

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Introduction to International Relations Theory

Course code: POL 212 / POL 212E

Teacher responsible: Prof. Dr. J. MEN

Course description:

As an introduction to International Relations (IR) theory, this course is designed to acquaint students with the main currents of theoretical approaches that characterize the major developments in the field of international relations. The content and nature of International Relations theory is by no means fixed. Before examining contemporary mainstream approaches, the course will first review the “Great Debates” that tell the origins of IR theory. From there, the course will go through a series of critical interventions that have contested the mainstream approaches. The overall objective is to guide students to establish a broad basis of knowledge in the theoretical field.

Course objectives:

At the end of the course, students will gain:

- substantive understanding of the general scope and competing theories of International Relations;
- a conceptual framework and empirical tools with which to analyse the issues of contemporary international relations;
- an understanding by engaging epistemological questions and “great debates” in the discipline;
- an appreciation of academic debate relevant to the practical concerns of global decision-makers.

Grade weighting scheme:

Term Paper	30%
Presentation	10%
Mid-Term	25%
Final Exam	35%
TOTAL	100%

Course material and references:

Text book:

- Burchill, Scott et al (2005), *Theories of International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 3rd edition.

Articles for presentation and class discussions:

- Ralph Pettman, “Competing Paradigms in International Politics,” *Review of International Studies* 7, no. 1 (1981): 39-49.

- Peter Wilson, "The Myth of the 'First Great Debate,'" *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 5 (December 1998): 1-16.
- Gellman, P. "Hans J. Morgenthau and the Legacy of Political Realism," *Review of International Studies* 14, no. 4 (1988): 247-66.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," in C. Kegley (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory* (New York: Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 67-81.
- Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin. "The Promise of Institutional Theory." *International Security* 20, no.1 (Summer 1995): 39-51.
- Grieco, Joseph M. "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism." *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 485-507.
- Richard Little, "The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations*. 6, no. 3 (2000): 395-422.
- John Maclean, "Marxism and International Relations: A Strange Case of Mutual Neglect," *Millennium* 17:2 (Summer 1988): 295-320.
- Andrew Linklater, "The Transformation of Political Community: E.H. Carr, Critical Theory and International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 23:3 (1997): 321-338.
- Jim George, "Realist 'Ethics,' International Relations, and Post-Modernism: Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic," *Millennium* 24:2 (Summer 1995): 195-223.
- Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is What States Make of it," *International Organisation* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): pp. 391-425.
- J. Ann Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists," *International Studies Quarterly* 41:4 (December 1997): 611-32.
- Leggold, "Is Anyone Listening? International Relations Theory and the Problem of Policy Relevance," *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 1 (1998): 43-62.

Students are encouraged to leaf through periodicals (both manually and electronically). The following are available in either (or both) the VUB and ULB libraries, and some are available as full-text article delivery online.

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences [VUB, 3 A SILL 72] (Useful for concise explanations of terms or particular issues)

Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science [ULB, SHABH P.059261]

American Journal of Political Science [Athens – JSTOR].

American Political Science Review [Athens – JSTOR; VUB, FCB 320 E APSR; ULB, SHABH P. 016976; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 016976]

British Journal of Political Science [VUB, FCB 320 E BJPS; ULB, SHABH P. 551221; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 551221]

British Journal of Politics and International Relations [Athens – INJENTA]

European Journal of International Relations

European Journal of Political Research [VUB, FCB 320 E EJPR; ULB, SHABH P. 529183; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 529183]

Foreign Affairs [VUB, 34 E FAFF; ULB, SHABH P. 018844; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P.

018844; ULB, S (2660313) HABH P. 018844]
Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations [Available from the Brussels School office]
International Affairs [ULB, SHABH P.034455]
International Organization [**Athens – JSTOR**; VUB, FCB 34 E INTO; ULB, SHABH P. 116736; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 116736]
International Political Science Review [ULB, SHABH P. 662472; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 662472]
International Security [VUB, FCB 327.6 E INSE]
International Studies Quarterly [VUB, 32 E ISQU]
Journal of Peace Research [ULB, SHABH P. 662480] [ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 662480]
Journal of Politics [**Athens – JSTOR**]
Millennium: Journal of International Studies
Political Science Quarterly [**Athens – JSTOR**]
Political Studies [VUB, FCB 320 E PSTU; ULB, SHABH P. 662510; SHNBH 4NIV P. 662510]
Review of International Studies [VUB, SGES]
World Politics, [**Athens – JSTOR**; VUB, FCB 327 E WOPO; ULB, SHABH P. 125843; ULB, SHNBH 4NIV P. 125843]