UNIT

In recent years, International Relations (IR) as a discipline has been characterized by extensive and significant theoretical ferment. This unit will provide you with an overview of key theoretical traditions in IR. The goal of this unit is not to get you to adopt a particular IR theory or representation of world politics. Instead, it is hoped that this unit will help you to develop the tools to uncover the assumptions, both tacit and explicit, behind the way in which questions and texts are framed, to consider what questions are left unasked, and to recognize which theories have been, or have not been, used. Overall, the unit is designed better to prepare you as a scholar and as a citizen to understand the workings of world politics through a greater awareness of the diversity of IR theories and their respective strengths and weaknesses.

METHODS

The following methods will be outlined and used in the seminars:

• Listening and speaking in discussion
• Essay writing
• Oral presentation

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course unit is to help you as citizens and future decision-makers to develop an understanding of the variety of theories which are employed for the analysis of international relations and as a guide for policy makers. The unit will also help you identify your own position and viewpoints within the epistemology and theory of International Relations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
There are three levels of skill in the study of international relations which you are going to learn and practice in this unit:

- **Synthesis & Evaluation**
- **Application & Analysis**
- **Knowledge & Comprehension**

When you have completed this unit successfully, you should thus be able to demonstrate orally and in your essay writing that you can:

- **PLACE** each theory correctly within the ‘third debate’.
- **EVALUATE** the contributions of different theories to our understanding of contemporary international relations.
- **APPLY** different theoretical approaches to contemporary international relations.
- **ANALYSE** the merits and limitations of different theoretical approaches.
- **DEFINE** key concepts in international relations theory.
- **EXPLAIN** different theories of international relations.

**ACTIVE LEARNING**

You will enjoy and learn from this unit most, if you:

- Read the core material for seminar and do any required homework!  
  *It is simply no fun having to listen to people talk about things you don’t have a clue about.*
- Note any questions that you have about your reading and ask them in class!  
  *The seminars are not to test your knowledge, but to help you understand what you have read. If you do not use this opportunity to ask a question you might never know the answer.*

**REQUIRED WORK**

Your learning of the tasks set out in the learning above will be formally and informally assessed through:

- one oral presentation and handout
- one essay due on the Friday of week 12 by 12 noon

**1. ASSESSED ESSAY**

There are no seminars during weeks 11 and 12 so that you can concentrate on writing your assessed essays. The question for the essay and the oral seminar presentation must be on
different topics. Essay questions will be handed out in class when they have been approved
by our external examiner.

Full details about all requirements and rules regarding assessed essays – including length,
formatting, submission, pass marks, extensions, feedback, resubmissions, and so on – are
in the Departmental Graduate Studies Handbook.

2. ORAL PRESENTATION
We will discuss guidelines and criteria for good oral presentations in the first week of term.

3. SELF-RELECTION
Self-reflection on your learning should be an integral part of your study because you will only
learn it you are aware of the gaps in your knowledge/understanding/skills. To encourage this
practice, I may ask you to think about and comment (in writing) on your oral presentation.

4. TEACHER FEEDBACK
You will have feedback as follows:
• oral comments during the seminar
• oral and/or written feedback on your presentation
• written feedback on your essay

OFFICE HOURS
My office hours will be announced in the first week of term.

REQUIRED TEXTS FOR PURCHASE

1. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith International Relations Theory: Discipline and

This is a new textbook that I am trying out for the first time this year. It is replacing John
Baylis and Steve Smith, The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International
Relations, 3rd edition JZ1305 GLO This is by far and away the best known textbook in the
field of international relations, but it is designed for broad-ranging undergraduate courses,
whereas Dunne, Kurki and Smith is specifically designed for a course on International
Relations Theory. I have placed all the relevant chapters from Baylis and Smith in the
section on Strongly Recommended Reading. I hope that you will read some of the chapters
because I would like to get your assessment at the end of the unit as to which text you
preferred.

