Theories of International Relations and Strategic Studies

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| **Credit level:**Level 7 |
| **Length:** semester 1 |
| **ECTS credit value:** 8 |
| **College and School:** Lazarski University in Warsaw, Faculty of Economics and Management  |
| **Module Leader:** Dr.Michal Kuz |
| **Host Course:** MA International Relations |
| **Pre-requisites:**N/A |
| **Co-requisites:**N/A |
| **Special features:**N/A |
| **Access restrictions:**N/A |
| **Summary of module content:** Theories of International Relations attempt to order and explain the complex reality of relations between states as well as between states and other actors. The main aim of the module is to introduce students to the basic theoretical concepts concerning international relations. During the module, two main goals will be pursued. Firstly, to make students acquainted with the basic theories of international relations. Secondly, to develop the skills of recognizing behavior patterns from a comparative perspective. Gaining these skills should allow students to interpret, explain, and predict events and tendencies in international relations. Both the educational aspect and critical thinking will be developed during the module. |

**Assessment Methods**

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| Rank | Assessment type | Assessment name | Weighting | Qualifying set (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments) |
| 1 | Essay | Essay | 50% |  |
| 2 | Presentation | Oral presentation  | 50% |

**Synoptic assessment**

N/A

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module the successful student will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the main theoretical approaches to international relations, demonstrating advanced understanding and application of different paradigms.
2. Assess, and trace the origins of the major processes taking place in international relations, identifying and explaining historical, social, and political factors that shape global dynamics.
3. Critically evaluate major processes in international relations using explanatory models, synthesizing diverse perspectives and frameworks to understand complex issues.
4. Utilize theoretical dependencies in contemporary international relations and clearly formulate conclusions, drawing informed conclusions and offering original insights into current global issues.
5. Articulate eloquently and fluently in speech on subjects pertaining to political theory and strategic games.
6. Cultivate confidence and proficiency in the oral and written presentations of one's research and strategic scenarios.

**Course outcomes the module contributes to:**

* L7.1 Work independently, demonstrating initiative, self-organization, and time management.
* L7.2 Construct reasoned argument, synthesize relevant information, and exercise critical judgement at an advanced level.
* L7.3 Undertake sustained research in the areas of international relations, democratic politics, security, and related areas.
* L7.4 Develop with confidence and competence a research strategy, working hypothesis, and methodology in international relations and politics more generally and practice research, hypothesis adaptation, and data collection.
* L7.5 Reflect on your own learning and seek and make use of constructive feedback.
* L7.9 Develop with confidence and competence a research strategy, working hypothesis, and methodology in international relations and politics more generally and practice research, hypothesis adaptation, and data collection.
* L7.10 Communicate effectively and fluently in speech and writing on a variety of topics in international politics at an advanced level.

**Indicative syllabus content**

1. Introduction to the international relations theoriesInternational trade and firm heterogeneity.
2. The perception of International Relations – the need for explanation and comparison (liberalism, realism, neo-liberalism, neo-realism, Marxist theories, constructivism, feminist theory, post-modernism, normative theory)
3. Realism, neo-realism
4. Liberalism, neo-liberalism
5. Historical sociology, Constructivism and feminism
6. Green politics
7. International Political Economy
8. Explanative models of Globalization
9. Practical comparison
10. Comparing case studies from the discussed theoretical approaches perspective
11. Perspectives on World History – to the end of the Cold War
12. The post-Cold War world – explanations of major processes
13. The contemporary world system
14. International Law, International Relations and Compliance

**Teaching and learning methods**

The module comprises of seminars and workshops that will encompass the indicative content. The lecture is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the primary themes in the foreign policies of large, medium, and small countries. The seminars and workshops adopt a discussion format that emphasizes practical problem-solving. Students will be also provided with additional reading materials to facilitate their independent study. The teacher will only offer general guidelines concerning the writing tasks and encourage students to consult with one another. This is essential for the development of investigation abilities at level 7. The essential skills will be consistently taught and developed through the application of a guided discovery technique.

