



**The Exeter College Oxford Summer Programme  
at Exeter College in the University of Oxford**

**Introduction to International Relations**

**Course Description**

The course aims to introduce students to the subject and study of International Relations (IR). Students will learn about the historical and conceptual foundations of the field, as well about the contemporary challenges and approaches to global politics. The course will be divided into three segments. The first looks at the historical development of the international system, from Westphalia to the two World Wars, from 9/11 to today. The second segment will introduce the main concepts and theories of IR: power and anarchy (realism), cooperation and institutions (liberalism), international society (English School) and justice (critical theories). The third segment will look at contemporary challenges such as the changing nature of contemporary war and violence, human rights and humanitarian intervention, global hierarchies and inequalities, the decline of the West and the rise of the Rest. The course is designed to be multidisciplinary and is suitable for students of all disciplines who have a strong interest in international relations, political theory and history of the twentieth century. There are no prerequisites and no previous knowledge of international relations or political history is required, but would be an advantage.

**Topics:**

1. What is IR? The subject and study of International Relations
2. From the classical origins to Westphalia
3. From the concert of Europe till the League of Nations
4. Bipolarity, globalisation and the 'triumph of the West'? Beyond 9/11
5. Power and anarchy: the realist approach
6. Cooperation and institutions: the liberal approach
7. The anarchical society and the 'English School'
8. Justice and emancipation: critical theories of IR
9. Understanding contemporary political violence
10. Human rights and humanitarian intervention
11. Global hierarchies, global inequalities
12. The future of the global order

**Course Objectives**

To introduce students to the subject of IR as it has historically developed, from the rise of the modern Westphalian system to 9/11 and beyond. To offer an overview of the academic field of IR, including its key theories and concepts. To reflect upon contemporary issues and challenges in global politics. To develop students' skills of analysis and argumentation, of developing historically based evidence in the context of political debate and discussion.

## Teaching Methods and Assessment

- 12 x 1.25hr Lectures (15hrs)
- 6 x 1.25hr Seminars (7.5hrs)
- 4 x 1.25hrs Tutorials (5hrs)

**Final Assessment:** An essay of no more than 3,000 words (40%), a final three-hour written examination (40%), oral presentation (10%) and participation in seminar discussion (10%).

## BACKGROUND READING

Baylis J., Smith S. & Owens, P. (eds) *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Brown, C. and K. Ainsley, *Understanding International Relations*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2009.

## Lecture Schedule

### 1. What is IR? The subject and study of International Relations

Considers the contours of the subject matter of international relations and reviews the evolution of the academic field of IR.

Reading:

Baylis, John and Smith, Steve (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Chapters 1.

Brown, Chris and Kirsten Ainsley, *Understanding International Relations*, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

### 2. From the classical origins to Westphalia

Examines the way in which the international system emerged in ancient Greece and evolved into the modern European states-system.

Reading:

Buzan, B. and R. Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 163-240.

Watson, Adam, *The Evolution of International Society: a comparative historical analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 152-198.

### 3. From the concert of Europe till the League of Nations

Charts the evolution of international relations from the 'balance of power' era to the First World War, including the age of empires and the post-war international order.

Reading:

Watson, Adam, *The Evolution of International Society: a comparative historical analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 198-276.

Carr, E.H., *The Twenty Years Crisis* London: Macmillan, 1946, chapters 2, 3 and 4.

#### **4. Bipolarity, globalisation and the ‘triumph of the West’? Beyond 9/11**

Considers the evolution of the international order from the Second World War and the Cold War to the end of bipolarism, the 9/11 terror attacks and the current ‘interregnum’.

Reading:

Clark, I., *Globalisation and Fragmentation; International Relations in the Twentieth Century* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Fukuyama, F. ‘The End of History and the Last Man’ *The National Interest* 1989

Cox, M. ‘From the Cold War to the War on Terror’, in Baylis, Owens & Smith *Globalization of World Politics*, pp.72-86.

