

**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 Fernandez  
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 Barbe 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.

**Competences**

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 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 metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.
26. 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.
27. Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
28. Working autonomously.
29. Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
30. Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

## Content

CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM (2022-2023)

Group 01 Dra. Esther Barbé

Group 51 Dr. Oriol Costa

### ***INTERNATIONAL ORDER: CONCEPTS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR ANALYSIS***

1. *1. Introduction to the contemporary international system (post-Cold War)*

International order: classical approaches (Hobbes, Grotius, Kant)

Types of order: international order, globalized order, world order, globalized international order.

Levels of analysis: de-centralized globalization

Multi-dimensionality of the international agenda

### 1. 2. *Globalized international order: States system*

States system (pluralism)

Sovereignty

International order based on:

- Powers (hierarchy)
- Institutions (multilateralism)
- Values (solidarism)

### 1. 3. *Globalized international order: globalization*

Globalization: the end of geography, a single (an unequal) world, instantaneity, density

Transformation of the capitalist system: global value chains and technological revolution.

Order as global governance:

- Beyond the states system (Commission on Global Governance, 1995)
- Provision of international public goods (health, environment)
- Governance between states (trans-governmental networks)
- Private governance (private authorities)

### 1. 4. *Change in a globalized international order*

Changes in the material, normative and institutional structures of the international system.

Sources of change: Power, ideas and institutions

- Power: competition for power and distribution of power
- Distribution of power: polarity and polycentrism
- Ideas (norms and values): shared or rival
- Norms of coexistence, cooperation and solidarism
- Emerging norms: Human security and sustainable development
- Institutions: Formal and informal multilateralism (international organizations, conventions, unilateralism).
- Practical multilateralism (utilitarianism) and normative multilateralism (principled)

## **CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER SINCE 1989**

### 1. 5. *Major phases of change*

Constitutive phase (1989-2001)

Transitional phase (2001-2008)

Contestation phase (from 2008)

1. 6. *The constitution of the international order: the hegemony of the US*

Unipolar moment

US hegemony: material and normative base

Leader of the (Western) economic liberal order

Military hyper-power, without rivals and without a mission

\*Case study: Gulf war - 1991

1. 7. *The constitution of the international order: the neo-idealist moment*

Neo-idealism: New International Order (Bush)

Liberal ideas: democracy, market economy, human rights\*

Economic neo-liberalism: Washington consensus

Liberal solidarism and emerging norms: protection of civilians

\*Case study: UN peacekeeping operations in the context of "new wars".

1. 8. *The constitution of the international order: Institutionalized global governance*

Institutional renaissance: the case of the UNSC

Malleable institutions: NATO, CSCE, EU

\*Case studies: New institutions

Institutionalization of established norms:

-World Trade Organization -1994 (free trade)

Institutionalization of emerging norms:

-UN Conference on the Environment and Development - Rio 1992 (sustainable development)

-Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court - 1998 (international criminal justice)

-Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines - 1997 (protection of civilians)

1. 9. *Transition (from constitution to crisis in the international order): the erosion of hegemony*

Uni-multipolar moment

Emerging Powers - BRIC. China's accession to the WTO (2001)

9/11 attacks (2001) and global terror. Asymmetrical rivalry

Rivalry in the non-proliferation agenda (Iran, North Korea)

Mechanisms that erode hegemony: Soft balancing

\*Case study: Kosovo or the emergence of Russia as a rival.

1. 10. *Transition (from constitution to crisis in the international order): Discussion over norms*

Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015): modes of development and appearance of the Global South

Fight against terror and illiberal states: torture and mercenaries

The limits of liberal solidarism: Protection of civilians vs sovereignty

\*Case study: The emergence of Responsibility to Protect in a context in which protection of civilians had failed (Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo).

