

Contemporary International System

Code: 101090
ECTS Credits: 6

| Degree | Type | Year | Semester |
|--|------|------|----------|
| 2500259 Political Science and Public Management. | OB | 3 | 1 |
| 2503778 International Relations | OB | 2 | 1 |

Contact

Name: Oriol Costa Fernández
Email: Oriol.Costa@uab.cat

Use of languages

Principal working language: catalan (cat)
Some groups entirely in English: Yes
Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

Teachers

Maria Ester Barbé Izuel

Prerequisites

We expect students to have basic previous knowledge of International Relations, developed for instance by way of a general course on IR. We also expect them to be able to keep themselves informed about international current affairs, as well as some capacity for analysis, argumentation, and debate.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This is an advanced education course, and it complements the knowledge acquired in previous, more general courses (particularly on International Relations).

It will allow students to develop their own view about the post-Cold War international system, and in turn it will contribute to their further training in IR and help them take more specific IR classes or get ready for graduate programmes.

Students will learn about the key changes that have taken place in the international system since the end of the Cold War, in issue areas such as the form and distribution of power, actors and their (new) roles, challenges, conflicts and relationships. They will also learn about some of the concerns that have defined international relations since the early 1990s.

It is around such matters that we expect students to develop their analytical skills, as well as their capacity to articulate and debate ideas and concepts.

Skills

Political Science and Public Management.

- Applying theoretical and analytical knowledge of International Relations to practical and professional cases, in particular to the areas of conflict and cooperation between actors.
- Arguing from different theoretical perspectives.
- Assessing specific distinctive aspects and conceptual and methodological instruments of the different tendencies and analytical approximations of International Relations.
- Demonstrating good writing skills in different contexts.
- Demonstrating they know theoretical tendencies and classical and recent analytical approximations of International Relations.
- Designing data collection techniques, coordinating the information processing and meticulously applying hypothesis verification methods.
- Distinguishing the discipline's main theories and different fields: conceptual developments, theoretical frameworks and theoretical approaches underlying the discipline's knowledge and different areas and sub-areas, as well as their value for the professional practice through concrete cases.
- Identifying sources of data and conducting bibliographic and documentary searches.
- Interpreting and applying English texts in an academic way.
- Managing the available time in order to accomplish the established objectives and fulfil the intended task.
- Producing and planning researches or analytical reports.
- Realising effective oral presentations that are suited to the audience.
- Synthesizing and critically analysing information.
- Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
- Working autonomously.
- Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
- Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

International Relations

- Analyse cases and phenomena in the international sphere and interpret different political texts using contemporary political theories.
- Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
- Identify the main theories of international relations and their different fields (international theory, conflicts and security, international politics, etc.) to apply them in professional practice.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Use English to receive and communicate analyses and proposals.
- Use different tools for analysing the contemporary international system and its functional and regional or geographical subsystems.
- Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.

Learning outcomes

1. Apply different theoretical focuses to the analysis of the international system and its subsystems and international European politics.
2. Apply different theoretical focuses, with a constructivist approach, to the actions of international organisations.
3. Applying theoretical and analytical knowledge of International Relations to practical and professional cases, in particular to the areas of conflict and cooperation between actors.
4. Arguing from different theoretical perspectives.
5. Assessing specific distinctive aspects and conceptual and methodological instruments of the different tendencies and analytical approximations of International Relations.
6. Critically assessing the impacts of globalization in several areas: safety, environment, human rights, migrations and peace.
7. Demonstrating good writing skills in different contexts.

