

Seminar: Field Seminar in International Relations

1st Term, Academic Year 2024-2025

Mondays, 15.00 – 17.00 (Mostly but not always: Seminar room 2, Badia)

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Description

This course surveys the state-of-the-art in international relations (IR) theory. Yet, rather than introducing the different -isms (realism, liberalism, constructivism, post-structuralism, etc.), as is the case in more traditional IR survey courses, it focuses on the different ways to understand and do theory in the social sciences at large, then exemplified by IR debates. Its focus on theorising therefore also speaks to researchers outside IR.

Theorising in the social sciences takes place in different modes, such as (1) meta-theory, where epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions of theories are assessed, (2) normative theory that uses moral philosophy to assess significant questions of international ethics, (3) political theory that relies on historical and conceptual analysis for understanding the nature of fundamental phenomena, like the state or sovereignty or power, (4) empirical theory in the naturalist tradition that creates theories through the finding, generalisation and explanation of empirical regularities, and (5) empirical theory in the interpretivist tradition, that is geared towards reconstructing the (intersubjective) meaning of phenomena and/or the creation of frameworks of analysis (analytical generalisation). Theorising is also used with two quite different purposes in mind. Instrumental theorising produces potential toolboxes: Theory is the result of knowledge and its regularities reapplied. Constitutive theorising is interested in the analytical lenses we use when “seeing” the world: Theory is not the result of, but the condition for the possibility of knowledge.

Despite its brevity, the course aims at providing some grasp of these different modes and purposes. It proposes to do so by touching a series of research themes in IR. Recent decades have seen

- (1) a widening of the research fields beyond its classical concerns with war, diplomacy, and world order / global political economy (e.g. emotions, environment, big data),
- (2) new meta-theoretical inspirations (e.g. new thinking on causality, uncertainty, relational and process ontologies, new materialism) and
- (3) an engagement with different theoretical traditions (e.g. feminism, post-colonialism, non-Western IR) and methodologies (e.g. ethnographic approaches)

As a result, IR has renewed its theories and theorising, as, for instance, in the study of international norms and institutions, (critical) security studies and foreign policy analysis (FPA), as well as in

the burgeoning fields of International Political Economy (IPE), International Political Sociology (IPS), International Political Theory (IPT), and what has come to be called Global IR.

In sum, the seminar focuses on modes and purposes of theorisation, exemplifying these different research designs of theorisations within some of the subfields (e.g. FPA, IPE, IPS, IPT) and/or research fields within IR (e.g. environment, security). In this context, it is important to note that there is no necessary link between the two. Research fields are not vetted to one single design, but regularly use many, and single researchers similarly may employ different designs.

Within the limited time frame, the seminar syllabus will introduce the above topics. The present syllabus includes many readings beyond the required ones for each session. This does *not* mean that students should master them all (which is anyway impossible). These readings are a first reference for those who want to develop a particular topic in more detail. They are meant as intellectual support, not as some sort of exam requirements. The seminar is worth 20 credits.

Learning Outcomes

- Researchers will gain an in-depth understanding of contemporary international relations theory
- They will come to understand the variety of modes of IR theorising (meta-theoretical, theoretical / conceptual, empirical - both naturalist and interpretivist, normative / ethical) and their respective ways to evaluate IR theorising
- They will (start to) develop their own perspective on the pluralism that has come to define IR over the past 15 years.

Format

The class will be run as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm. For Sessions 2 - 10, response memos – ideally prepared by 1-2 researchers for each session – will inform and guide our debates.

In parallel, it is possible to run a series of (voluntary!) **ad hoc-seminars** which are demanded and respond to more specific interests or educational lacunae of researchers, given their usually diverse backgrounds. For some of these seminars, external experts can be invited, both online and in person. In 2023-24, such seminars included topics like the agency-structure debate, constructivism, post-structuralism (Prof. Maja Zehfuss), gender / queer studies (Prof. Laura Sjoberg), but also challenges to peace in the Western Balkans (Prof. Florian Bieber) or Global Patterns of Torture in Russian Occupied Ukraine (Prof. Jonathan Austin).

Requirements

- **Elective:** For researchers taking the seminar as an elective, they are required to prepare 3 response memos (the equivalent of 3-4 pages, double spaced) over the course of the 10-week term. The first response memo needs to be handed in latest by week 4, the second by week 7, the last by week 10.
- **Required Course:** For researchers taking the seminar as a requirement, they prepare 2 response memos (as above) plus a final paper (approx. 5-6000 words) instead of the third response memo.

Schedule

Introduction. From practice to theory:

Confusing description with explanation and foreign policy strategy with theory

Session 1 (30 Sept 2025). The three domains and four modes of theorising IR ... and its confusions

Modes of theorising IR

Session 2 (7 Oct 2024). Theorisation as empirical generalisation: Different ways of establishing regularity in the study of environmental security

Session 3 (14 Oct 2024). Theorisation by generating hypotheses / frameworks of analysis: Models and Approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis

Session 4 (21 Oct 2024). (Ethnographic) Case study and theory development: Practice theory in Diplomatic Studies (IPS)

Session 5 (28 Oct 2024). Theorisation by abstraction: Ideal types in the English School of IR

Session 6 (4 Nov 2024). Theorisation as concept analysis: The concept of power in International Political Economy (IPE)

Session 7 (11 Nov 2024). Theorising in International Political Theory (IPT): Understanding violence

Session 8 (18 Nov 2024). Normative theorising: The ethics of inequality and global justice

Session 9 (2 Dec 2024). Meta-theorising: Relational and process ontologies

Conclusion. From theory to practice: The politics of performatives

Session 10 (9 Dec 2024): The politics of categorisations and theorisations

Seminars and Readings

Part I. Introduction. From practice to theory:

Confusing description with explanation and foreign policy strategy with theory

Session 1. The three domains and four modes of theorising IR ... and its confusions

Whereas most social sciences in the West evolve as a reaction to the differentiation of modern societies, where the economy, civil society, but then also the political system become autonomous fields warranting a new expertise knowledge, the differentiation into sovereign states happened well before. Hence, by the time social sciences are institutionalized, IR was not looking for new knowledge but for ways to account for its already existing practical knowledge. The discipline was not there to produce (new) knowledge; knowledge established its discipline. The first debate (realism versus idealism), and in particular (classical) realism played a major role for translating the maxims of (European) diplomatic and military behaviour into the laws of a (US) social science. This first session therefore introduces into this peculiar history and showcases one particular debate in which this mix of practical and observational knowledge can be observed. (Yes, this session has the only all-male reference list. Perhaps not a coincidence).

Readings

- Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. "[The Ends of International Relations Theory: Stages of Reflexivity and Modes of Theorizing](#)." *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (3): 521–41.
- Mearsheimer, John J. 1994/95. "[The False Promise of International Institutions](#)." *International Security* 19 (3): 5–49.
- Wendt, Alexander. 1995. "[Constructing International Politics](#)." *International Security* 20 (1): 71–81.

