

**POL380H1S - Topics in International Politics:
Critical Approaches to World Politics**

**Department of Political Science
Summer 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm to 4pm
Room LM 157**

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Office Hours by appointment

Course Description

Mainstream theories of IR (Realism, Liberalism, most versions of Constructivism) are designed to explain or understand world politics, therefore implicitly promoting the *statu quo*. Critical theories on the other hand are meant to critique the *status quo* and seek to change the current social order. The aim of critical thinkers is to understand the underlying structures of oppression for a more complete picture of the world in which we live. In a word, critical theories are oriented towards *emancipation* from economic, patriarchal, cultural and discursive domination. This course will introduce students to a variety of critical approaches for understanding world politics, including: Marxism, Postcolonialism, Feminism and Queer theories. This will be done with a strong focus on applying these approaches to practical cases such as, human rights, global finance, gender and sexual oppression, social movements, corporations, international institutions, foreign aid, and the Iraq war.

*The prerequisite for taking this class is POL208 "Introduction to International Relations."
Lectures and readings assume a basic knowledge of theoretical debates in the field of
International Relations, as well as a basic familiarity with current world events.*

Requirements

Participation: 20%
Graphic study guides: 30% (3x10%)
Research paper (2000 words): 25% +5% (August 16)
Final test: 20% (August 9)

Participation (20%)

Students are expected to do all the required readings in order to contribute meaningfully to class discussions. Participation marks will be based both on attendance and capacity to critically engage with the topic and readings under review. Active participation and relevant interventions in discussions will form most of the participation mark.

Graphic Study Guides (3 x 10%)

Students are expected to prepare a 2 page graphic study guide for each section of the course. The idea behind this study guide is to present the major concepts and theories from each section in a visual format that combines text and image creatively. The study guide should cite course readings and apply theoretical insights to real world issues. For example, you could present your study guide in the form of a cartoon, collage or map (with shapes and arrows). You can design your graphics by hand or digitally, on a computer. You can take inspiration from scrapbooking, zines, comic books or graphic novels. We will accept a variety of forms (you don't have to be a good artist!). What counts is that your study guide demonstrates that you understand the central concepts within a given section of course. The graphic study guides are due at the beginning of class on July 19, July 31, August 7.

Current Events Research Essay (35% + 5% (plan))

Write a research paper (1800- 2000 words) that applies a critical approach to a current event in world politics (i.e., foreign policy, trade, climate change, conflict, migration, human rights, international organizations, etc.). The current event should be an issue that has made headlines in the past 6 months in reputable news sources (BBC, CBC, Aljazeera, PBS, NYT, etc.). The essay should incorporate a summary of the event (<500 words) and a critical analysis that applies approaches from one of course sections (e.g., Marxist, Postcolonial, Feminist or Queer). This is an opportunity to apply a theory to a contemporary issue in a tone that is accessible to a wider audience. The papers are due on **August 16, before 5 pm**, on blackboard.

A research plan of the essay (5%) should be handed in maximum one week after the last class of the block of approaches the student plan on using. Details concerning the plan will be given in class.

Final Test (25%)

The final test will cover the entirety of the course material. It will be held on the last day of class.

Accessibility Concerns

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as

possible. Any request for accommodation request must be asked in advance of the due date, with official UofT documentation.

BlackBoard

It is your responsibility to check your university portal regularly. Handouts, assignments and special announcements will be distributed through Blackboard.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with according to the policies of the Office of Student Academic Integrity, available at:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students/academic-integrity-basics> As plagiarism can easily result from unintentional carelessness or inattention to proper citation practices, for further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>.

Late Assignment Policy

A copy of all assignments must be submitted *on time* in order to avoid penalties. No assignments will be accepted via email, fax, or under the instructor's door. An assignment submitted after the deadline, before the following day 5:00 pm will be considered one day late. Every extra day at 5:00 pm is considered one more day late (week-ends included). The penalty is 5% per day late. For example, if an assignment is due on June 1 at 10:00 am, and you hand in your paper on June 1 at 8:00 pm, 5% will be deducted. If you hand in your paper at 4:00 pm on June 2nd, 5% will be deducted. If you hand in your paper on June 2nd at 8:00pm, 10% will be deducted. Hard copy (if needed) of late assignments must be hand in in the department of Political Science office, in Sidney Smith, SS3018.

Grade Appeals

If you are concerned with your grade, you will have to provide a detailed one page written appeal about why you feel the grade is unjustified. This appeal must be address the comments provided by the grader. The appeal should be submitted within 2 weeks of the reception of the grade, and the instructors will review the assignment and give a decision shortly after the appeal is made. The instructors can then decide to stay with the original grade, lower the grade or give a higher grade.

Schedule

Introduction:

- 1: What is critical IR?
- 2: What is 'critical' in 'critical theories'?

