

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
School of International Studies
Centre for International Politics, Organization & Disarmament

B.A. (HONOURS) OPTIONAL COURSE: WINTER SEMESTER 2014

IO 201: Introduction to World Politics

Course Teacher: Professor Varun Sahni
Classroom: Room 216, SIS
Class Hours: Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 3:00 to 4:00 PM
Office: Room 216, SIS
Office Hours: Monday, 4:00 to 5:00 PM

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce an undergraduate student of the Humanities to politics in the international arena. It is divided into three parts. The first part will examine several theoretical orientations towards understanding the world system. The second part will introduce students to the most important issues and problems of world politics. The third part of the course will focus on India's most important external relations and interests.

Course Pedagogy, Requirements and Evaluation

The course will comprise of interactive lectures, class discussion and audio-visual presentations. Regular and active class participation is required. There will be two written examinations – one in the middle and one at the end of the semester. The dates of the two examinations will be announced later.

Course Outline and Class Schedule

Week One

21 January: **Introduction to the Course**

What the course is about, why the issues it deals with are important, and how the course is organised.

Theories of International Relations

24 January: **Theory and its relevance**

By first comprehending what concepts, variables and laws are, we will arrive at an understanding of what theory is and what it is for.

Week Two

27 January: **Classical Realism / Political Realism**

Hans Morgenthau postulates six principles of Political Realism.

28 January: **Structural Realism / Neorealism**

This class will be about the components of international political structure, as theorised by Kenneth Waltz.

31 January: **Offensive Realism**

John Mearsheimer argues that great powers think and sometimes act offensively.

Week Three

3 February: **Liberalism: Complex Interdependence**

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye theorise complex interdependence as the polar opposite of realism.

4 February: **Liberalism: Cooperation Under Anarchy**

Kenneth Oye uses game theory to explain the problem of cooperation under conditions of anarchy.

7 February: **Realism v Liberalism: Absolute and Relative Gains**

Which is the better explanation, realism or liberalism? Perhaps that depends upon whether we consider states to be purely self-seeking or obsessed with others.

Week Four

10 February: **International Regimes**

This class is about regime theory: the importance of principles, norms, rules and decision making procedures in international politics.

11 February: **Social Constructivism**

Alexander Wendt proposes that states construct their identities, and hence interests, through a process of mutual interaction.

14 February: **Critical Theory**

The theoretical critique of modernity is necessary because of its underlying pathologies of domination and exclusion.

Week Five

17 February: **Marxism**

Although classical Marxism is largely silent about international relations, later Marxists have made important theoretical contributions about hegemony and imperialism.

18 February: **Feminism**

Distinct ways of seeing and explaining the world: J. Ann Tickner reformulates Morgenthau's six principles.

21 February: **Dependency and Non-Alignment**

Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, not all IR theorists are from the US: there have also been some distinct explanations of world politics emanating from the South.

Issues and Problems in World Politics

Week Six

24 February: **Hegemony**

The acute concentration of power in the international system: its reasons, manifestation and consequences.

25 February: **Globalisation**

Moving to a world of networks and flows on a global scale.

28 February: **Human Rights**

In a system of states, what about individual human beings and their rights and aspirations?

Week Seven

3 March: **Democracy**

Does democracy pertain only to domestic politics, or does it also have international consequences?

4 March: **Culture**

About whether a clash of civilizations is inevitable, and whether a dialogue among civilizations is possible.

7 March: **Ethnicity**

Do ethnic identities drive politics, or does politics create ethnic identities?

Week Eight

10 March: **Regionalism**

Understanding what regions are, and how integration happens.

11 March: **War**

Why wars happen, and how they can be measured and compared.

14 March: **Deterrence**

What happens when two adversaries, say India and Pakistan, possess nuclear weapons.

Week Nine

17 March: **Holiday – Holi**

18 March: **Terrorism**

The use of terror for political purpose: how do we understand it?

21 March: **Trade**

Exchange relations of a global scale and the difficulty in reaching a world trade agreement that is fair and acceptable to all.

Week Ten

24 March: **Technology**

How technology and its acquisition have an impact on world politics.