8. Demonstrating they know theoretical tendencies and classical and recent analytical approximations of International Relations.
9. Describing the international order: anarchy versus order, society of states and transnational society.
10. Describing the main characteristic elements of the international society as a whole (1945-2000).
11. Designing data collection techniques, coordinating the information processing and meticulously applying hypothesis verification methods.
12. Evaluate case studies of change and continuity in the international system, in the main regional subsystems (European, American, Asian) and in the subsystems of economy and security.
13. Explaining the major approximations to the international relations (realism, transnationalism and structuralism).
14. Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
15. Identifying sources of data and conducting bibliographic and documentary searches.
16. Interpreting and applying English texts in an academic way.
17. Managing the available time in order to accomplish the established objectives and fulfil the intended task.
18. Producing and planning researches or analytical reports.
19. Properly using the theory and concepts of international relations (traditions of Hobbesian, Grotian or Kantian thought).
20. Realising effective oral presentations that are suited to the audience.
21. Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
22. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
23. Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
24. Synthesizing and critically analysing information.
25. Use English to receive and communicate analyses and proposals.
26. Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.
27. Use theoretical and meta-theoretical focuses to analyse the impact of globalisation on security, the economy and society on both a transnational and national scale and in different international organisations.
28. Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
29. Working autonomously.
30. Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
31. Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

Content

1. Introduction

-A world without the cold war

-Diverse explanations: Ideas/Institutions/Power

-A globalized international order

-Fragmentation and complexity: Levels of analysis and multidimensional agenda

2. Globalized international order: the big picture

The end of geography

A single (unequal) world

Instantaneity

Interaction density

Block I. The evolution of the international system: facts and features

3. A world without the cold war. Ideas: managing the end of the cold war

- Neoidealist moment

- The UN at the central stage, wider agenda and new norms: the "solidarism"

- Peace Missions

- The global agenda: Rio 1992

4. A world without the cold war. Institutions: negotiating the norms of the system

- An institutionalist stage

- Amending the Agenda for Peace (1995), Rwanda (1994), Srebrenica (1995)

- Humanitarian intervention and its limits. Kosovo 1999

- Institutionalization: WTO, Kyoto, ICC, anti-personnel landmines.

5. A world without the cold war. Power: hierarchy and conflicts over values

- Seattle (1999): no-global and the Global South

- The impact of 9/11 (2001): global terror and coalitions of the willing

- The non-proliferation agenda: India, Iran, North Korea

- Global South and emerging powers: redistribution of power in the international institutions (WTO, UNSC, UNHRC)

- Global crisis (2008) and minilateralism (G20).

Block II. Globalized international order: structure, actors and interactions

6. Polarity: The US hegemony

- The concept of polarity: resources and alliances

- Hegemony (material or normative)

- The US unipolar moment

- Hegemony and the provision of public goods: the governance of economic interdependence

7. Polarity: Emerging powers

- Emerging economies: BRICS

- Institutionalization (BRICS, BASIC), soft balancing and ideational power

- Acknowledging the new powers

- Debate: The reform of the Security Council

8. Normative controversy

- Westphalia: pluralist logic and coexistence norms

- (Liberal) solidarism, post-cold war and conflicts over values

- Norm diffusion mechanisms
- New concepts: human security and sustainable development

9. Regionalization

- A multilevel world: decentralized globalization
- The interaction between the global and regional levels
- New regionalism: reaction vis-à-vis globalization
- Regional security complexes

10. New wars

- Evolution towards intra-state, internationalized conflicts
- Explaining conflicts: ethnicity, natural resources
- The privatization of violence and mass violation of Human Rights
- Globalization and the weakness of the state

11. Global governance

- Beyond the society of states (Commission on Global Governance, 1995)
- The intensification of governance between states (trans-governmental networks)
- Transnational civil society
- Private governance (private authorities)

III. Case studies: Global problems and governance

12. Conceptual and analytical framework

- Multilateralism and international agenda-setting
- International institutions
- International regimes (delimitation)
- International organizations (formalization)
- Effectiveness and legitimacy

13. Analysis: International regimes

This section of the course suggests a list of some very diverse issue areas which are currently part of the agenda of international negotiations. Four of them will be touched upon along the course and students will deliver reports about them by applying an analytical framework designed to study international regimes (information and files can be found at *Campus Virtual*)

