	To be assigned
Essay 1	20%	10 March
Essay 2	20%	31 March
Simulation	20%	14, 18, 21 April
Final reflections exam	20%	12 May

Grade Scale

A	93+	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D+	67-69
B-	80-82	D	60-66
		F	59 and below

Grade Policy

The instructor does not accept late assignments. The grade that you receive at the end of the semester is the sum of grades received for your completed coursework and active participation. This is not negotiable and no additional coursework will be provided to supplant grades. All assignments should be uploaded on blackboard.

Active class participation 10%

Students are expected to attend the classes and show knowledge of – and engagement with – the essential readings, that need to be read before the relevant class. Short quizzes will take place throughout the term to check you are watching the online lectures, your classmates' presentations and doing the required reading.

Presentation 10%

In pairs students will be required to do one presentation on one weekly recommended reading. These will be chosen during week 2 of term. Presentations will be no longer than 15 minutes and should be done in a format that can be shared with the class remotely ahead of time. Either using Power Point with audio or a video presentation. Please make sure your presentation is shared before the class on Wednesday, ideally by Sunday so your fellow students will have time to watch it.

The presentation should answer the following questions about the article/chapter:

1. What is the context of the article/author?
2. What is the main argument?
3. How is the argument made/developed (case study? data? comparison?)
4. Do you agree or disagree, and why?

Essays 1 and 2: 20% each

You will apply two theories to a current event. You will either show how one theory *helps* in understanding the event and how the other theory is *inadequate* to explaining the event. Your essay question should be in the format of 'What theory best explains XXX'.

The essay should be approx. 1,500 words. The essay must clearly answer the question selected by the student while: (i) engaging with the topics and readings provided in class (ii) developing a clear argument (iii) being properly referenced. The paper must include 4-6 academic references (journal articles, chapters in edited books, academic books, etc.). These can include "required readings" or "recommended readings" listed below, or other credible academic sources not listed in the syllabus.

Essay 1: Choose between realism, liberalism, constructivism

Essay 2: Choose at least one 'traditional' theory and one 'critical' theory

Simulation 20%

We will conduct one online simulation in this course. More information about the simulation will follow, but it will be managed and organized through the ICONS system through the University of Maryland. *Each simulation costs \$13 per student.* If this is an undue financial burden, please see me ASAP and an alternative will be found.

Based on the brief given, each team will produce, before the simulation:

- 1-page word document with your 1) Objectives; 2) Obstacles; 3) Strategies

Each team will also receive a grade for their performance during the simulation

Final reflections 20%

Will be offered as take-home exam:

- After the simulation, each student will produce a theoretical reflection on the simulation in the form of an online take home exam.
- There will also be questions drawn from lectures, class discussions etc.
- Students are expected to respond to the questions ethically and responsibly.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I. Understanding and comparing IR theories

Week 1: 31 January and 3 February (*Zoom session on Wednesday 3 February)

Introductions

After introducing ourselves, we will go over the syllabus and the expectations of the course.

- Question for the class: Where does theory come from?

Week 2: 7 and 10 February

What is theory? Why does it matter?

- Focus: Levels of analysis

Required:

Alex Prichard, 2018, “The ‘Isms’ Are Evil. All Hail the ‘Isms’! A Reflection on IR Theory”, *International Relations Theory*, E-IR publication.

Further reading:

Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meridith Loken, 2020, Why Race Matters in International Relations, *Foreign Policy*: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/19/why-race-matters-international-relations-ir/>

Week 3: 14 and 17 February

- *Zoom class on Sunday 14

Realism - Tragedy, power and anarchy

- Focus: Balance of power
- Case: Iraq war
- Game: Survival

Required:

Richard Ned Lebow, Classical Realism, Chapter 3 (Dunne, Kurki, Smith: *International Relations Theories*)

The Realist Creed (Robert Kaplan):

https://www.realeclearworld.com/articles/2014/11/20/the_realist_creed_110813-2.html

Recommended:

Jervis, Robert, “Realism in the Study of World Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (October 1998), pp. 971-991.

