

Syllabus

Course Description

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| Course Title | Theory of International Relations |
| Course Code | 27160 |
| Course Title Additional | |
| Scientific-Disciplinary Sector | GSPPS-02/A |
| Language | English |
| Degree Course | Bachelor in Economics, Politics and Ethics |
| Other Degree Courses (Loaned) | |
| Lecturers | Prof. Roberto Farneti, Roberto.Farneti@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/17315 |
| Teaching Assistant | |
| Semester | Second semester |
| Course Year/s | 2/3 |
| CP | 6 |
| Teaching Hours | 36 |
| Lab Hours | - |
| Individual Study Hours | - |
| Planned Office Hours | 18 |
| Contents Summary | The course engages with the main theories and discourses in the study of International Relations: Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism will be explained by illustrating the debates and discussions that animate the discipline. Globalization is the backdrop where international actors engage in a system of relations ranging from cooperation to conflict. The course will illustrate a number of dyads, like East-West and North-South, that structure IRs, and will expand on such issues as national security, international and transnational institutions and global governance |
| Course Topics | The historical (and pre-historical) background; theories of world |

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| | <p>politics; structures and processes; international issues, globalization, and current challenges. The course begins by commenting on excerpts from Yuval Harari's book <i>Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind</i> expanding on the origins of "early human institutions" and follows the development of IRs up to the emergence of sophisticated forms of political accountability in the international politics of the XXI c. One block of lectures engages with the main theories and discourses in the study of IRs. Globalization is the backdrop where international actors engage in a spectrum of relations ranging from cooperation to conflict. The course will expand on such issues as national security, national self-determination, international and transnational institutions and NGOs, and global governance.</p> |
| Keywords | <p>THEORIES: Realism – power politics, anarchy, state interests. Liberalism – cooperation, institutions, interdependence. Constructivism – norms, identity, social construction of world politics.</p> <p>CONCEPTS: Sovereignty – the state as the main actor in international relations. Power – both hard (military, economic) and soft (norms, ideas). Globalization – interconnectedness, transnational challenges, erosion of state-centric models.</p> |
| Recommended Prerequisites | None |
| Propaedeutic Courses | None |
| Teaching Format | 18 two-hour lectures, normally offered twice a week, starting in March 2026. Instructor uses PowerPoint. |
| Mandatory Attendance | Recommended, but not mandatory |
| Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes | <p>ILO (Intended Learning Outcomes)</p> <p>ILO 1 Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>ILO 1.1 fundamentals of political science and understanding of the articulations of the discipline;</p> <p>ILO 1.2 globalisation and the logic (and actors) of the international system.</p> <p>ILO 2 Ability to apply knowledge and understanding</p> |

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| | <p>ILO 2.1 ability to understand, analyse and identify political decision-making processes;</p> <p>ILO 2.2 ability to understand the political logic of globalisation processes; this allows for the integration of strictly political knowledge with that learned in adjacent areas such as law and economics, which investigate the same processes from other perspectives;</p> <p>ILO 2.3 ability to analyse a technical text using appropriate theoretical tools;</p> <p>ILO 2.4 ability to produce a reasoned text on a political science topic</p> <p> </p> <p>ILO 3 Making judgements</p> <p>ILO 3.1 Acquisition of the capacity for judgement and methodological tools useful for the critical analysis of data, sources, assumptions and implications of scientific practice, and of the political, ethical and legal context within which economic phenomena are set and with which they interact</p> <p> </p> <p>ILO 4 Communication skills</p> <p>ILO 4.1 Proficiency (oral and written) in Italian, German and English, including translation between these languages.</p> <p>Intercultural competence. Conceptual awareness, synthesis and written expression, particularly in the drafting of scientific or science-based documents</p> <p> </p> <p>ILO 5 Learning skills</p> <p>ILO 5.1 Promotion of critical thinking and analytical skills to focus on complex problems in their long-term dynamics and the variety of their implications, including ethical ones</p> |
| Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.) | |
| Assessment | <p>1. Participation. Depending on how many students will be attending, format and participation will be discussed and agreed upon in week one. Attendance is not compulsory but in-class</p> |

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| | <p>discussion of case studies by registered students will be appreciated [ILO4; ILO5].</p> <p>2. Midterm: A mid-term is tentatively scheduled for April 8 (maximum 3 extra points). Only students who attend regularly (e.g., 80% of classes) can enroll to the mid-term [ILO1; ILO2; ILO3; ILO5].</p> <p>3. 70-minute final exam: this is an in-class written exam combining multiple choice + short essay (max 350 words); further details about the structure of the exam and the composition of the grade will be given in a separate doc, made available in the 'file' folder of the course's Teams within week 5 [ILO1; ILO2; ILO3; ILO5].</p> <p>Note: non-attending students will be invited to meet with the instructor during office hours in order to learn how to cultivate the communication and learning skills (ILO4 & ILO5) that are normally acquired through consistent participation in the course.</p> |
| Evaluation Criteria | See 'assessment' (instructor will circulate by week 3 of the course an extended, 4-page syllabus detailing the evaluation criteria) |
| Required Readings | John Baylis. Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, <i>The Globalization of World Politics</i> . 8th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Y.N. Harari, <i>Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind</i> (Penguin 2014) S. Rosato, "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> , Vol. 97, No. 4. (2003), pp. 585-602 W. Callahan, <i>Sensible Politics: Visualizing International Relations</i> (Oxford UP, 2020) |
| Supplementary Readings | |
| Further Information | |
| Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Gender equality, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Reduced inequalities |