

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department: Social Sciences and Humanities

Programme: International Relations

FHEQ Level: 6

Course Title: International Relations Theory

Course Code: INR 6101

Total Hours: 160

Timetabled Hours: 45

Guided Learning Hours: 15

Independent Learning: 100

Credits: 16 UK CATS credits
8 ECTS credits
4 US credits

Course Description:

The theories of international relations (IR) are best introduced through a study of the classic texts and debates in the discipline. This course examines most of the theories and approaches to international politics, as well as their historic foundations. It begins with some philosophical debates regarding the purpose of theorising, the importance of understanding ontological and epistemological assumptions and the difference between 'understanding' and 'explaining' in international relations theory. The course then critically evaluates the grand and middle range theories of IR, followed by a multitude of multidisciplinary approaches to conceptualising global politics and the post-positivist critiques. The course provides students with a set of conceptual and analytical tools in order to acquire a deeper and more nuanced understanding of international relations and global politics.

Prerequisites:

One of the following:

PLT 5201 Research Methods: Social Sciences

INR 4100 Intro to International Relations

PLT 4101 Modern Political Thought

COM 5205 Cultural Theory

PHL 5400 Modern European Mind

PLT 5200 Capitalism and Its Critics

Aims and Objectives:

- To advance a critical understanding of both mainstream and critical IR theories
- To encourage abstract and theoretical thinking
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of political concepts and ideas
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

International Relations: A6(i); A6(iii); A6(iv); C6(i); C6(ii); C6(iii); D6(ii); D6(iv)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of the major thinkers and intellectual paradigms in international relations
- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of key concepts - power and influence, order and justice, agents, and structures, understanding and explaining as they are theorized in international relations
- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of key texts and debates in the IR theory, and the ability to critically engage with these
- Takes responsibility for their own learning, and completes assigned work with a degree of clarity, contextualisation, critical thinking, and reflexive normative understanding appropriate for a 6000-level course
- Demonstrates flexible writing and analytical skills that translate directly into the workplace in, including the ability to adapt work to different contexts, audiences, and levels of complexity

Indicative Content:

- Theory and method in the social sciences
- Agency and structure in IR
- Classical and modern key texts and thinkers in IR theory
- Understanding the core assumptions of the theories and approaches to IR
- Critical evaluation of the classical theories, critical theories and approaches to IR
- Understanding of the central role of IR theory in the discipline of International Relations

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent, and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

Indicative Texts:

- Weber, C. (2021) *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction*. 5th ed. Routledge.
- Dunne, T., M. Kurki and S. Smith (Eds.) (2020). *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. 5th ed. Oxford University Press
- Kauppi, M.V. and P.R. Viotti (2019) *International Relations Theory*. 6th ed. Pearson.
- Jorgensen, K.E., (2017) *International Relations Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Palgrave.
- Daddor, O. (2017) *International Relations Theory: The Essentials*. 3rd ed. Sage.
- Lawson, S. (2015) *Theories of International Relations: Contending Approaches to World Politics*. Polity.
- Drezner, D. (2014) *Theories of International Relations and Zombies*. Princeton.
- Burchill, S., A. Linklater, R. Devetak, J. Donnelly, T. Nardin, M. Paterson, C. Reus-Smit and J. True (2013) *Theories of International Relations*. 5th ed. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

See syllabus for complete reading list

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	