2. Course Pack (contains all required reading that is not in the Textbook)

UNIT READINGS

Each week’s seminar will proceed on the assumption that you have completed ALL of that
week’s required reading. The syllabus organizes the required reading in order of difficulty
and **objective** in a way that matches the first two skill levels shown in the diagram 'learning outcomes' above:

**Required Text No. 1 ⇒ Learning objective: Knowledge**
The first text is usually from a textbook. It introduces you to the theory by summarizing key texts from a number of authors and provides an overview of the debates surrounding it. It is usually the easiest text to read for the week and is best read first.

**Required Text No. 2 ⇒ Learning objective: Comprehension**
The second text is a book or article by a/the key author who has defined a theory. It explains the details of a theory to you in the author's own words. This is the most important text that you read in the week because it allows you to make up your own mind about a theory. It is usually moderately difficult and is best read second.

**Required Text No. 3 ⇒ Learning objective: Application, Analysis, Critique**
Further texts either present an application of the theory or an analysis of its merits and limitations. These are frequently the most difficult texts because they introduce you to new skills. It is best to read these texts last.

**Reading recommended by previous students: 😊**

**Other readings**
Beyond the required readings, the readings for this unit are divided into two categories: strongly recommended reading and supplementary reading. Those under the heading 'strongly recommended' have been chosen because they offer prominent arguments, are written by prominent authors, and/or are particularly illuminating of the perspective under discussion. You might start with these when you pursue further reading about a given theoretical tradition. Those readings under the heading 'supplementary reading' have been chosen to give you a range of examples of work in, or critical of, the particular theoretical tradition. In each category entries are listed alphabetically.

**Short Loan:** Items marked with * are in the Short Loan Collection. Note that some items will be in the Short Loan Collection even if they are not marked with an asterisk here, as they may have been put on short loan for another unit. So, if an item does not have an asterisk yet is not on the open shelves, always check the Short Loan Collection! Please be aware that, for reasons of copyright, you are not allowed to photocopy items in the library that are themselves photocopies.

**Electronic Journals:** Many journals are now available online through the library’s home page at: [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/is/library/electronicjournals/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/is/library/electronicjournals/)

**NB:** Some of these materials (those, except journals, without class marks or call numbers) are not available in the University's library. I have included them because they are important to a survey of IR theory.

**Historical background reading:** If you need a quick introduction to international history, you might want to find the time to read Part One, 'The Historical Context,' in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, second edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.35-137.
If you have a bit more time, an excellent introduction to contemporary history is Geoffrey Barraclough, *An Introduction to Contemporary History*, London: Penguin, 1964 *(D421BAR)*.

**SEMINAR SCHEDULE**

There are ten 100-minute seminars in the unit (weeks 1-10). Attendance is compulsory. Seminars will provide you with an opportunity to:

- ask questions about things that you don’t understand
- engage in the intellectual discussion necessary to sharpening your understanding of these theories and issues
- learn how to apply IR theories to the analysis of contemporary international relations through selected exercises

**Week 1: Introduction**

In opening of this session I will talk to you about Teaching and Learning, the content of the unit, go through this syllabus with you to ensure that you understand its contents, and allocate oral presentations.

**Seminar Topic** Why study international relations theory?

**Required reading:**
Smith, Steve, ‘Introduction’ *[Text]*
*Steve Smith and John Baylis ‘Introduction’ in John Baylis and Steven Smith, The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations, 3rd edition Course Pack and JZ1305 GLO*

**Week 2: IR Theory and Method**

**Seminar Topic** How should we study international relations?

**Learning outcomes:**
*At the end of this class, you should be able to explain the difference between ‘explaining’ and ‘understanding’, its role in the ‘third debate’ in International Relations and you will have identified criteria for the assessment of the theories that we will be examining in the coming weeks*

**Required reading:**
**Textbook:** Milja Kurki and Colin Wight ‘International Relations and Social Science’ *[Text]*
**Key Work:** *Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith (1990) Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon, Chapter 1, also read Chapters 3 + 4 which are not in the course pack for copy right reasons. **Course pack + JX1391 HOL**
Strongly recommended reading:

