PIA5025: THEORY IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Effective Term Semester B 2024/25

Part I Course Overview

Course Title Theory in International Studies

Subject Code PIA - Public and International Affairs Course Number 5025

Academic Unit Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration One Semester

Credit Units

Level P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction English

Medium of Assessment English

Prerequisites Nil

Precursors Nil

Equivalent Courses AIS5025 Theory in International Studies

Exclusive Courses

AIS5022 Theory and Methodology in Asian and International Relations

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course seeks to ground students in the so-called "root discourses" of international relations (IR) - the field's core theoretical paradigms, concepts, debates, and questions - analysing how they relate one to another and exploring their

implications for understanding contemporary global issues. Students will learn how to use the theories to critically analyse and explain real-world events, tendencies, and institutions. The subject matter will include inter- and intra-state violence (such as wars and civil wars), patterned international economic exchanges, transboundary flows of ideas and images, the complex impacts of globalization, how state identities shape foreign policies, the evolving roles of international nongovernmental organizations, and more. Students will participate actively in the class-wide discussions held as a part of every lecture session and will give presentations on how the theories can be used to illuminate contemporary global issues.

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain the core theoretical traditions in international relations - the root discourses - and how they differ and inter-relate	40	Х	x	
2	Discuss and critically evaluate the newer IR theories and show how they evolved from the root discourses	20	Х	x	X
3	Develop the capacity to use IR theories critically to analyse and interpret real-world events, tendencies, and institutions	20	Х	x	x
4	Cultivate the synoptic, high-level understanding of international relations theories that is necessary for conducting advanced and compelling research	20	X	X	x

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

	LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	1	Prepare the assigned readings prior to each class session	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	2	Listen actively and in an engaged way to the class lecture and PPT presentation	1, 2, 3	
3	3	Watch the short documentary material with an analytical mindset	1, 2, 3, 4	

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

4	4	Participate actively	1, 2, 3	
		in class discussions,		
		linking concepts covered		
		in the readings and		
		lectures to the real-world		
		material presented in the		
		documentary and in news		
		sources		

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)
1	Class Participation	1, 2, 3	20	
2	Take-Home Quiz #1	1, 2, 3	25	
3	Take-Home Quiz #2	1, 2, 3, 4	25	
4	Group Research Paper	1, 2, 3, 4	30	

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Class participation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Active engagement in classroom activities. Attentive listening to lectures (no phone use, etc.) and participation in discussions.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.

Marginal

(D) Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of low quality, including in discussions.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.

Assessment Task

Take-Home Quiz #1 (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.

Marginal

(D) Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of low quality, including in discussions.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.

Assessment Task

Take-Home Quiz #2 (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically.

Marginal

(D) Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Assessment Task

Group Research paper (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Working in a group of approximately five students to produce a research paper of 12,000-15,000 words comparatively assessing the explanatory power of competing IR theories in interpreting a significant pattern, process, or event in international relations

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically and analytically.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically and analytically.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically and analytically.

Marginal

(D) Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically and analytically.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Assessment Task

Class participation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Active engagement in classroom activities. Attentive listening to lectures (no phone use, etc.) and participation in discussions.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.

Good

(B+, B) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Partial understanding of theories of international relations as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.

Assessment Task

Take-Home Quiz 1 (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically.

Good

(B+, B) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Partial understanding of theories of international relations as well as a partial ability to use them critically.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Assessment Task

Take-Home Quiz 2 (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically.

Good

(B+, B) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Partial understanding of theories of international relations as well as a partial ability to use them critically.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Assessment Task

Group Research Paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Working in a group of approximately five students to produce a research paper of 12,000-15,000 words comparatively assessing the explanatory power of competing IR theories in interpreting a significant pattern, process, or event in international relations

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent understanding of theories of international relations as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically and analytically.

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(B+, B) Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically and analytically.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Partial understanding of theories of international relations as well as a partial ability to use them critically and analytically.

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

International Relations Theory; Liberalism; Realism; Neo-Neo Debate; Regime Theory; Prisoner's Dilemma; English School; Constructivism; Post-Modernism; Gender and IR; Critical Theory; Globalization; Non-State Actors; War; International Political Economy; Global Communication

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Viotti, Paul R. and Mark V. Kauppi. International Relations Theory, 6th edition. New York: Pearson, 2019.
2	Reus-Smit, Christian and Duncan Snidal, eds. The Oxford Handbook of International Relations. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Buzan, Barry and Richard Little, International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
2	Robert Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation (New York: Basic Books, 1984).
3	Hedley Bull, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics 2nd edition, with a new foreword by Stanley Hoffman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).
4	J. Ann Tickner, Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
5	Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
6	Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., Becoming National: A Reader (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
7	John Keane, Global Civil Society? (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).