John Mearsheimer, Structural Realism, Chapter 4 (Dunne, Kurki, Smith: *International Relations Theories*)

Waltz, Kenneth N., *Realism and International Politics*, London: Routledge, 2008.

Week 4: 21 and 24 February

Liberalism

- Focus: Kant to Democratic Peace
- Case: The European Union
- Game: Prisoner’s Dilemma

Required:

Bruce Russett, Liberalism, Chapter 5 (Dunne, Kurki, Smith: *International Relations Theories*)

Recommended:

Axelrod, Robert, and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (October 1985), pp. 226-254.
Snidal, Duncan, "Coordination versus Prisoners' Dilemma: Implications for International Cooperation and Regimes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (December 1985), pp. 923-942.

Robert Keohane, 1984, *After Hegemony*, Princeton University Press.

Week 5: 28 February and 3 March (Census day)

- *Zoom class on Sunday 28 February

Constructivism

- Focus: Norms
- Case: The War on Terror
- Game: Identity game

Required:

Michael Barnett, Social Constructivism, Chapter 12 (Baylis, Smith and Owen: *Globalization of World Politics*)

Recommended:

Adler, Emmanuel, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3) (September 1997), pp. 319-363.

Katzenstein, Peter J., ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Wendt, Alexander, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46(2) (Spring 1992), pp. 391-425.

Alexander Wendt, 1999, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press.

Week 6: 7 and 10 March

- Essay 1 due 10 March

Feminism

- Focus: What has feminism added to our understanding of International Relations?
- Case: Masculinity in US and foreign policy

Required:

Johanna Kantola, 2007, The Gendered Reproduction of the State in International Relations, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9: 270-283.

Kelly Fisher (blog) 'The Differing Masculinities of Trump and Biden'

<https://blogs.prio.org/2021/01/the-differing-masculinities-of-trump-and-biden/>

Recommended:

Anne Phillips, 2018, Gender and Modernity, *Political Theory*: 1-24.

Paul Amar, 2011, Middle East Masculinity Studies: Discourses of 'Men in Crisis,' Industries of Gender in Revolution, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 7.3: 36-70.

Cynthia Enloe, 2014, Gender makes the world go round, Chapter, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkley: University of California Press.

Lola Olufemi, 2020, The saviour complex: Muslim women and gendered Islamophobia, Chapter 5, *Feminism Interrupted*, Pluto Press.

Week 7: 14 and 17 March (International Day)

Marxist and Critical theory

- Focus: Historical materialism and hegemony
- Case: The vampire metaphor

Required:

Stephen Hobden and Richard Wyn Jones, Marxist theories of international relations, Chapter 7 (Baylis, Smith and Owen: Globalization of World Politics).

Recommended:

Robert Cox, 2000, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations", in *International Relations: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, edited by Andrew Linklater (Routledge, 2000), p.1218

Karl Marx, Capital,

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aucegypt/detail.action?docID=3008517>

John S. Moolakkattu, "Robert W. Cox and Critical Theory of International Relations", *International Studies* 46(4) 439–456.

Week 8: 21 and 24 March

* 25 March is drop course deadline

Postcolonial theory

- Focus: Eurocentrism and race
- Case: International Organisations

Required:

Meera Sabaratnam, Postcolonial and decolonial approaches, Chapter 10 (Baylis, Smith and Owen: Globalization of World Politics)

Recommended:

Antony Anghie, 2002, "Colonialism and the Birth of International Institutions: Sovereignty, Economy, and the Mandate System of the League of Nations," *Journal of International Law and Politics*, 34: 513-523.

Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'The postcolonial moment in security studies', *Review of International Studies* (2006), 32, pp. 329-352.

Meera Sabaratnam, 2020, "Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Texts", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 1–29.