Additional readings

- For realists by realists
- Aron, Raymond. 1962. *Paix et guerre entre les nations*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy. (Engl.: 2003. *Peace & War: A Theory of International Relations*. New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers.)
- Aron, Raymond. 1976. *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz. II: L'âge planétaire*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.
- Carr, Edward Heller. 1946. *The Twenty Years' Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. 1946. *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. 1960. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 3rd ed. New York: Knopf.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1959. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wolfers, Arnold. 1962. *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*. Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- For a recent attempt to revive specifically Classical Realism:
- Kirshner, Jonathan. 2022. *An Unwritten Future: Realism, Uncertainty, and World Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- For the theoretical analysis of realism(s) within IR's disciplinary history
- Donnelly, Jack. 2000. [Realism and International Relations](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guilhot, Nicholas. 2017. *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-20th Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobson, John M. 2012. [The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- For a more general critique of the origins of US IR, see
- Vitalis, Robert. 2015. [White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations](#). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- For what the enemy thinks (not obligatory):
- Guzzini, Stefano. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2004. "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 10 (4): 533–68.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2020. "Saving Realist Prudence." In J. Samuel Barkin, ed., *The Social Construction of State Power: Applying Realist Constructivism*, 217–32. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

- For ways to link the three domains of international theory (still not obligatory):

Guzzini, Stefano. 2010. "[Imposing Coherence: The Central Role of Human Practices in Friedrich Kratochwil's Theorising of Politics, IR and Science](#)." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 13 (3): 301–22.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2020. "[Embrace IR Anxieties \(or, Morgenthau's Approach to Power, and the Challenge of Combining the Three Domains of IR Theorizing\)](#)." *International Studies Review* 22 (2): 268–88.

Part II. Modes of theorizing IR

Session 2. Theorisation as empirical generalisation:

Different ways of establishing regularity in the study of environmental security

A first research design conceives of theorization as the establishment of (probabilistic) regularities. This can be done in either a quantitative or qualitative manner. The field chosen to illustrate this mode of theorization is environmental security, including issues of climate conflict, resource wars and environmental peacebuilding. A complementary reading engages a reflection on the causal mechanisms when conceived in different epistemologies. It is again important to note here, as elsewhere, that certain research fields are not vetted to one only design and that many scholars in environmental security have been using other designs.

Readings

Grech-Madin, Charlotte. 2021. "[Water and Warfare: The Evolution and Operation of the Water Taboo](#)." *International Security* 45 (4): 84–125.

Ide, Tobias. 2019. "[The Impact of Environmental Cooperation on Peacemaking: Definitions, Mechanisms, and Empirical Evidence](#)." *International Studies Review* 21 (3): 327–46.

von Uexkull, Nina, and Halvard Buhaug. 2021. "[Security Implications of Climate Change: A Decade of Scientific Progress](#)." *Journal of Peace Research* 58 (1): 3–17.

Complementary reading

Beaumont, Paul, and Cedric de Coning. 2022. "[Coping with Complexity: Toward Epistemological Pluralism in Climate–Conflict Scholarship](#)." *International Studies Review* 24 (4): viac055.

Additional readings

Selby, Jan, Omar S. Dahi, Christiane Fröhlich, and Mike Hulme. 2017. "Climate Change and the Syrian Civil War Revisited." *Political Geography* 60: 232–44.

Scheffran, Jürgen, Michael Brzoska, Hans Günter Brauch, Peter Michael Link, and Janpeter Schilling, eds. 2012. *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict: Challenges for Societal Stability*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Swain, Ashok, and Joakim Öjendal, eds. 2018. *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*. Abingdon: Routledge.

von Uexkull, Nina, and Halvard Buhaug, eds. 2021. "Special Issue on Security Implications of Climate Change", *Journal of Peace Research* 58 (1): 3–194.

Session 3. Theorisation by generating hypotheses / frameworks of analysis:

Models and Approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is an important subfield in International Relations that after its heyday in the 1970s, has recently seen a revival (also connected to diplomatic studies, see Session 4). It originated in the attempt to systematise diplomatic history. The watershed was the publication of Graham T. Allison's research on the Cuban Missile Crisis, which featured three models for understanding the decisions during the Crisis. As such, FPA developed a mainly event-centered analysis where case studies are used for theory-development. Focusing on decision-making processes, it attempted to find generalisable frameworks of analysis which, in the more positivist tradition, could perhaps be turned into causal theories once scope conditions could be established. Yet, the more ambitious promises have stayed largely unfulfilled. As a result, FPA changed from its sole focus on decision-making and branched out by developing frameworks of analysis inspired by other theoretical inspirations, like constructivism and post-structuralism. Moreover, some of the initial inspiration to include psychology into the analysis was developed in the systematic study of beliefs and emotions.

Readings

- Allison, Graham T. 1969. "[Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis](#)." *American Political Science Review* 63 (3): 689–718.
- Hansen, Lene. 2006. [Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War](#). London, New York: Routledge (chapter 2+3: 'Discourse analysis, identity, and foreign policy' + 'Beyond the Other', pp. 15–48)
- Mercer, Jonathan. 2010. '[Emotional beliefs](#).' *International Organization* 64 (1): 1–31; or: Mercer, Jonathan. 2013. "[Emotion and Strategy in the Korean War](#)." *International Organization* 67 (2): 221–52. (the first is theoretical and perhaps more daring; the second shows an integration of emotional and rational analysis).
- Weldes, Jutta. 1999. [Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis](#). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (chapter 3: 97–119). Or: Hopf, Ted. 2002. [Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999](#). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (chapter 1: 1–38).

Additional readings (very extensive as it covers also the different -isms in IR)

- Rationalist FPA

- Baldwin, David A. 1985. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Goldstein, Judith, and Robert O. Keohane. 1993. "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework." In their *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, 3–30. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press

- Extensions and critiques of Allison's models

- Steinbruner, John D. 1974. *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kaarbo, Juliet. 1998. 'Power Politics in Foreign Policy: The Influence of Bureaucratic Minorities.' *European Journal of International Relations* 4 (1): 67–98.
- Krasner, Stephen. 1972. 'Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison's Wonderland).' *Foreign Policy*, vol. 7, pp. 159–79.
- Smith, Steve. 1980. "Allison and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Review of the Bureaucratic Politics Model of Foreign Policy Decision-Making." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 9 (1): 21–40.

Steiner, Miriam. 1983. "The Search for Order in a Disorderly World: Worldviews and Prescriptive Decision Paradigms." *International Organization* 37 (3): 373–413.

Welch, David. 1992. "The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms." *International Security* 17 (2): 112–46.