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| Activity type | Category | Student learning and teaching hours\* |
| Lecture | Scheduled |  |
| Seminar | Scheduled | 45 |
| Tutorial | Scheduled |  |
| Project supervisor | Scheduled |  |
| Demonstration | Scheduled |  |
| Practical classes and workshops | Scheduled |  |
| Supervised time in studio/workshop | Scheduled | 15 |
| Fieldwork | Scheduled |  |
| External visits | Scheduled |  |
| Work based learning | Scheduled |  |
| Scheduled online learning | Scheduled |  |
| Other learning | Scheduled |  |
| Total scheduled |  | 60 |
| Placement | Placement |  |
| Independent study | Independent | 140 |
| Total student learning and teaching hours |  | 200 |

\*hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

**Assessment rationale: why has this assessment been used for this module?**

**Essay** (2500 words, 50%). The essay is designed to develop the students’ critical and analytical skills. Together, they challenge students to demonstrate a systematic and in-depth engagement with the main theoretical approaches to modern international relations phenomena. The essay also tests students’ research, analytical and critical skills. It challenges students to demonstrate appropriate levels of competence and independence in applying theories of IR to concrete problems. This assessment contributes to LOs 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**Oral presentation** (50%): Students are required to deliver a comprehensive oral presentation on one of the topics provided by the instructor. This presentation serves as a critical component of the assessment framework, designed to evaluate students' ability to articulate complex international relations theories and apply them to contemporary global challenges. This assessment contributes to LOs 5 & 6.

Students will be provided with information regarding the ethical implications of AI's use in the preparation of essays and presentations. They are permitted to employ AI for preliminary research, literature inquiry, brainstorming, language and writing style enhancement, fact-checking and cross-referencing sources, and preparing for potential Q&A sessions.

**Assessment criteria: what criteria will be used to assess my work on this module?**

**Essays** will be evaluated according to the following criteria, each of which will be given equal weight within the evaluation process: 1. Quality of writing, 2. Use of evidence, 3. Quality of argument and analysis, 4. Context and factual issue, 5. Use of references and citations.

**Oral presentations** will be evaluated individually according to the following criteria, each contributing 20% to the overall assessment: 1. Clarity of explanation, 2. Quality of argumentation and analysis, 4. Contextual comprehension and factual accuracy, 5. Ability to answer questions. 5. Use of sources.

The assessment(s) will examine to what extent the student has demonstrated ability to:

* Know and understand the main political theories of international relations.
* Apply those theories to concrete phenomena, such as interstate conflict, formation of alliances and their dissolution.
* Provide a critique of the main international relations theories such as realism, liberalism and constructivism.
* Understand the historical development of theories of international relations as a field of study.
* Critically approach different theory-based explanation of interstate conflict and cooperation.
* Combine different theoretical approaches to match a concrete set of problems such a proposing a solution wich would end an interstate conflict.

**Sources**

* Scott Burchill, Richard Devetak, Andrew Linklater, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reuss-Smit, Jacqui True, Theories of International Relations, Palgrave McMillan, 2013. 5th ed.
* Robert Jackson Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches, Fourth ed., Oxford University Press, 2010
* Paul Viotti, Mark Kauppi, International Relations Theory, Pearson 2012.

**Recommended Reading List:**

* Booth, K. and Smith, St., International Relations Theory Today, Polity Press, 2004
* Bull, Hadley, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics, London, 1995.
* Carlsnaes, Walter, Risse, Thomas, Simmons, A. Beth, Handbook of International Relations, London, 2006.
* Doyle, M.W., Kant, I., Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs, „Philosophy and Public Affairs”, vol. 12, No. 3.
* Eckes, Alfred E., Zieler, Thomas, Globalization and American Century, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
* Frost, Mervyn, Ethics in International Relations, A Constitutive Theory, Cambridge Universiy Press, 1996
* Giddens, A., Runway World. How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives, New York, 2000.
* Haas, Ernst B., Beyond the Nation State: Functionalism and International Organization, Stanford University Press, 1964.
* Hertz, J.H., Idealist Internationalism and Security Dilemma, “World Politics”, January 1959.
* Ikenberry, John, After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and Order Building after Major Wars, Princeton University Press, 2001.