Saurin, J. (2006) 'International Relations as the Imperial Illusion; or, the Need to Decolonize IR', in B. Gruffydd Jones (ed.), *Decolonizing International Relations*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 23–42

Week 9: 28 and 31 March

- **Essay 2 is due 31 March*

Postructural theory

- Focus: Securitization
- Case: Images and discourses on terrorism

Required:

Lene Hansen, Poststructuralism, Chapter 11 (Baylis, Smith and Owen: Globalization of World Politics).

Further reading

Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde (1998) *Security: A New Framework of Analysis*. London: Lynne Rienner.

Lene Hansen, 2011, "Theorizing the image for Security Studies: Visual securitization and the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis", *European Journal of International Relations* 17(1) 51–74.

Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London: Routledge

Sophie Haspeslagh, 2020, "The 'linguistic ceasefire': Negotiating in an age of proscription", *Security Dialogue* 1–19.

Marco Pinfari, 2017, "Framing through Paradox: Egypt and the "Obama Supports Terrorism" Campaign", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 122-138.

Part II. IR theories in practice

Week 10: 4 April (Western Easter) and 7 April

- *No class*
- *Watch the panopto lecture on simulation preparation*
- *Meet with your team to prepare your position and prepare the simulation*
- **Hand in your 1-page word document with your 1) Objectives; 2) Obstacles; 3) Strategies before the simulation by 8 April*

Week 11: 11 and 14 April

- Simulation Part I
- We will meet online on Wednesday

Week 12: 18 and 21 April

- Simulation Part II
- We will meet online on Sunday and Wednesday

**Withdrawal deadline 22 April*

**Spring break 25 April to 3 May*

Week 13: 5 May

Applying IR Theories to understand public health issues

- **Case: COVID-19**

Required:

Joshua Busby, 2020, “What International Relations Tells Us about COVID-19”, E-IR:
<https://www.e-ir.info/2020/04/26/what-international-relations-tells-us-about-covid-19/>

Recommended:

“IO COVID-19 Online Supplemental Issue”, *International Organisation*
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/information/io-covid-19-online-supplemental-issue>

Week 14: 9 and 12 May

- **Individual final reflections take home exam on 12 May*

Week 15: 19 May

- **Wrap-up**

ACDEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

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 person's 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 may result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or the report in question. Cheating during an examination may result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, would also be implemented.

You should be aware that all written work will be submitted to "Turnitin.com", the plagiarism detection and prevention software. By reading this syllabus, you will acknowledge that you have understood that any detected plagiarism will have to be reported. The University's statement on academic integrity, from which the above statement is drawn, is available at <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity/Pages/default.aspx>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Generally, AUC informs instructors about any disabilities a student may have and works with the instructor to make sure each and every student has equal opportunity to participate in the course. If you have not done so already, please visit the AUC Disability Service (<http://www.aucegypt.edu/studentlife/gethelp/Pages/disabilityserv.aspx>). However, even if your specific case has not been documented I am willing to work individually with you. Please make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible to discuss any accommodation necessary to guarantee your full participation.

STUDENT-FACULTY COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES: Due to remote and hybrid teaching and learning there is likely to be more email contact and individual zoom calls between faculty and students. The following points are intended to foster clarity in communication and to provide information on response time and response frequency.

Office hours will be conducted via zoom hours. Individual meetings with students will be conducted during established office hours (Sundays 11:15-12:15pm and Wednesdays 11:30-12:30pm). 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 1-2 *working days* in advance.

During the Sunday-Thursday work week, student emails and queries will generally be answered within 24 hours. During weekends students can expect a typical response time of 48 hours. Email correspondence that is professional, considerate and well written will lead to more effective communication and clearer answers. Please take the time to formulate and proofread well thought out emails. Clearly stated questions will be answered within 1-2 *working days*. Students should look for answers to their questions in the syllabus and on Blackboard before emailing using their AUC email accounts.