- Constructivist FPA

Biswas, Shampa. 2001. "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position: Race as a Postcolonial Resource?" *Alternatives* 26 (4): 485–522.

Doty, Roxanne Lynn. 1993. "Foreign Policy as a Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines." *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (3): 297–320.

Lafer, Celso. 2004. *A identidade internacional do Brasil e a política externa brasileira: passado, presente e futuro*. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

McSweeney, Bill. 1999. *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ringmar, Erik. 1996. *Identity, Interest and Action*. Cambridge University Press.

- Role Theory in FPA

Harnisch, Sebastian, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, eds. 2011. *Role Theory in International Relations*. London: Routledge.

Holsti, K. J. 1970. "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy." *International Studies Quarterly* 14 (3): 233–309.

Thies, Cameron G. 2010. "Role Theory and Foreign Policy." In Robert A. Denemark, ed., *International Studies Encyclopedia, Vol. X*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Walker, Stephen G., ed. 1987. *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wehner, Leslie E. 2020. "The Narration of Roles in Foreign Policy Analysis." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 23 (2): 359–84.

Wehner, Leslie E., and Cameron G. Thies. 2021. "Leader Influence in Role Selection Choices: Fulfilling Role Theory's Potential for Foreign Policy Analysis." *International Studies Review* 23 (4): 1424–41.

- Post-structuralist FPA

Campbell, David. 1992. *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Laffey, Mark. 2000. 'Locating identity: performativity, foreign policy and state action.' *Review of International Studies* 26 (4): 429–44.

Neumann, Iver. 1999. *Uses of the Other: The East European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Chapter 1: 'Uses of the Other in World Politics', pp. 1–37).

Wæver, Ole. 2004. "European Integration and Security: Analysing French and German Discourses on State, Nation, and Europe." In David R. Howarth and Jacob Torfing, eds, *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance*, 33–67. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Gender in Foreign Policy Analysis

Aggestam, Karin, and Ann Towns. 2019. 'The Gender Turn in Diplomacy: A New Research Agenda.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 21 (1): 9–28.

Basu, Soumita. 2016. "The Global South Writes 1325 (Too)." *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 362–74.

- Haastrup, Toni. 2020. "Gendering South Africa's Foreign Policy: Toward a Feminist Approach?" *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16 (2): 199–216.
- Pratt, Nicola. 2014. "Reconceptualizing Gender, Reinscribing Racial–Sexual Boundaries in International Security: The Case of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security'." *International Studies Quarterly* 57 (4): 772–83.
- Shepherd, Laura J. 2016. "Making War Safe for Women? National Action Plans and the Militarisation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda." *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 324–35.
- Towns, Ann. 2020. "Gender, Nation and the Generation of Cultural Difference across 'the West'." In Andrew Phillips and Christian Reus-Smit, eds, *Culture and Order in World Politics*, 271–93. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Psychology / Emotions in FPA

- Hutchison, Emma 2010. 'Trauma and the Politics of Emotions: Constituting Identity, Security and Community After the Bali Bombing.' *International Relations* 24(1): 65–86.
- Hutchison, Emma. 2016. *Affective Communities in World Politics: Collective Emotions after Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jervis, Robert. 2006. "Understanding Beliefs." *Political Psychology* 27 (5): 641–63.
- Mercer, Jonathan. 2014. 'Feeling like a state: Social Emotion and Identity.' *International Theory* 6 (3): 515–35.
- Ross, Andrew G. (2006) 'Coming in from the Cold: Constructivism and Emotions', *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (2): 197–222.
- Sasley, Brent. 2011. "Theorizing States' Emotions." *International Studies Review* 13 (3): 452–76.
- Saurette, Paul. 2006. "You Dissin me? Humiliation and post 9/11 global politics." *Review of International Studies* 32 (3): 495–522.

- For some background on FPA, incl. classics and Handbooks

- Carlsnaes, Walter. 2013. "Foreign Policy." In Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, eds, *Handbook of International Relations*, 298–325. London et al.: Sage.
- Carlsnaes, Walter and Stefano Guzzini, eds. 2011. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 5 vols. *Sage Library of International Relations*. London et al.: Sage.
- Kaarbo, Juliet, and Cameron G. Thies, eds. 2024. *The Oxford Handbook of Foreign Policy Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mello, Patrick A. and Falk Ostermann, eds. 2023. *Routledge Handbook of Foreign Policy Analysis Methods*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- For my own take on some of the issues

- Guzzini, Stefano. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold*. London, New York: Routledge (chapter 5).
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2012. 'The framework of analysis: geopolitics meets foreign policy identity crises.' In his ed., *The return of geopolitics in Europe? Social mechanisms and foreign policy identity crises*, 45–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2017. "Militarizing Politics, Essentializing Identities: Interpretivist Process Tracing and the Power of Geopolitics." *Cooperation and Conflict* 52 (3): 423–45.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2022. "["Vision of Itself" in Foreign Policy Analysis: From the Role of Ideas to Identity and Recognition.](#)" *Teoria Polityki* (6): 33–57 [Open access]. (A shorter version is published as "Ideas and Identity from Rationalism to Theories of Recognition." In Patrick A.

Mello and Falk Ostermann, eds, *The Routledge Handbook of Foreign Policy Methods*, 21–38. Abingdon: Routledge, 2023.)

Session 4. (Ethnographic) Case study and theory development: Practice theory in Diplomatic Studies (IPS)

Another empirically oriented mode of theorization is informed by micro-sociological and/or ethnographic approaches. Similar to historical institutionalism which is informed by the historical contextualization of phenomena, here cultural and sociological contexts are the starting point of the analysis. Yet the analysis does not aim to establish testable hypotheses but to re-construct the configurations of these contexts, its mode of domination, its rituals and other social practices which constitute a social field. Also, besides looking for similar patterns, such a field-oriented approach may be interested in finding out differences across various contexts, and not regularities. Underlying theoretical inspirations are usually more informed by theories of symbolic action (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu, Erving Goffman). In IR, much of the analysis has been conducted under the banner of practice theory(ies). A representative field to which this type of approach has been applied is the field of diplomacy.

Readings

- Adler-Nissen, Rebecca. 2014. ‘[Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society.](#)’ *International Organization* 68 (1): 143–76.
- Adler-Nissen, Rebecca, and Alena Drieschova. 2019. “[Track-Change Diplomacy: Technology, Affordances, and the Practice of International Negotiations.](#)” *International Studies Quarterly* 63 (3): 531–45.
- Nair, Deepak. 2019. “[Saving face in diplomacy: A political sociology of face-to-face interactions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.](#)” *European Journal of International Relations* 25(3): 672–97.
- Neumann, Iver B. 2005. “[To Be a Diplomat.](#)” *International Studies Perspectives* 6 (1): 72–93.
- Pouliot, Vincent. 2016. [International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy.](#) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Appendix: Research design, methods and data, pp. 272–307).