FER


Supplementary reading:


Halliday, Fred, 'International relations and its discontents,' *International Affairs*, 71(4), 1995, 733-746. **Serial JX1.I5 + Electronic journals**


Linklater, Andrew, 'The question of the next stage in international relations theory: A critical-theoretical point of view,' *Millennium*, 21(1), 1992, pp.77-98. **Serial JX1.M5**


Neufeld, Mark, 'Reflexivity and international relations,' *Millennium*, 22(1), 1993, pp.53-76. **Serial JX1.M5**


Smith, Steve, ‘Paradigm dominance in international relations: The development of international relations as a social science,’ *Millennium*, 16(2), 1987, pp.189-206.  **Serial JX1.M5**


Week 3: Classical Realism

Seminar Topic  Identify the essential elements of classical realism and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

Learning outcomes:
By the end of this class, you should be able to summarize, apply and critique Classical Realism.

Required reading:
Textbook: Richard Ned Lebow ‘Classical Realism’ [TEXT].

Strongly recommended reading:

Supplementary reading:
Select Realist Classics:

Other Relevant Readings:
Kegley, Jr., Charles W., ‘The neoidealism moment in international studies? Realist myths and the new international realities,’ *International Studies Quarterly*, 37(2), 1993, pp.131-146. Serial JX1.I58 + Electronic journals
Krasner, Stephen D., 'Rethinking the Sovereign State Model,' Review of International Studies, 27 (Special Issue), 2001, pp.17-42. Serial D1.B65 + Electronic journals
'Symposium: The end of the cold war and theories of international relations,' International Organization, 48(2), 1994. Serial JX1.I5 + Electronic journals

Week 4: Structural or Neo-Realism

Seminar Topic: Identify the essential elements of structural or neo-realism and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

Learning outcomes:
By the end of this class, you should be able to explain structural or neo-realist theory, apply it to contemporary world politics and identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Required reading:
Textbook: John J. Mearsheimer ‘Structural Realism’ [TEXT].

Strongly Recommended reading:
Hoffmann, Stanley, Robert O. Keohane, and John J. Mearsheimer, 'Correspondence: Back to the future, Part II: International relations theory and post-cold war Europe,' 


**Supplementary reading:**

Barkdull, John, 'Waltz, Durkheim and international relations: The international system as an abnormal form,' *American Political Science Review*, 89(3), 1995, 669-680. **Serial JA1.A + Electronic journals**


**JX1391 NEO**

**JX1308 HOL**

**JX1395 INT**

**Serial D1.B65 + Electronic journals**

**Serial JX1.M5**

**JX1308 WAL**

**Electronic journals**

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**Week 5: Neoliberal Institutionalism**

**Seminar Topic.** Identify the essential elements of neoliberal institutionalism and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

**Learning outcome:**

*At the end of this class, you should be able to explain the difference between relative and absolute gains and apply it to the analysis of international institutions. You should also be able to compare and evaluate Neo-Realism and Neoliberal Institutionalism.*

**Required reading:**

**Textbook:** Diana Panke and Thomas Risse ‘Liberalism’ and Lisa L.Martin *Neoliberalism [TEXT].*

**Course pack + JX1308 KEO**

**Course pack + JX1395 NEO**

**Strongly recommended reading:**

**Serial D1.B65 + Electronic journals**

**Serial JX1.I58 + Electronic journals**


**Supplementary reading:**


Doyle, Michael W., ‘Liberalism and world politics,’ *American Political Science Review*, 80(4), 1986, pp.1151-1169. **Electronic journals**


Jones, R.J. Barry, and Peter Willetts (eds.), *Interdependence on Trial*, London: Pinter, 1984. **JX1395 INT**


Wallander, Celeste A., 'Institutional assets and adaptability: NATO after the cold war,* International Organization*, 54(4), 2000, pp.705-735. **Serial JX1.15 + Electronic journals**


