

COURSE OUTLINE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This module gives students an introduction to the theoretical background to international relations and examines a range of contemporary and historical topics through which it is possible to explore the behaviour of states and international organisations. The main areas of theory will be covered and these will be related to the changing international environment in which they were developed. Major themes including national interest, realism, ideology, 'superpowers', war and co-operation will be addressed as well as the practical aspects of the subject. The course will also contrast the international behaviour of small and large states. Students will receive additional material in class and will be encouraged to relate what they learn to developing issues.

1. **Introduction** The basis of international relations. Anarchy or system. The growth of theory. Some major contemporary issues:- Globalization, terrorism and the rise of US power. The realist, pluralist and globalist approaches to international relations.
2. **International relations in the twentieth century** The role of ideology. The impact of war. The emergence of superpowers. The end of the Cold War and the world after 1990.
3. **Constraints and opportunities - freedom of action in international relations** Big and small powers. Case studies: the USA; Germany.
4. **National interest** The role of domestic politics. Alliances, friendships and partnerships. Case study: Britain, the USA and the European Union.
5. **Global power - the rise of the 'superpower'** The USA and the USSR in international relations. Military and economic strength. Case study: nuclear weapons.
6. **Regional power** The role and ambitions of regional powers. Hegemony and competition. Case study: China.
7. **Regional co-operation** Sovereignty and its limitations. The development of regional groupings. Case studies: the European Union; NATO.
8. **War and international relations** The theory and practice of war in international relations. Legitimacy of military action. Idealism and realism. Case studies: Nazi Germany and World War 2; the Gulf War; September 11.
9. **Intervention: Humanitarian, political and military.** Is there a 'duty' to intervene? Case studies: intervention in the former Yugoslavia; Iraq; Congo.
10. **Globalisation or the 'same old story'** Possible future developments. The roles of the United Nations, nation states and alliances in the new century.

Course Aims

- To give students an awareness of the theory and practice of international relations and to provide them with a structure within which to understand international events.

Objectives

- To develop an awareness of the underlying concepts and theories of the relations between states.
- To understand how to apply these concepts and theories to contemporary and historical case studies.
- To research topics relating to these case studies
- To present information gained from research in both oral and written form.

Outcomes

- To be able to demonstrate, in both oral and written forms, a knowledge and understanding of theories and concepts in international relations and to be able to apply these to particular situations.
- To be able to demonstrate and apply research skills in both oral and written form.
- To complete regular class work, as set by the tutor, using a range of material and working both on an individual basis and as part of a group.

Assessment Process

Students typically complete 2 essays and 2 tests each term in addition to regular classwork and private study assignments. These marks as a whole, combined with an assessment of student performance in class, make up the final grade for the course. Sample essay questions are shown below; test questions will relate to practical topics.

Grade breakdown

- 40% Essays
- 40% Tests
- 15% Class Participation
- 5% Attendance

Sample Essay Assignments

1. How can international relations theory help us to understand the Cold War?
2. How is national interest defined by a state? Discuss two examples.

3. What role does military power play in contemporary international relations in the Far East?
4. How effective is humanitarian intervention?

Assessment Criteria

DISTINCTION Grade A	Student understands a broad range of ideological concepts, has excellent understanding of their impact in relation to given historical situations, and shows excellent communication skills in constructing an original and persuasive argument, with reference to a broad range of evidence.
CREDIT Grade B	Student understands core ideological concepts clearly, has advanced understanding of their impact in relation to given historical situations, and can construct a sound argument to reflect that with persuasive use of evidence.
MERIT Grade C	Student understands core ideological concepts, has clear understanding of their impact in relation to given historical situations, and can construct an argument to reflect that knowledge accurately, with reference to a range of evidence.
PASS Grade D	Student understands basic ideological concepts, has some understanding of their impact in relation to given historical situations, and some ability to communicate that information both orally and in written form.
FAIL	None of the criteria listed above followed.

Recommended Introductory reading

Ngairé Woods (ed), *Explaining International Relations Since 1945*

ISBN: 9780198741961

Peter Calvacoressi, *World Politics Since 1945*

ISBN: 9781405899383

If you are unable to obtain these books locally, they can be ordered from

<http://www.bookshop.blackwell.co.uk> or www.Amazon.co.uk