Additional readings

- Cornut, Jérémie. 2018. “Diplomacy, Agency, and the Logic of Improvisation and Virtuosity in Practice.” *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (3): 712–36.
- Kuus, Merje. 2015. “Symbolic Power in Diplomatic Practice: Matters of Style in Brussels.” *Cooperation and Conflict* 50 (3): 368–84.
- Kuus, Merje. 2018. “Transnational Institutional Fields: Positionality and Generalization in the Study of Diplomacy.” *Political Geography* 67 (November): 156–65.
- Kuus, Merje. 2023. “Bureaucratic Sociability, or the Missing Eighty Percent of Effectiveness: The Case of Diplomacy.” *Geopolitics* 28 (1): 174–95.
- Neumann, Iver B. 2002. “Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn: The Case of Diplomacy.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 31 (3): 627–51.
- Neumann, Iver B. 2007. “‘A Speech That the Entire Ministry May Stand for’, or: Why Diplomats Never Produce Anything New.” *International Political Sociology* 1 (2): 183–200.
- Neumann, Iver B. 2008. “The Body of the Diplomat.” *European Journal of International Relations* 14 (4): 671–95.
- Neumann, Iver B. 2013. *Diplomatic Sites: A critical enquiry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pouliot, Vincent. 2010. *International Security in Practice: The Politics of Nato-Russia Diplomacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pouliot, Vincent. 2016. *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pouliot, Vincent and Jérémie Cornut. 2015. "Practice theory and the study of diplomacy: A research agenda." *Cooperation and Conflict* 50 (3): 297–315.

Ramel, Frédéric. 2018. "How to understand international society differently: Mauss and the chains of reciprocity." *Journal of International Political Theory* 14 (2): 165–82.

Sending, Ole Jacob, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B. Neumann (eds). 2015. *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Standfield, Catriona. 2020. "Gendering the Practice Turn in Diplomacy." *European Journal of International Relations* 26 (1_suppl): 140–65.)

Standfield, Catriona. 2022. "Who Gets to Be a Virtuoso? Diplomatic Competence through an Intersectional Lens." *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 17 (3): 371–401.

- On Bourdieu / practice theory in IR

Adler, Emanuel, and Vincent Pouliot, eds. 2011. *International Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca, ed. 2013. *Bourdieu in International Relations: Rethinking Key Concepts in IR*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bigo, Didier. 1996. *Polices en réseaux. L'expérience Européenne*. Paris: Presses de Sciences-Po.

Bigo, Didier. 2011. "Pierre Bourdieu and International Relations: Power of Practices, Practices of Power." *International Political Sociology* 5 (3): 225–58.

Büger, Christian, and Frank Gadinger. 2018. *International Practice Theory*. Cham: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan.

Hopf, Ted. 2017. "Change in International Practices." *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (3): 687–711.

Leander, Anna. 2008. "Thinking tools: Analyzing symbolic power and violence." In Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, eds, *Qualitative methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, 11–27. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Leander, Anna. 2011. 'The Promises, Problems, and Potentials of a Bourdieu-inspired Staging of International Relations', *International Political Sociology* 5 (3): 294–313.

Pouliot, Vincent. 2008. "The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities." *International Organization* 62 (2): 257–88.

Ringmar, Erik. 2014. "The Search for Dialogue as a Hindrance to Understanding: Practices as Inter-Paradigmatic Research Program." *International Theory* 6 (1): 1–27.

Schindler, Sebastian and Tobias Wille. 2015. "Change in and through Practice: Pierre Bourdieu, Vincent Pouliot, and the End of the Cold War." *International Theory* 7 (2): 330–59.

Schindler, Sebastian and Tobias Wille. 2019. "How Can We Criticize International Practices?" *International Studies Quarterly* 63 (4): 1014–24.

Sundaram, Sasikumar S and Vineet Thakur. 2019. "A Pragmatic Methodology for Studying International Practices." *Journal of International Political Theory* 17 (3): 337–55.

Villumsen Berling, Trine. 2015. *The International Political Sociology of Security: Rethinking Theory and Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- As a background

McNay, Lois. 1999. "Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity." *Theory, Culture & Society* 16 (1): 95–117.

Reckwitz, Andreas. 2002. "Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist

Theorizing.” *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2): 243–63.

Reckwitz, Andreas. 2017. “Practices and their affects.” In Allison Hui, Theodore Schatzki and Elizabeth Shove, eds, *The Nexus of Practices: Connections, constellations, practitioners*, 114–25. Abingdon: Routledge.

Session 5. Theorisation by abstraction: Ideal types. The English School

A relatively rare form of theorization in IR, but a very classical one in Political Science, is the elaboration of ideal-types and typologies. Comparative Government used to be mainly about (more or less explanatory) typologies (e.g. democracy – authoritarianism – totalitarianism, with all the sub-types). When typologies are not fundamentally descriptive (hence: taxonomies), they, like ideal-types, are abstractions that serve as heuristic devices to capture something fundamentally important about phenomena. Against this backdrop, the seminar deals with the English School of IR, also called the “international society approach”.

Readings

- Buzan, Barry. 2004. [*From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation*](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (chapter 4: 90–138).
- Friedner Parrat, Charlotta. 2024. “What Watson can teach us about war and order: revisiting *The Evolution of International Society*.” *International Politics* (doi: 10.1057/s41311-023-00550-9).
- Keene, Edward. 2009. “International Society as an Ideal Type.” In Cornelia Navari, ed., *Theorising International Society: English School Methods*, 104–24. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Watson, Adam. 1992. *The Evolution of International Society: A comparative historical analysis*. London and New York: Routledge (Chap. 2: 13–18).

Additional readings

- Bain, William. 2003. *Between Anarchy and Society: Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power*. Oxford University Press.
- Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.
- Butterfield, Herbert and Martin Wight, eds. 1966. *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, Barry. 2014. *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations: The Societal Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Buzan, Barry & Laust Schouenbourg. 2018. *Global International Society: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dunne, Timothy. 1995. “The social construction of international society.” *European Journal of International Relations* 1 (3): 367–89.
- Dunne, Tim and Christian Reus-Smit. 2017. *The Globalization of International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Friedner Parrat, Charlotta. 2024. Change in international order? An institutional analysis. *European Journal of International Security*: 1-19 (online).
- Gong, Gerrit W. 1984. *The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in International Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hall, Ian. 2006. *The International Thought of Martin Wight*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holsti, K. J. 2004. *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hurrell, Andrew. 2007. *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, J. D. B. and R. J. Vincent, eds. 1990. *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nantermoz, Olivia. 2020. "International refugee protection and the primary institutions of international society." *Review of International Studies* 46 (2): 256–77.

Reus-Smit, Christian. 1999. *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wheeler, Nicholas J. 2002. *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. Oxford University Press.