#### **5. Power and anarchy: the realist approach**

Reviews the realist school of thinking around international relations, considering the continued centrality of concepts such as power, anarchy and the security dilemma.

Reading:

Carr, E.H. *The Twenty Years Crisis*, chapter 5 and 6.

Baylis, Owens & Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, Chapter 6, ‘Realism’, pp. 99-112

Mearsheimer, J. (2014), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton, Chapter 2, pp. 29-54.

#### **6. Cooperation and institutions: the liberal approach**

Explores the promise of the liberal approach to IR, in particular focusing on the scope for cooperation among states and the pacifying role of international institutions.

Reading:

Baylis, Owens & Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, chapter 7, Liberalism, pp. 113-125.

Axelrod, Robert and Robert O. Keohane ‘Achieving cooperation under anarchy: strategies and institutions’, *World Politics* 38, 1, October 1985.

Brown & Ainsley, *Understanding International Relations*, chapter 5.

#### **7. The anarchical society and the ‘English School’**

Offers an overview of the ‘via media’ provided by the English School of IR, introducing the concepts of international society and international order.

Reading:

Bull, Hedley, *The Anarchical Society* (London: Macmillan, 1977), Chapters 1-3.

Baylis, Owens and Smith, *Globalization of World Politics*, chapter 2 ‘The Evolution of International Society’.

Dunne, T. ‘The English School’ in T. Dunne, M. Kurki and S. Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theories; Discipline and Diversity* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

#### **8. Justice and emancipation: critical theories of IR**

Considers a variety of normative and critical approaches to IR, including Marxism and Critical theory, and the way in which these have challenged the IR mainstream.

Reading:

Burchill, Scott and Andrew Linklater (eds.), *Theories of International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Cox, Robert W., 'Social forces, states and world orders: beyond International Relations theory', *Millennium*, 10,2 (1981).

## **9. Understanding contemporary political violence**

Reviews the transformations of warfare and examines the many faces of contemporary violence, including terrorism.

Reading:

Baylis, Owens and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, chapter 15, 'International and Global Security', and chapter 23, 'Terrorism and Globalisation'.

Strachan, H. (2006), 'The Changing Character of War', 9 November 2006, Europaeum, <http://www.europaeum.org/files/publications/pamphlets/HewStrachan.pdf>.

Brighi, E. (2015), 'The Mimetic Politics of Lone Wolf Terrorism', *Journal of International Political Theory*, 11:1, pp. 145–164.

## **10. Human rights and humanitarian intervention**

Reflects on the growth of a consciousness about human rights and wrongs and examines the contemporary dilemmas and practices of humanitarian intervention.

Reading:

Baylis, Owens and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, chapter 30, 'Human Rights' and chapter 31, 'Humanitarian Intervention in World Politics'.

Walling, C.B. (2015), 'Human Rights Norms, State Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention', *Human Rights Quarterly*, 37(2): 383-413.

Welsh, J. (2006) *Humanitarian intervention and international relations*, Oxford, OUP, pp. 52-70.

## **11. Global hierarchies, global inequalities**

Considers the hidden hierarchies of world politics – including class, gender and race – and introduces theoretical approaches such as feminism and post-colonialism.

Reading:

Baylis, Owens and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, chapter 12 'Post-colonialism'.

Burchill, Scott and Andrew Linklater (eds.), *Theories of International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), chapter 9 'Feminism'.

Carver, Terrell (2008) 'Men in the Feminist Gaze: What does this Mean in IR?' *Millennium* 37:1 pp. 107-122.

## **12. The future of the global order**

Reflects on the contemporary evolution of the international order and evaluates the current prospects for peace and renewed perils of war.

Reading:

Baylis, Owens and Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics*, chapter 32, 'Globalization and the Transformation of Political Community' and chapter 33, 'Globalization and the Post Cold-War Order'.

Singh, R. (2008) 'The Exceptional Empire: Why the United States Will Not Decline — Again' *International Politics* 45:5, 571-593.