25 March: **Resources**

The uneven distribution of natural resources and their scarcity is a critical factor in world politics.

28 March: **Environment**

Understanding how the state of the planetary ecosystem has an impact not only on world politics but on the world itself.

India's External Relations and Interests

Week Eleven

31 March: **Pakistan and Afghanistan**

At one time, Pakistan used to be of immediate importance to India while Afghanistan was a distant concern, but that is no longer the case.

1 April: **Sri Lanka and Bangladesh**

Two important neighbours whose decisions and trajectories will have a huge impact on India.

4 April: **Iran and Israel**

About how India has been able to build close links with two countries that consider each other as mortal enemies.

Week Twelve

7 April: **The Arab World**

India's relations with the Arab world go well beyond oil, remittances and pilgrimage.

8 April: **Holiday – Ram Navami**

11 April: **USA**

India has a multidimensional relationship not amounting to an alliance with the systemic hegemon.

Week Thirteen

14 April: **China**

India's largest trade partner, also its greatest security threat: what does the future hold for bilateral relations with the rising continental and global power?

15 April: **Japan and Korea**

Important economic partners of India, but is the relationship with Japan now being converted into a strategic one?

18 April: **Holiday – Good Friday**

Week Fourteen

21 April: **Russia**

India's most important friendship during the Cold War, but does the relationship now go beyond arms supplies?

22 April: **UK, France and Germany**

India's relations with each of the Big Three in the European Union are multifaceted yet remarkably different from one another.

25 April: **South Africa and Brazil**

Two new partners, emerging powers like India: the political content of these two relationships raise them well above India's relations with Africa and Latin America in general.

Week Fifteen

28 April: **Central Asia**

India's extended neighbourhood to the west is critical for India's energy security.

29 April: **Southeast Asia**

India's Look East policy has been perhaps its most important and successful diplomatic initiative since the end of the Cold War.

2 May: **Disarmament Policy**

A state with nuclear weapons that has consistently worked for comprehensive global nuclear disarmament: is there a contradiction, and what explains it?

Week Sixteen

5 May: **Energy Policy**

India's frenetic search for energy now drives the country's foreign policy across the world.

6 May: **Diaspora Policy**

India has rediscovered its Diaspora and is seeking to derive value from it, but has it also taken on global obligations?

9 May: **Foreign Economic Policy**

In what ways has India's foreign economic policy changed after the opening up of the Indian economy?

Reading List

Baylis, John, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds.) (2011), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (5th edn.), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brown, Chris and Kirsten Ainley (2005), *Understanding International Relations* (3rd edn.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Burchill, Scott et al. (2001), *Theories of International Relations* (2nd edn.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Calvocoressi, Peter (2008), *World Politics Since 1945*, 9th edn., New York: Routledge.
- Dunne, Tim, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.) (2013), *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 3rd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Edkins, Jenny and Maja Zehfuss (eds.) (2009), *Global Politics: A New Introduction*, New York: Routledge.
- Ganguly, Sumit (2010), *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ganguly, Sumit and Manjeet S. Pardesi (2009), "Explaining Sixty Years of India's Foreign Policy", *India Review*, 8 (1), pp. 4-19.
- Griffiths, Martin et al. (2008), *International Relations: The Key Concepts* (2nd edn.), New York: Routledge.
- Mazlish, Bruce and Akire Iriye (eds.) (2005), *The Global History Reader*, New York: Routledge.
- McWilliams, Wayne C. and Harry Piotrowski (2009), *The World since 1945: a History of International Relations* (7th edn.), London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Mohan, C. Raja (2003), *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Viking Press.
- Reus-Smit, Christian and Duncan Snidal (eds.) (2008), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Viotti, Paul R. and Mark Kauppi (2007), *International Relations and World Politics* (3rd edn.), New Delhi: Pearson.
- Weber, Cynthia (2010), *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction* (3rd edn.) London: Sage.

Most of the readings listed above are textbooks. Each student would be expected to have a distinct comfort level with different textbooks. Students are therefore advised to sample the various textbooks above and choose those that they find the most helpful. Do remember that not all topics are covered equally well in a single textbook. Please contact the course teacher in case any doubts persist.