Wight, Martin. 1977. *Systems of States*. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Wight, Martin. 1979 [1946]. *Power Politics*. Edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad. Harmondsworth: Penguin/RIIA.

Yao, Joanne. 2019. "'Conquest from barbarism': The Danube Commission, international order and the control of nature as a Standard of Civilization." *European Journal of International Relations* 25 (2): 335–59.

- Critiques and discussions of the English School

Basu-Mellish, Jack, et al. 2023. English School Special Section. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 51 (2): 552–614.

Copeland, Dale C. 2003. "A Realist critique of the English School." *Review of International Studies* 29 (3): 427–41.

Kaczmarek, Katarzyna. 2019. "Reification in IR: The Process and Consequences of Reifying the Idea of International Society." *International Studies Review* 21 (3): 347–72.

Keene, Edward. 2002. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Linklater, Andrew and Hidemi Suganami. 2006. *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Linklater, Andrew. 2021. *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Rengger, N.J. 2000. *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order: Beyond International Relations Theory?* Abingdon: Routledge.

Weber, Cynthia. 1998. "Reading Martin Wight's 'Why is There No International Theory?' as History". *Alternatives* 23 (4): 451–69.

Wæver, Ole. 1992. International society – theoretical promises unfulfilled? *Cooperation and Conflict* 27 (1): 97–128.

Forum on the English School. 2001. *Review of International Studies* 27 (3): 465–513 (includes an opening intervention by Barry Buzan to revive the English School, followed by rejoinders of Andrew Hurrell, Stefano Guzzini, Iver Neumann, Martha Finnemore)

- On ideal-types in IR and more generally

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2011. *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge (chapter 5).

- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2017. "The Production of Facts: Ideal-Typification and the Preservation of Politics." In Richard Ned Lebow, ed., *Max Weber and International Relations*, 79–96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Humphreys, Adam R. C. 2012. "Applying Jackson's Methodological Ideal-Types: Problems of Differentiation and Classification." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41 (2): 290–308.
- Gerhardt, Uta. 1994. The Use of Weberian Ideal-Type Methodology in Qualitative Data Interpretation: an Outline for Ideal-Type Analysis. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique* 45 (1): 74–126.
- Swedberg, Richard. 2018. How to use Max Weber's ideal type in sociological analysis. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18 (3): 181–96.

Session 6. Theorisation as concept analysis:

The concept of power in International Political Economy (IPE)

So far, theorisation has been empirically driven. But theorisation can also be informed by theoretical puzzles, as in the different forms of concept analysis. Concepts play a central role in theories. They are their building blocks. More strongly: concepts are the condition for the possibility of knowledge. They literally make us "see" (conceive of) certain things, rather than others. Their meaning is informed by the overall logic of theories, the so-called theory-dependence of concepts. Accordingly, concept analysis can take different forms. Most fundamentally, it is about the meaning of the terms used in an analysis. But that meaning may be conditioned by the theory in which the analysis is taking place. Hence, a critique can inquire whether there is an incoherence of the usage or whether, for the subject at hand, the concept "blends out" significant aspects of the phenomena to be studied. Besides a coherence and relevance check of the concept, concept analysis can also inquire the performative effect of categorisations that not only describe but interact with the social world (see session 10) and how concepts have acquired certain meanings and functions in our political discourse (conceptual history and genealogy, not further covered here).

The selected readings engage the meaning of a concept, here: power. It is a debate from the 1980s which saw the establishment of IPE. Initially, and for some of its defenders, IPE was not a sub-field of IR, but the other way round. In order to understand the nature of world order, of "the international", it was deemed necessary to combine the logics and political dynamics of the state system (IR) with the economic dynamics of capitalism. As a result, more structuralist approaches came into mainstream IR, as the discussion around power illustrates.

Readings

- Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye Jr. 1977. [*Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*](#). Boston: Little Brown (chapters 1-3. In any of the multiple re-editions)
- Baldwin, David A. 1980. "[Interdependence and power: a conceptual analysis.](#)" *International Organization* 34 (4): 471–506.
- Gill, Stephen and David Law. 1989. "[Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital.](#)" *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (4): 475–99.
- Leander, Anna. 2005. "[The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies](#)." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3): 803–26.

Additional readings on concept analysis in IR

- Berenskoetter, Felix, ed. 2016. *Concepts in World Politics*. London et al.: Sage Publ.

- Berenskoetter, Felix. 2017. "Approaches to Concept Analysis." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45 (2): 151–73.
- Berenskoetter, Felix. 2018. "Deep Theorizing in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (4): 814–40.
- Berenskoetter, Felix & Stefano Guzzini. 2024 forthcoming. 'Contested Essential Concepts in IR', in Cameron Thies, ed., *Handbook of International Relations* (Edward Elgar) [also accessible as [DIIS Working Paper 2024: 02](#)],
- Ish-Shalom, Piki, ed. 2021. *Concepts at Work: On the Linguistic Infrastructure of World Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- (and on power:
- Barnett, Michael, and Raymond Duvall, eds. 2005. *Power in Global Governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Berenskoetter, Felix, and Michael J. Williams, eds. 2007. *Power in World Politics*. London, New York: Routledge.)
- Strange, Susan (1988) *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*, New York: Basil Blackwell (Prologue and chap. 2: pp. 1-6, 23–42).

- For my own take

- Guzzini, Stefano. 1993. "[Structural Power: The Limits of Neorealist Power Analysis](#)." *International Organization* 47 (3): 443–78.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2000. "The Use and Misuse of Power Analysis in International Theory." In Ronen Palan, ed., *Global Political Economy: Contemporary Theories*, 53–66. London, New York: Routledge.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2005. "[The Concept of Power: A Constructivist Analysis](#)." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3): 495–522.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2016. "Power." In Felix Berenskoetter, ed., *Concepts in World Politics*, 23–40. London et al.: Sage.
- Guzzini, Stefano. 2022. '[Power in World Politics](#)', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, edited by William Thompson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Session 7. Theorising in International Political Theory (IPT): Understanding violence

International Political Theory (IPT) has a particularly strong tradition in the UK. It is not primarily informed by developing our social theories via a discussion / critique of its concepts and assumptions, as the discussion in some of the former seminars, but by political theory. Political theory includes both the understanding of fundamental or constitutive phenomena of global politics (e.g. sovereignty), often informed by intellectual history (covered in this session), and normative theory with its link to moral philosophy (covered in the next session). As an illustration, Frazer and Hutchings' analysis of political violence showcases how such design can make (theoretical) arguments in favour of some approaches rather than others.

Readings

- Frazer, Elizabeth, and Kimberly Hutchings. 2008. "[On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon](#)." *Contemporary Political Theory* 7 (1): 90–108.
- Frazer, Elizabeth, and Kimberly Hutchings. 2011. "[Virtuous Violence and the Politics of Statecraft in Machiavelli, Clausewitz and Weber](#)." *Political Studies* 59 (1): 56–73.