Young, Oran R., 'Political leadership and regime formation: On the development of institutions in international society,' *International Organization*, 45(3), 1991, pp.281-308. **Serial JX1.I5 + Electronic journals**


**Week 6: Marxism/Gramscianism**

**Seminar Topic** Identify the essential elements of Marxist IR theory and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

**Learning outcomes:**

*At the end of this class, you should be able to explain Marxist/Gramscian IR theory and assess its relevance for the analysis of contemporary world politics.*

**Required reading:**

**Textbook:** Mark Rupert ‘Marxism and Critical Theory’ [TEXT].


**Application:** Cox, Robert W., 'Gramsci, hegemony and international relations: An essay in method,' Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 12(2), 1983, pp.162-175. **Course Pack and Serial JX1.M5 + Electronic journals**

**Strongly recommended reading:**

Cox, Michael, ‘September 11 and US hegemony – Or will the 21st century be American too’, *International Studies Perspectives*, 3(1), 2002, pp.53-70. **Electronic journals**


*Hobden, Stephen, and Rochard Wyn Jones, ‘Marxist Theories of International Relations’*

John Baylis and Steven Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd edition **JZ1305 GLO**


**Supplementary reading:**

*Marxist classics*


**Other relevant readings**

Amin, Samir, ‘Accumulation on a world scale: Thirty years later,’ *Rethinking MARXISM*, 1(2), 1988, pp.54-75.


Deudney, Daniel, ‘Geopolitics as theory: Historical security materialism,’ *European Journal of International Relations*, 6(1), 2000, pp.77-107. **Serial JZ6.5 E8 + Electronic journals**


Gills, B.K., ‘Historical materialism and international relations theory,’ Millennium, 16(2), 1987, pp.265-272. **Serial JX1.M5**


Halliday, Fred, Rethinking International Relations, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994. **JX1391 HAL**.

Jameson, Frederick, ‘Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism,’ New Left Review, 146, 1984, pp.53-92. **Serial LX1.N4**


Teschke, Benno, 'Geopolitical relations in the European middle ages: History and theory,' International Organization, 52(2), 1998, pp.325-358. **Serial JX1.I5 + Electronic journals**

Teschke, Benno, 'Theorizing the Westphalian System of States: International Relations from Absolutism to Capitalism,' European Journal of International Relations, 8(1), 2002, pp.5-48. **Serial J26.5 E8 + Electronic journals**


**Week 7: Transnationalism and Globalization**

Seminar Topic: Identify the essential elements of transnationalism and globalization and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

Learning outcomes:  
*At the end of this class, you should be able to explain the three-level game and evaluate its ability to explain world politics.*

**Textbook:** Colin Hay 'International Relations Theory and Globalization' [TEXT].

**Key Text** Peter Willets 'Transnational Actors and International Organizations in Global Politics' in *John Baylis and Steve Smith, The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd edition **JZ1305 GLO**


**Strongly recommended reading:**


Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink, 'Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics', *International Social Science Journal 51 (1)*, 1999, pp.89-.

**Serial H1.I55**


**Supplementary reading:**


### Week 8: Social Constructivism

**Seminar Topic** Identify the essential elements of social constructivism and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

**Learning outcomes:**

At the end of this class, you should be able to summarize and critique the key arguments of mainstream constructivism and evaluate how it adds to our understanding of international relations.

**Required reading:**

**Textbook:** K.M.Fierke ‘Constructivism’ [TEXT].

**Key Text:** Wendt, Alexander, ‘Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics,’ *International Organization*, 46(2), 1992, pp.391-425. **Course pack + Electronic journals**

**Critique:** Sterling-Folker, Jennifer, ‘Competing paradigms or birds of a feather? Constructivism and neoliberal institutionalism compared,’ *International Studies Quarterly*, 44(1), 2000, pp.97-119. **Course pack + Electronic journals**

**Strongly recommended reading:**

✉ Adler, Emanuel, ‘Seizing the middle ground: constructivism in world politics,’ *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3), 1997, pp.319-363. **Serial JZ6.5 E8**