1. 11. *Transition (from constitution to crisis in the international order): the symptoms of institutional crisis*

US unilateralism: the Iraq war and the UNSC (2003)

Alternative multilateralism: US and the *coalitions of the willing*

\*Case studies: the limits of global governance mechanisms

- WTO (emerging powers and clash of interests)
- Ottawa Convention and the ICC (membership)
- Reform of the UNSC (legitimacy problems)
- Creation of the UN Human Rights Council (re-distribution of power)
- Non-Proliferation Treaty (erosion of the regime)

1. 12. *Contestation of the international order: Fragmented multi-polarity*

Re-distribution of power: raise of the Chinese economy, competition for resources and technological rivalry

Economic crisis (2008) in the changing landscape (China as a financial power). Beginnings de-globalization.

The return of power politics: power transition and the China-US rivalry.

\*Case studies: the return of power politics

- Re-emergence of Russia: Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014)
- Emergence of China in the Pacific: South China Sea.

1. 13. *Contestation of the international order: Controversy over norms*

Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) en the framework of a contested globalization.

Controversies over the norms of liberal solidarism (individual rights)

The role of China, Russia, the Global South and the US

\*Case studies: Controversies over norms

- Re-definiton of Human Rights: traditional values (UNHRC)
- Erosion of international criminal justice: sovereignty and anti-colonialism (ICC)
- Erosion of gender equality: right to life (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights)

1. 14. *Contestation of the international order: Crisis of multilateralism*

Crisis of the international liberalorder. Actors, new powers, Global South and the US

Financial crisis (2008) an changes in minilateralism: from G7 to G20

Failure of institutional reform (IMF) and alternative multilateralism (institutions lead by China)

American anti-multilateralism (Trump): erosion of the WTO, NATO, INF, UNESCO, Paris Agreement, WHO.

\*Case study: institutional crisis

-A deadlocked WTO

1. 15. *The international order in the 21st century: an assessment*

Three big crises: 2001 (terrorism), 2008 (economy), 2020 (health)

Changes in power, ideas and institutions

The impact of Covid-19 as an enhancer of previous trends

### **PRACTICAL SESSIONS WITH DELIVERABLES**

These is an indicative list of issues pertaining to a context shaped, from the point of view of norms, by sustainable development and human security. During the term we will work on two such issues. Note cards will be produced for each of them, a debate will take place at class for each of them, and then a written exercise too. More information will be available at Campus Virtual.

1. Conflict diamonds
2. Climate change
3. Responsibility to Protect
4. Women, Peace and Security (Resolution 1325 of the UNSC)
5. Sexual and reproductive health and rights
6. Refugees and displaced people
7. Biological diversity
8. Global Health
9. De-forestation
10. GMOs

During the course 2021-2022 we will work on two different issues that are hotly debated internationally: climate change and Sexual and reproductive health and rights. The instructions for these seminar sessions can be found at Campus Virtual. Apart from other documents (also to be found at Campus Virtual), you must use, as a basic reading, the following book:

Barbé, E. (dir.), *Las normas Internacionales ante la crisis del orden liberal*, Tecnos, Madrid, 2021.

## **Methodology**

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Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

## **Activities**

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Learning activities with audiovisual material	4	0.16	3, 4, 10, 9, 24, 30, 6
Lectures	34	1.36	3, 4, 8, 10, 9, 17, 16, 24, 28, 5, 6
Seminars	10	0.4	3, 4, 8, 10, 9, 18, 20, 17, 15, 16, 24, 29, 28, 30, 27, 5, 6

Type: Supervised

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Out-of-class supervision of deliverables and office-hours more generally	5	0.2	3, 8, 10, 9, 11, 18, 17, 15, 16, 24, 29, 28, 27, 6
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Type: Autonomous

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Autonomous out-of-class work	49	1.96	17, 15, 16, 24, 28
Autonomous out-of-class work related to seminars	40	1.6	3, 4, 8, 11, 18, 20, 17, 15, 16, 24, 29, 28, 30, 27, 5, 6

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## Assessment

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. Two short exercises to be written at class . 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. A debate session will sum-up and extract knowledge in a participatory way. The final written exercises account for 20% of the final grade each.

3. 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.

## Assessment Activities

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

## **Bibliography**

See the syllabus

## **Software**

None