Frazer, Elizabeth, and Kimberly Hutchings. 2019. "[Anarchist Ambivalence: Politics and Violence in the Thought of Bakunin, Tolstoy and Kropotkin](#)." *European Journal of Political Theory* 18 (2): 259–80.

Additional readings

Butler, Judith. 2020. *The Force of Non-Violence: An Ethico-Political Bind*. London, New York: Verso.

Gentry, Caron E., and Laura Sjoberg. 2015. *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking About Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books.

On the locus classicus for structural violence in IR / Peace Research:

Galtung, Johan. 1969. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (3): 167–91.

Galtung, Johan. 1971. "A Structural Theory of Imperialism." *Journal of Peace Research* 8 (1): 81–117.

- Some of the originals referred to

Arendt, Hannah. 1969. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Fanon, Frantz. 1952 [2011]. "Peau noire, masques blanches." In *Œuvres*, pp. 45–251. Paris: La Découverte [Engl.: *Black Skin, White Masks*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2019]

Fanon, Frantz. 1961 [2011]. "Les damnés de la terre." In *Œuvres*, pp. 449–676. Paris: La Découverte [Engl.: *The Wretched of the Earth* (Preface by J-P Sartre, trans. Constance Farrington). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2001].

- On Violence (indicative)

Aron, Raymond. 1973. *Histoire et dialectique de la violence*. Paris: Gallimard. (critique of Sartre)

Michaud, Yves. 1978. *Violence et politique*. Paris: Gallimard.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe Bourgeois, eds. 2004. *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Sofsky, Wolfgang. 1996. *Traktat über die Gewalt*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer. (There exists a French translation)

And basically all social theory informed by gender and/or race studies, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, as the analysis of structural and symbolic violence is central to most of these approaches. As an example:

Barder, Alexander D. 2019. "Scientific Racism, Race War and the Global Racial Imaginary." *Third World Quarterly* 40 (2): 207–23.

Barder, Alexander D. 2021. *Global Race War: International Politics and Racial Hierarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- For the courageous

Benjamin, Walter. 2021. *Toward the Critique of Violence: A Critical Edition (Edited by Peter Fenves and Julia Ng)*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. [see also the German original]

- Something else - an anthropological analysis and re-conceptualisation of violence

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley et al.: University of California Press.

Session 8. Normative theorising: The ethics of inequality and global justice

The second component of IPT is normative theory that is dedicated to elucidate the moral implications of global dynamics. Doing so, it relies on traditions in moral philosophy, such as the division between consequentialist theorists who assess normative claims on the basis of their outcomes (like utilitarian theories) and deontological theories, where the morality of an action should be based on whether that action itself is right or wrong. It uses specific non-empirical methodologies, prominently the assessment of logical and normative consistency or ethical arguments. This can imply showing inconsistencies so far not known that are significant, since they affect the theories at their core (internal critique), such as the *reductio ad incommodum* (forcing the critiqued to having to chose), self-refutation or double-standards. It can also consist in resolving known inconsistencies within a theory, usually by providing a different pathway to normative standpoints. Finally, in an external critique, the critique can provide an alternative approach that reaches the preferred normative standpoints yet by using different normative principles. Here, contradictions are resolved not by working on the standpoints, but on the underlying principles and argumentative logic. The chosen pieces are classics in the analytical philosophy tradition, including a reference utilitarian (and cosmopolitan) position, exemplified by Peter Singer and a series of rejoinders.

Readings

- Singer, Peter. 1972. "[Famine, Affluence, and Morality](#)." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 1 (3): 229–43.
- Nagel, Thomas. 2005. "[The problem of global justice](#)." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 33 (2): 113–147.
- Pogge, Thomas. 2005. "[Real World Justice](#)." *The Journal of Ethics* 9 (1): 29–53.
- and
- Barry, Christian & Gerhard Øverland. 2016. [*Responding to Global Poverty: Harm, Responsibility, and Agency*](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (chapter 2: "Assistance-based responsibilities", pp. 11–29)

- Complementary readings

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2006. "Kindness to strangers." In his *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, 155–174. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Barry, Christian, and Laura Valentini. 2009. "Egalitarian Challenges to Global Egalitarianism: A Critique." *Review of International Studies* 35 (3): 485–512.
- Beitz, Charles. 1999 [1979]. *Political Theory and International Relations*. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Beitz, Charles R. 2000. "Rawls's Law of Peoples." *Ethics* 110 (4): 669–96.
- Caney, Simon. 2005. *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (in particular chapter 4: Distributive justice).
- Miller, David. 2007. *National Responsibility and Global Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (Chapter 2: "Cosmopolitanism", pp. 23–50).

For another take on cosmopolitanism, see:

Cohen, Joshua, ed. 1996. *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*. Martha C. Nussbaum with Respondents. Boston: Beacon Press.

See the extensive review in

Bader, Veit. 1999. "For Love of Country." *Political Theory* 27 (3): 379–97.

- Background readings on normative theorising (in IR)

Brown, Chris. 1992. *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches*. New York et al.: Harvester Wheatsheaf. [Yes, it is old – but clear]

Brown, Chris, and Robin Eckersley, eds. 2018. *The Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (for a primer, see their chapter “International Political Theory and the Real World”, pp. 3–18).

Erskine, Toni. 2021 or forthcom. “Normative International Relations Theory”, in Tim Dunne, Mila Kurki and Steve Smith, eds, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. (5th or 6th forthcom. ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 264–91.

For IR, check also out the specialised journal in this tradition: *Ethics and International Affairs*.

Session 9. Meta-theorising: Relational and process ontologies

Meta-theorising inquires the assumptions – ontological, epistemological, methodological – that undergird social and political theories. Becoming prominent in the late 1980s and 1990s, around the so-called “Third Debate” (Holsti, Hollis & Smith, Lapid), it became a way to criticize the (in)coherence of certain theorisations in IR. For instance, Alexander Wendt (1987) became famous by showing that Kenneth Waltz’ theory of neorealism, although allegedly a structural theory, ultimately relied on a market analogy and therefore on methodological individualism which unconsciously blends out certain aspects of reality (as also structuralist theories do). In a slightly different vein, Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie showed that regime theory’s ontology clashed with its epistemology. Its ontology is informed by intersubjectivity (regimes, norms) that can become internal reasons for action, whereas its positivist epistemology can conceive of norms merely as objects that are external causes for action.

This type of theorizing is illustrated by a recent “relational turn” in IR. Although the ideas were already out for a while, they gathered pace in the last decade. This was informed by attempts to rethink the agency-structure problem through a more processual ontology, which led to social theories that would be able to offer this. And it was informed by “Global IR”, that is, the attempt not to merely assume that concepts and theorisations derived from the West are (to be) shared in other cosmologies. Relation(al)ism is often considered a hallmark of Chinese or more widely Asian cosmologies. The seminar readings are on the social theory side, but the link to the discussion in Global IR is in the additional readings, and to some extent followed up in session 9.

