

Theory of International Relations

The course in International Relations Theory is designed as an advanced introduction to the major perspectives that have structured Western reflection on international politics and that continue to inform contemporary theories in the field. Its aim is to provide students with a solid conceptual foundation for understanding the relationships between the state, war, peace, authority, legitimacy, diplomacy, international order, and conflict, by placing these themes within a broad historical perspective, from classical foundations to current debates.

The structure of the course is progressive and combines a general theoretical introduction with a successive examination of the main paradigms. The opening topics establish the overall framework of the discipline: the place of theory within the study of international relations, the specificity of Western thought, and the question of theoretical alterities. The course then moves through the major explanatory traditions: geopolitics, the realism–idealism opposition, the English School, and neorealism, followed by later developments of realism such as neoclassical realism, offensive realism, and theories of hegemonic cycles. The second half of the course broadens the analysis to include neoliberalism, constructivism, feminism, and marxism, before turning to wider themes such as the world system, anti-colonialism, and anarchism in international relations. The final meetings are devoted to non-Western perspectives, which give the course an important critical opening beyond the classical canon of the discipline. Overall, the course is structured so as to lead students from the conceptual foundations of the field toward contemporary theoretical pluralism.