



IRPG841

Theories of International Relations

S3 Day 2017

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Conor Keane

conor.keane@mq.edu.au

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MIntRel or PGDipIntRel or GradDipIntRel or MIntCommMIntRel or MIntBusMIntRel or MIntRelMIntTrdeComLaw or MTransInterMIntRel or MConflnt or GradCertIntRel or MPPP or GradCertPP or GradDipPP

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides students with a grounding in the principle theoretical approaches to the study of international relations and world order. Beginning with a focus on the historical emergence of traditional approaches such as realism, liberalism and Marxism and their competing perspectives on the causes of war and the conditions for peace, the unit goes on to consider more recent approaches, including gender approaches, critical theory, constructivism, postcolonialism, postmodernism and green theory.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

As a core compulsory unit for all students in the MIR program, this unit provides an essential grounding in theories of International Relations (IR).

Students will gain a critical appreciation of traditional theoretical approaches to the study of international relations as well as of newer approaches that have emerged in recent years.

Students will be able to practically apply IR theory to the analysis of issues in the general field of international politics

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Online participation	15%	No	ongoing
On-campus Participation	10%	No	Ongoing
Summit of Political Theorists	10%	No	TBD
Essay	40%	No	21/01/2018
End-of-semester test	25%	No	28/02/2018

Online participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **15%**

Students will participate in weekly online discussions for this unit from December 4 until the on-campus session begins. Responses should be posted before Monday of the following week. The questions that you are required to answer will be accessible via two separate forums. The theme of the first 'Theory Discussion' forum is two general questions about the IR theory (or theories) apropos to the each weeks content. You may chose to provide a longer answer to one question or shorter answers to multiple questions.

The second forum 'Practical Application' requires students to post a suggestions of how one of the theories we discuss each week can be applied to a particular case study. The case study can be either past or present. I will then chose some of these suggestions to critically assess during the on-campus session.

You should post around 250 words in both forum every week (for a total of 500 words). No referencing is required.

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On-campus Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Students will be required to participate each day (five days total) and demonstrate that they have engaged with the prerecorded material and set readings. You are graded on your contribution to class discussion and group work.

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Summit of Political Theorists

Due: **TBD**

Weighting: **10%**

Students will to participate in a hypothetical 'Summit of Political Theorists.' As individuals and/or groups you will adopt the role of theorists from a particular school of IR thought. In 20 minutes (each), using a powerpoint presentation, you will describe what you believe to be the most pressing global issues and examine how they should be approach and/or overcome. You will then field questions about your presentation from the rest of the student cohort for approximately 10 minutes.

Roles will be assigned via an online forum on ilearn and you will be given time to interact with your group members during the on-campus session. More details about this will be forthcoming.

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Essay

Due: **21/01/2018**

Weighting: **40%**

An essay of up to 3,000 words max. (worth 40%). You must include the word count on the title page of your essay. If you don't provide an accurate word limit you will be penalised. If you exceed the word limit by more than 10% you will be penalised. Essays that are well short of the word limit (more than 10% under) will also be penalised. Due date is 21 January 11:55pm. All essays should be upload it through Turnitin - no hardcopy is required. **All essays must include at least one case study** (more information about this will be provided on ilearn).

Essay Questions

Choose one of the following questions:

1. Elucidate and critically assess the role of ideas about 'human nature' in realist and liberal theory.
2. Is the 'democratic peace thesis' realistic?
3. '[R]ealists claim to recognize the brute facts about world of international politics for what they are, unclouded by wishful thinking about unobtainable goals.' (Lawson, 2012, p. 88). Discuss.
4. How relevant is the Marxist critique of capitalism to the analysis of the modern international system?
5. '[C]ritical theory focuses attention on the social construction and effects of knowledge ...' (Lawson, 2012, p. 47). Explain this statement and assess the implications for the analysis of world politics.
6. Traditional approaches to IR tend to assume that 'men make war while women make peace' (Lawson, 2012, p. 53)? Critically assess this claim.
7. In what ways do postmodern/poststructural approaches provide a radical critique of traditional IR theories?
8. How valid is the claim made by proponents of postcolonialism that IR theory is Eurocentric?
9. Is green theory a unique IR theory in its own right? Or does it simply draw upon existing theories and apply them to the particular topic of the environment?
10. What is 'normative theory' and how does it relate to ideas about the role of culture in international politics?
11. Do most IR theories underestimate the role that bureaucratic politics plays in shaping the behaviour of states?
12. Are there current leaders who have adopted the maxims outlined in Machiavelli's 'The Prince'?
13. Contrast the way in which different IR theories conceptualise power in international relations.

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End-of-semester test

Due: **28/02/2018**

Weighting: **25%**

An end-of-semester test worth 25% of the total assessment. Students will be asked to answer a total of 2 short essays out of a choice of ten questions based on the unit material. Answers should be between 500-700 words. The short answer test must also be submitted electronically to turnitin in the same as an assignment and also uploaded to Turnitin. Students must reference any source material, but you do not need to include a bibliography. Answers must be in your own words, and reflect your own thoughts. You have 8 hours to complete the exam on 28 January (exam opens at 9am and closes at 5pm). More details about this will be forthcoming on ilearn.

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Delivery and Resources

Teaching Methods/Mode of Delivery

Teaching on the unit consists of online 'flipped' lectures and a 5 day intensive on-campus session. Students must also be prepared to discuss issues during the seminars based on the recommended readings and the lectures

Prerequisites and Preparation

Students taking this unit inevitably come from a wide range of academic backgrounds. Some students will already have been introduced to the study of IR, and IR theory, at undergraduate level. For others, this unit will be their first experience of the subject, or of the more general field of political studies, of which IR is a part. For those with little or no previous background in the study of politics and IR, it is essential that you do some extra reading and preparation for the unit. Even if you have done some politics and IR before, you will benefit from some revision.

Textbooks and Sources: Students make an enormous financial investment in studying for a Master's degree. Don't compromise by not investing in the core texts for any unit and relying solely on the library. You are strongly advised to acquire your own copies of the core texts so that you have ready access to them when you need them. You will find that these texts are useful for other units as well. The core texts for IRPG841 are:

Stephanie Lawson, *Theories of International Relations: Contending approaches to world politics* (Polity, 2015) is now available to be purchased at the co-op book store. Most of the readings for each week's topic will come from this document. The rest of the required readings will be available online

Another text worth purchasing is: Stephanie Lawson, *International Relations*, (Polity, 2012). This book introduces students to the general field of IR, explains the emergence of IR theories in an historic context, and examines three major contexts for the application of theoretical concepts, namely: security and insecurity, global governance and world order, and globalization and the state.

Unit Schedule

See iLearn

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- On-campus Participation

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen

fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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Assessment tasks

- Online participation
- On-campus Participation
- Essay
- End-of-semester test

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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Assessment tasks

- Online participation
- On-campus Participation
- Essay

- End-of-semester test

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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- Students will be able to practically apply IR theory to the analysis of issues in the general field of international politics

Assessment tasks

- On-campus Participation
- Essay
- End-of-semester test

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

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Assessment tasks

- On-campus Participation

- Essay
- End-of-semester test

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Students will gain a critical appreciation of traditional theoretical approaches to the study of international relations as well as of newer approaches that have emerged in recent years.

Assessment task

- On-campus Participation

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
11/12/2017	There was an inconsistency with the assessment worth and the description of the assessment (final exam). This error has now been corrected.