Readings

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus, and Daniel H. Nexon. 1999. “[Relations before States: Substance, Process and the Study of World Politics](#).” *European Journal of International Relations* 5 (3): 291–332.

Qin, Yaqing. 2016. “[A Relational Theory of World Politics](#).” *International Studies Review* 18 (1): 33–47.

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus, and Daniel H. Nexon. 2019. “[Reclaiming the Social: Relationalism in Anglophone International Studies](#).” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32 (5): 582–600.

Kurki, Milja. 2022. “[Relational Revolution and Relationality in IR: New Conversations](#).” *Review of International Studies* 48 (5): 821–36.

Weber, Martin. 2020. "[The Normative Grammar of Relational Analysis: Recognition Theory's Contribution to Understanding Short-Comings in IR's Relational Turn.](#)" *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (3): 641–48.

Additional readings (which also connect the issue to Global IR)

Fierke, Karin M., and Vivienne Jabri. 2019. "Global Conversations: Relationality, Embodiment and Power in the Move Towards a Global IR." *Global Constitutionalism* 8 (3): 506–35.

Kavalski, Emilian. 2018. *The Guanxi of Relational International Theory*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

Kurki, Milja. 2020. *International Relations in a Relational Universe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ling, Lily H. M. 2014. *The Dao of World Politics: Towards a Post-Westphalian, Worldist International Relations*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Trowsell, Tamara, Navnita Chadha Behera & Giorgio Shani, "Pluriversal Relationality." Special Issue of *Review of International Studies* 48 (5): 787–929.

Zalewski, Marysia. 2019. "Forget(Ting) Feminism? Investigating Relationality in International Relations." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32 (5): 615–35.

Zanotti, Laura. 2018. *Ontological Entanglements, Agency and Ethics in International Relations: Exploring the Crossroads*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge. (see also the Forum on the Book in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49, 1, (2020))

- For some of the classical control of inconsistencies

Kratochwil, Friedrich, and John Gerard Ruggie. 1986. "International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State." *International Organization* 40 (4): 753–75.

Wendt, Alexander. 1987. "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory." *International Organization* 41 (3): 335–70.

- For the "third debate"

Holsti, K. J. 1985. *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory*. Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Lapid, Yosef. 1989. "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era." *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (3): 235–54.

Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith. 1990. *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Still

Guzzini, Stefano. 2017. "International Political Sociology, Or: The Social Ontology and Power Politics of Process." In Xavier Guillaume and Pinar Bilgin, eds, *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology*, 366–75. Abingdon: Routledge. [also accessible as [DIIS Working Paper 2016: 06](#)].

Guzzini, Stefano. 2024. '[Relationism\(s\) Unpacked: Engaging Yaqing Qin's Relational Theory of World Politics](#)', *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 17 (2): 187–205.

Part III. Conclusion. From theory to practice: The politics of performatives

Session 10. The politics of categorisations and theorisations

The way we categorise the social world interacts with that world. Hence, the analysis of such performative effects is often done through discourse analysis that establishes how discourses

help create the subject they presuppose or, put differently, constitute the object of which they speak. A most famous example is a self-fulfilling prophecy. When Samuel P. Huntington launched his article of the coming “Clash of Civilizations” in the early 1990s, scholars were quick to react as much for the dubious understanding of cultures and civilisations, as for the performative effect it would have if everyone came to believe in such a clash: it would encourage policies that would make it inevitable. The performative link can however also be on the level of subjects themselves whose identity is performatively constituted (or pre-empted), therefore the widespread concern with identity in much post-structuralist, gender, race and post-colonial approaches.

Readings

- Ish-Shalom, Piki. 2006. “[Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism: The Democratic Peace and the Politics of Democratization](#).” *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (4): 565–98.
- Löwenheim, Oded. 2008. “[Examining the State: A Foucauldian Perspective on International ‘Governance Indicators’](#).” *Third World Quarterly* 29 (2): 255–74.
- Winkler, Stephanie Christine. 2019. “[‘Soft Power Is Such a Benign Animal’: Narrative Power and the Reification of Concepts in Japan](#).” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32 (4): 483–501.
-

Short description of assignments

1. The basis: analytical reading

All assignments necessarily include a component which invite you to read texts analytically and to ‘make the arguments your own’, not in the sense of you agreeing with them, but being able to independently articulate and comment them.

There is more than one way to do this. However, the following components are almost always present: *what* is the main claim and contribution of the reading? *Why* (and *for whom*) is this significant? *How* and how successful is the claim defended?

1. First, you have to try to understand the intention and main claim of the author. What are the main arguments, what is the main thesis? By establishing the main thesis, keep in mind that academic results – although this seems sometimes hard to believe – are part of a wider communication. To whom is the argument addressed, i.e. to which literature, debate or event does it respond and wants to contribute? What is its exact contribution which we did not yet know? What is hence the purpose of the piece?

The rule of thumb is: ‘in which context? says who? what? to whom? for what purpose?’

Example:

John Mearsheimer has published in the early 1990s an article, entitled ‘Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War’. The offensive realist Mearsheimer was puzzled by the Yugoslav wars, i.e. by the fact that the end of the Cold War seemed to herald peace but brought war. His main thesis is that the end of the Cold War was not bringing more, but less stability to Europe, because certain policy-constraining effects of bipolarity no longer held.

2. After the ‘what’, where you try to succinctly get to the core of the argument, in a second but related step, you have to understand why the topic or argument is significant. *Why* should who care?

Example:

Mearsheimer’s main claim has three implications and hence also three audiences which may not necessarily overlap. Theoretically, Mearsheimer wants to show that realist theories of IR are powerful, since their main variable (changes in the polarity of the international system) can, according to him, explain the puzzle of instability. Empirically, he made sense of the Yugoslav wars. And politically, the article suggested that it was best not to have liberal daydreams about the post-war system and try to contain such tendencies with force, if necessary (preparing for war to achieve negative peace).

3. Having established the main thesis, purpose and significance, you have to double-check whether the argument is well supported. After ‘what’ and ‘why’ comes the ‘how’. This, in turn, comes in two steps. First, you have to understand whether the chosen methodology for supporting the argument is appropriate. Second, you have to assess whether the empirical and theoretical evidence can make the point the author wants them to make.