- Climate change
- Anti-personnel landmines
- Weapons of mass destruction -Nuclear proliferation
- Diamonds (resources and armed conflicts)

- Human rights
- Rights of the children
- Women, peace and security (UNSC Resolution 1325).
- Refugees and displaced persons
- Genocide -International criminal justice
- Terrorism
- Genetically-modified organisms
- Transnational crime

Methodology

--

Activities

| Title | Hours | ECTS | Learning outcomes |
|--|-------|------|--|
| Type: Directed | | | |
| Learning activities with audiovisual material | 4 | 0.16 | 3, 4, 10, 9, 24, 31, 6 |
| Lectures | 34 | 1.36 | 3, 4, 8, 10, 9, 17, 16, 24, 29, 5, 6 |
| Seminars | 10 | 0.4 | 3, 4, 8, 10, 9, 18, 20, 17, 15, 16, 24, 30, 29, 31, 28, 5, 6 |
| Type: Supervised | | | |
| Out-of-class supervision of deliverables and office-hours more generally | 5 | 0.2 | 3, 8, 10, 9, 11, 18, 17, 15, 16, 24, 30, 29, 28, 6 |
| Type: Autonomous | | | |
| Autonomous out-of-class work | 49 | 1.96 | 17, 15, 16, 24, 29 |
| Autonomous out-of-class work related to seminars | 40 | 1.6 | 3, 4, 8, 11, 18, 20, 17, 15, 16, 24, 30, 29, 31, 28, 5, 6 |

Evaluation

The final qualification depends on the grades obtained in the following assignments.

1. A final exam. The final exam (individual and in written form) aims to test the degree of knowledge of students, both as regards analytical concepts and substantive issues addressed in the course (all the course is included in this, also issues raised in seminar sessions). The exam accounts for 50% of the final grade. You need to pass the exam (5 points out of 10) in order to pass the course.

2. A short exercise to be written at class on humanitarian intervention and R2P. Students will have worked with the key documents and discourses issued by several international actors and will also hand in an out-of-class paper. This session accounts for 20% of the final grade. Block II.

3. A short written exercise, plus a presentation and debate at class in small groups (we will divide the class in subgroups) on an assigned issue regarding international regimes. Students will also hand in an out-of-class paper on this issue. This accounts for 20% of your final grade. Block III.

4. Participation in class activities and debates accounts for 10% of the final grade.

Notes on the course:

In order to successfully pass the course, students will need at least a 5/10 at the final exam. The exam is designed for students to show a basic and balanced knowledge of the theoretical and substantive contents of the three blocks of the syllabus. A minimum of 5/10 at the exam grade is a necessary condition for the rest of the grades to be taken into account. Students who fail the exam will have to re-take it.

There will also be re-take options for the other assignments.

The precise dates of the seminar sessions and the debates on the reports will be announced at *Campus Virtual*, together with the rest of the course plan. The files for the preparation of these sessions will be found at *Campus Virtual* too.

Evaluation activities

| Title | Weighting | Hours | ECTS | Learning outcomes |
|--|-----------|-------|------|---|
| Final exam | 50% | 3 | 0.12 | 1, 2, 4, 26, 8, 7, 10, 9, 13, 17, 16, 21, 24, 29, 19, 27, 5, 12, 6 |
| International regime: deliverables, in-class debate and short written in-class exercise. | 20% | 2 | 0.08 | 3, 1, 2, 4, 26, 8, 7, 10, 9, 17, 16, 23, 21, 22, 24, 29, 31, 25, 6 |
| Participation | 10% | 0 | 0 | 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 20, 17, 15, 16, 23, 21, 24, 29, 19, 28, 25, 6 |
| R2P: deliverables, in-class debate and short written in-class exercise. | 20% | 3 | 0.12 | 3, 1, 2, 4, 26, 7, 11, 18, 20, 14, 15, 23, 21, 22, 24, 30, 31, 28, 25, 12 |

Bibliography

See the syllabus