Course name: Introduction to International Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term:</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECTS credits:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons per week:</td>
<td>90 + 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>Eng.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor:</td>
<td>Aliaksei Kazharski</td>
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<td>Form of study:</td>
<td>lecture + seminar</td>
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**Prerequisites**

none

**Course Objectives**

The course is meant to provide a basic introduction into the study of international relations. The students will familiarize themselves with the historical origins, the purpose, the major stages of evolution and the prospects of the discipline, as well as become acquainted with the basic theoretical approaches it has developed. Furthermore, the course intends to give an insight into the pivotal problems and points of debate inside the discipline and to test their own critical thinking capabilities on suggested empirical cases through active involvement in class discussions, debates and simulations. Upon completing the course the students should be able to both read and critically interpret original texts of international relations theory and to have developed a basic analytical toolkit for practicing independent interpretation of IR phenomena in the further stages of their career.

**Contents**

Session 1 Introduction. Course objectives and requirements
Session 2. International relations: genealogy of the discipline

Session 3. Realist theory and the critique of 'liberal utopianism': 'state of nature', realpolitik and the origins of war

Session 4. Neorealism (structural realism): international system, stability and polarity

Session 5. The liberal response to neorealism: 'complex interdependence', cooperation and international institutions

Session 6. The English school of international relations: 'international society' and 'world order'

Session 7. Sociological institutionalism: sovereignty and decolonization

Session 8. Marxism in international relations: world-systems theory and the critique of globalized capitalism

Session 9. Liberalism after the Cold War: the 'end of history' and the role of 'soft power'

Session 10. Geopolitics and its critics: is the world a global chessboard?

Session 11. Cultural determinism in IR: a 'clash of civilizations'?

Session 12 Constructivism: identity in international relations

Session 13. Poststructuralism: analysis of foreign policy discourses

Themes and Readings involved

Session 2. International relations: genealogy of the discipline

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Auxiliary texts


Optional reading


Session 3. Realist theory and the critique of 'liberal utopianism': 'state of nature', realpolitik and the origins of war

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Auxiliary texts


Optional reading


Recommended video

Through the Realist Lens. Conversations with History: John Mearsheimer

<http://conversations.berkeley.edu/content/john-mearsheimer>

Question for debate

Russia’s policies in the Ukrainian crisis: 'imperialist' or 'status quo'?

Session 4. Neorealism (structural realism): structure of international politics, stability, polarity

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Auxiliary texts

**Optional reading**


**Recommended video**

Theory and International Politics. Conversations with with History: Kenneth Waltz

<http://conversations.berkeley.edu/content/kenneth-waltz>

**Question for debate**

After the Cold War: is our world uni- or multipolar?

**Session 5. The liberal response to neorealism: 'complex interdependence', cooperation and international institutions**

**Mandatory reading**

**Primary texts**


**Auxillary texts**


**Optional reading**


**Short essay question**

Explain how Keohane and Nye understand complex interdependence

**Session 6. The English school of international relations: 'international society' and 'world order'**

**Mandatory reading**

**Primary texts**


**Auxiliary texts**


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**Optional reading**


**Recommended video**

Iver B. Neumann: Eurasian steppe and international relations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dQ0Ul6369o>

**Short essay question**

How does the English school understand 'international society' and how is it different from the understanding of international politics developed in the realist tradition?

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**Session 7. Sociological institutionalism: sovereignty and decolonization**

**Mandatory reading**

*Primary texts*


*Optional reading*


*Recommended movie*

**Question for debate**

Decolonization: did it bring more good or harm?

**Session 8. Marxism in international relations: world-systems theory and the critique of globalized capitalism**

**Mandatory reading**

*Primary texts*


*Auxillary texts*


**Optional reading**


**Recommended movie**


**Short essay question**

Explain how Wallerstein understands the 'world-system' and try to locate Slovakia in it. Is it in the core, the periphery or the semi-periphery? Provide empirical arguments.

**Session 9. Liberalism after the Cold War: the 'end of history' and the role of 'soft power'**

**Mandatory reading**

*Primary texts*


*Auxillary texts*

Optional reading


Simulation

How can Slovakia have soft power?

Session 10. Geopolitics and its critics: is the world a global chessboard?

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Auxiliary texts


Optional reading


Short essay question. Why can geopolitics be thouht of as 'intellectual poision'?

Session 11. Cultural determinism in IR: a 'clash of civilizations'?

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Optional reading

Recommended video

Civilizations in World Politics : Beyond East and West. Peter J. Katzenstein’s lecture at Orbis Hall, Kyung Hee University, December 3, 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm3WBwstLkc>
Short essay question. Is the 'Islamic State' (ISIS) proof to the 'clash of civilizations' doctrine?

Session 12 Constructivism: identity in international relations

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Optional reading


Short essay question

Why can studying identity and recognition be important for understanding international relations?

Session 13. Poststructuralism: analysis of foreign policy discourses

Mandatory reading

Primary texts


Auxillary texts


Optional reading


Obligatory Readings

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources
pp. 1-12 [session 2]; pp. 129-131, 137-156 [session 5]; pp. 239-243, 246-249 [session 6]; pp. 189-193, 199-209 [session 9]

Supplementary Readings and Sources
Specified for each session

Evaluation Criteria
During the semester the students are supposed to deliver 6 short essays ('memos') 500 words max, dealing with the question(s) specified for the session. The question should always be answered based on the required readings, as well as the students own informed opinion, and should demonstrate the student's ability to critically reflect on the particular topic.

The students are also expected to deliver 1 longer essay (1200 words) at the end of the course on a subject of their specific interest. The topic should be approved by the course leader in advance.

The essays must be delivered by the deadline, which is the eve of each lecture (9 p.m.). Essays delivered after the deadline will not be considered.

When writing their essays the students must cite their sources properly. Copy-pasting without quotation marks or paraphrasing without references is unacceptable and will be automatically treated as plagiarism!

Written essays are 40% of the final grade.

The students are expected to attend lecture and seminar sessions, and to participate actively in class discussion, debates and simulations. An absolute precondition for meaningful participation is reading the mandatory texts. The student's ability to comment on the required readings in class will be a primary criterion of evaluation.
The course will include three in-class debates (sessions 3, 4 and 7). The students will be split into two groups and will be responsible for preparing their argumentation as a group.

The class will also include one simulation that involves group work (session 9).

**Attendance and participation are 30% of the final grade.**

During the semester the students will receive two written assignments in class which will be based on the required readings.

**In class tests are 30% of the final grade.**

A midterm evaluation will be provided.

**Course Evaluation (%)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>100-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>very good</td>
<td>92-84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>83-74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>satisfactory</td>
<td>73-63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>sufficient</td>
<td>62-51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fx</td>
<td>fail</td>
<td>50-0%</td>
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Passing a course assumes that student was not absent at more than 4 lessons.