Example:

Mearsheimer’s methodology is not very elaborate, since he basically makes ‘good sense’ arguments with some chosen historical illustration. So, you cannot much control whether the variables he isolates and the arguments he uses are well defended. In this case, you have to control whether *the assumptions* upon which such arguments are built, can hold. For instance, here the assumption is that international politics is generally driven by systemic forces which also explain this particular case. Moreover, the theoretical basis, here realism, has already been criticised from elsewhere: how does this new case live up to former criticisms, does it respond to them? Does the approach discuss competing explanations? If not, why? If yes, how fair are the other explanations introduced and compared? Is the literature sufficiently well covered? Finally, is the empirical evidence sufficient for the claim; i.e. it is not only important to know whether the evidence is correct (or the interpretation of it reasonable), but whether the case can rest on it, which is a far more demanding requirement.

4. Finally, you have to come to a conclusion on whether the research questions asked (the problematique) is indeed significant, whether the arguments are cogent, whether they are well supported, and whether they succeed in the purpose the author has said for him/herself.

Doing these steps leads you to produce an ‘inverted research design’, i.e. you re-construct the research design the scholar had by reading backwards from the published result.

2. The seminar-presentation

A seminar-presentation has two purposes. First, it wants to quickly move the agenda of the seminar to the core points of the readings. Second, it wants to raise questions which can structure the discussion later.

1. For the first aim, the presentation relies on the analytical reading just mentioned and hence not much more description is needed here. To restate: A presentation of a reading is not a summary of a text. The worst presentation simply restates the section headings of the readings, following them religiously. This is to be avoided at all cost. It is well advised to think about other readings and about possible comparisons and discussions/debates between them and the text. The expression of a personal judgement (or questions), even tentative but supported by argument, is mandatory.

2. For introducing the discussion, i.e. for asking relevant questions about a text, the presenter has to make sure that his/her own choice of discussion topics is sufficiently justified. That justification can come via an internal and an external critique of the text.

An *internal* critique is the logical follow-up of the analytical reading, step 4. Here, the presenter raises and develops issues which are within the very research design of the author by controlling for consistency and logic in both the theoretical assumptions with which the author works and in their relation to the empirical material. Such a critique is important and is, to some extent, both the 'easiest' for a commentator (since to a large extent, one does not need to think about topics much beyond the text), and often the more damaging and honest towards the author. For at least you make sure not to criticise someone for something he/she never wanted to do in the first place.

But there is also a second, *external*, critique. This also logically follows from the criticisms in the analytical reading and can happen at different steps. At a first step, the historical and sociological context can provide a clue not only why a scholar chooses a topic, but also the emphasis on certain factors which might seem odd in the light of later years. At a second step, if the assumptions of an argument clash, this can have something to do with the insufficiently reflected underlying ethical, political, and also meta-theoretical influences. For instance, Margaret Thatcher's famous 'There is no such a thing as a society' implies this three-fold stance in favour of individualism, as opposed to positive freedom (ethics), social-democracy (politics) and holism (meta-theory). But whereas there is no such a thing as a society when it comes to Thatcherite British Politics, apparently there was such a thing as a British nation, when she went to the Falkland war – an uneasy, if not contradictory combination of individualism and nationalism. Moreover, if the author has not sufficiently covered relevant literature and competing explanations, then an external critique can situate the piece of work with regard to this. Finally, if there seems to be a bias in the selection of the information, the author is unaware of or has not justified, then the external critique can try to find out the reasons for the bias. These are just examples of external critiques: there can be more.

In short: in an internal critique you probe the argument for internal consistency and that can imply that, with the very same assumptions, other results would have been just as possible. In an external critique you show that the same result can be reached by other and better ways, or that such results should not be looked for in the first place.

3. Important for the presentation is that these questions somewhat 'naturally' follow from the analytical reading. The presenters should, if all functions well, not need to explicitly justify the questions and comments they raise, since they are but the consequence of the analytical reading. This said, some questions can be of a more personal interest, because the presenters have previous experiences or knowledge which can be associated with the readings and which could become an interesting piece for discussion. There, in order to introduce it, some background justification is warranted.

Finally, and equally important, academia is not a place for the 'I-know-it-all' people. So, the obvious questions that need to be asked are about things one is not sure about. Usually other people are not sure about that either – or should not be. Hence, it is not only legitimate, but crucial that those points be raised that were not clear to the presenters, but seemed important for the argument of the reading, and hence for the seminar discussion.

The actual handout of the presentation should include a shortened version of the inverted research design and comments, as well as the questions for discussion. One can either insert questions into the discussion of the research design, or collect them after it. There is no need to have more than 4 (good) questions or so (but the list can get easily longer, if there are many things unclear). The whole should preferably fit on one page.

3. Response memos

Once the analytical reading and the presentation is clear, a response memo is little more. It consists of approx. 3-4 pages which show the inverted research design of the assigned author (or discusses/compares if there is more than one) and raises some questions at the end, both for clarification and discussion in the seminar.

These papers serve several functions. They ensure that you read with the necessary care. They make sure that all can profit from the seminar discussion (otherwise why have a seminar?), since all know the reading. They help you to accumulate knowledge. You can more easily refer back, compare between the readings. At the end of the course, you will have at least 3 in-depth writings on your readings.

But most importantly, they allow a regular flow of information and communication, a continuous feedback between the student and the teacher. All memos will receive written feedback. It offers the opportunity of a more person-tailored teaching, a quasi-tutoring, where your individual interests, curiosity, but also potential lacunae can be accommodated. For this reason, it is compulsory in these memos to include questions about things you did not understand, were not sure about, or which have spurred your curiosity and on which you would like to solicit feedback from the teacher.

4. Final papers / Essays

For those who write a longer paper as final assignment (roughly 5000 to 6000 words), a separate memo on “how to write an essay” will be distributed. Note that also this assignment can have different functions, not all covered in that memo. Besides write a paper that engages some selected components of the course, researchers can also use the opportunity to link some of the course literature and modes of theorisation to their own research. But the following could be useful when going about it.

The essay may contain a design including the following in this or similar order:

1. Define and justify the precise problematique you would like to discuss / explain or understand. (Note: this should involve some literature review of the event / theme that helps you to situate the precise problematique). This first step, also called *problematization*, is meant to indicate the body of knowledge – empirical, theoretical or both – to which your analysis will speak and potentially contribute (audience) and the reasons for why the discussion is significant for that body of knowledge.

2. Specify and justify the body of knowledge (usually: theories) *with* which you conduct your analysis. Look for the kind of theories which can be used in the analysis or which have been used already in the debate about the event / topic. Justify your choice of theory/ies. If necessary, justify your choice against alternative theories / explanations. Note that these theories with which you make your analysis can come from the same area as the target audience to which you wish to contribute, but they can also stem from another area.

Smaller, well-defined topics, where aims are explicit, concrete and manageable, tend to produce better papers than broad and sweeping topics that more easily lead to vaguer lines of reasoning and unclear answers. This is not a distinction between ‘concrete’ versus ‘abstract’. Several concrete questions can be imprecise, whereas abstract ones can be sharp.