Checkel, Jeffrey T., ‘Norms, institutions, and national identity in contemporary Europe,’ *International Studies Quarterly*, 43(1), 1999, 83-114. **Serial JX1.I58 + Electronic journals**


*Wendt, Alexander, Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. **JZ1251 WEN 1,3, 6-8**

**Supplementary reading:**

Some constructivist ‘classics’


**Other relevant readings:**


Neumann, Iver B., 'Self and other in international relations,' *European Journal of International Relations*, 2(2), 1996, pp.139-174. **Serial JZ6.5 E8**


Onuf, Nicholas, 'International legal order as an idea,' *American Journal of International Law*, 73, 1979, pp.244-266. **WILL LIBRARY KC1.A4**

Onuf, Nicholas, 'Sovereignty: Outline of a conceptual history,' *Alternatives*, 16(4), 1991, pp.425-446. **Serial HC59.7.A7**


Shannon, Vaughn P. 'Norms are what states make of them: The political psychology of norm violation,' *International Studies Quarterly*, 44(2), 2000, pp.293-316. **Serial JX1.158 + Electronic journals**

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**Week 9: Poststructuralism**

**Seminar Topic** Identify the essential elements of poststructuralism and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

**Learning outcomes:**

*At the end of this class, you should be able to explain poststructuralist IR theory and to compare and contrast it with positivist IR theories.*

**Required reading:**

*Textbook:* David Campbell ‘Poststructuralism’ [TEXT].

**Key Texts:**


**Course Pack and E744 CAM**

**Application:**


**Strongly recommended reading:**


Krishna, Sankaran, ‘The importance of being ironic: A postcolonial view of critical international relations theory,’ *Alternatives*, 18, 1993, pp.385-417. **Serial HC59.7.A7**


* Smith, Steve, and Patricia Owens, ‘Alternative approaches to international theory’ John Baylis and Steven Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd edition **JZ1305 GLO**


Supplementary reading:


Dalby, Simon, ‘Geopolitical discourse: The Soviet Union as other,’ *Alternatives*, 13(4), 1988, pp.415-422. **Serial HC59.7.A7**


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Week 10: Feminism

Seminar Topic Identify the essential elements of Feminist IR theory and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to international relations.

Learning outcomes: At the end of this class, you should be able to explain and critique feminist IR theory.

Required reading:
Textbook: J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg 'Feminism' [Text]

Strongly recommended reading:
Cohn, Carol, 'Sex and death in the rational world of defense intellectuals,' *Signs*, 12(4), 1987, pp.678-718.
Locher, Birgit, and Elisabeth Prügl, ‘Feminism and constructivism: Worlds apart or sharing the middle ground?’ *International Studies Quarterly*, 45(1), 2001, pp.111-129. *Serial JX1.158 + Electronic journals*
* Smith, Steve, and Patricia Owens, 'Alternative approaches to international theory' John Baylis and Steven Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd edition *JZ1305 GLO*

Another debate:
Supplementary reading:


‘Feminists write international relations,’ special issue of *Alternatives*, 18(1), 1993. Serial HC59.7.A7

Grant, Rebecca, and Kathleen Newland, eds. *Gender and International Relations*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991. HQ1236 GEN


Newland, Kathleen, ‘From transnational relations to international relations: Women in development and the international decade of women,’ *Millennium*, 17(3), 1988, pp.507-516. **Serial JX1.M5**

Parker, Andrew, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger, eds., Nationalisms and Sexualities, London: Routledge, 1992. **HQ16 NAT**


‘Women and International Relations,’ special issue of *Millennium*, 17(3), 1988. **Serial JX1.M5**

Zalewski, Marysia, ‘Well, what is the feminist perspective on Bosnia?’ *International Affairs*, 71(2), 1995, pp.339-356. **Serial JX1.I5 + Electronic journals**


For details of essay writing, referencing, hand-in dates and penalties please see the Graduate Handbook.