Section 1: Marxist approaches

- 3: Third World Marxism
- 4: The Origins of Inequalities
- 5: Globalization and anti-globalization responses

Section 2: Postcolonial approaches

- 6: Discourse, Power and the Power of Discourse
- 7: Constructing the "Other": Postcolonial interventions
- 8: Exploring the legitimacy of human rights in a global world

Section 3: Feminist and Queer approaches

- 9: Introduction to Feminist and Gender studies in IR
- 10: Queering Theory: Exploring the Relationship between Gender, Sexuality and World Politics
- 11: Knowledge, Power and the Future of IR
- 12: Final Test

Detailed Schedule

1: What is Critical IR? (July 3rd)

This week will introduce the thematic scope of the course and course expectations.

Discussion Questions:

What is the role of critical theory in international relations?; What are some of the myths that mainstream IR relies on?; What does critical theory bring to the table?; Why should we criticize the *statu quo*?

Required Readings

Agethangelou, AM and Ling, L.H.M. 2009. *Transforming World Politics: From Empire to Multiple Worlds*. Routledge. **Read:** Introduction section on "The Neoliberal Imperium" and Chapter 3 "The House of IR"

To prepare for the course we suggest reviewing the sections that address critical theory (i.e., Post-structuralism, Marxist theory, Postcolonial theory) from your introduction to IR textbooks, for example:

The Globalization of World Politics (6th edition) by Baylis, Owens Smith

Frieden, Jeffry, David Lake and Kenneth Schultz. 2010. World politics: interests, interactions, institutions. New York: W.W. Norton.

Jackson, Robert and Georg Sorensen. 2013. Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Approaches (fifth edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2: What is 'Critical' in 'Critical Theories'? (July 5th)

This week is a more thorough introduction to and mapping of the various strands of critical theories in IR, based on their assumptions (ontological, substantive and normative). We will also go through an overview of critical methodologies and methods.

Discussion Questions

What does it mean to take a critical approach to IR?; What are the differences between a 'mainstream' and a 'critical' approach?; What is the role in interpretation and discourse analysis in IR?; What are critical methodologies?

Required Readings

Cox, Robert W. 1986. "Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in Robert O. Keohane, Neorealism and Its Critics. Columbia University Press, 204-254.

Recommended

Tickner, J. Ann. 2005. "What is your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions," *International Studies Quarterly*, 49, 1-21.

Rengger, Nicholas and Ben Thirkell-White. 2007. "Still Critical After All These Years? The Past, Present and Future of Critical Theory in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 33. Supplement S1, 3-24.

Milliken, Jennifer. 1999. "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods," *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:2 (1999), 225-254.

3: Third World Marxism (July 10th)

Though Marx himself focused on 19th-century British capitalism, his ideas have been used to explain the global characteristics of capitalism and inspired socialist and communist movements around the world. This week we will discuss how Marxist theories of imperialism, world systems and dependency

help us understand the development of the international capitalist system. We will also discuss how Marxism has been taken up from a global perspective.

Discussion Questions

What role does Marxism play in understanding global politics? What contributions has it made to critical theorizing?; What are the strengths and limitations of a Marxist worldview?; What is the legacy of Marxism in different parts of the world?

Required Readings

Escobar, Arturo. 1995. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press. **Read:** Chapter 3 “Economics and the Space of Development: Tales of Growth and Capital

Prashad, Vijay. 2017. “Red Star Over the Third World”. **Read:** Excerpt on page 11 of Morning Star News: http://pdfs.morningstaronline.co.uk/assets/MS_2017_12_04.pdf

Prashad, Vijay. 2017. “Communists Sweep the Nepali Elections.”
<https://socialistproject.ca/2017/12/b1528/>

Recommended

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. “The Rise and Future Demise of the Capitalist World System Concepts for Comparative Analysis” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 16,4: 387-415.

Lenin, V. I. (1939). *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism: A popular outline*. New York: International Publishers.

Gunder Frank, Andre. 1966. “The Development of Underdevelopment.” *Monthly Review*.

4: The Origins of Inequalities (July 12th)

Overview of the origins of the inequalities in North-South relations: colonisation, imperialism, slave trade and dispossession.

Discussion Questions

What are the origins of inequalities between nations?; Are North-South divisions a useful framing of the world?; How does colonisation still influence a country's development today?; What are the historical roots of globalization dynamics?

Readings

Ghosh, Jayati, 2015. "The Creation of the Next Imperialism," *Monthly Review*.
<https://monthlyreview.org/2015/07/01/the-creation-of-the-next-imperialism/>

Recommended

Silvia, Federici. 2002. "Women, Reproduction and Globalization," *Économie mondialisée et identités de genre*, Genève, Graduate Institute Publications [online].
http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/genre/shared/Genre_docs/2887_Actes2002/04_federici.pdf

Standing, Guy. 2014. "The Precariat" chapter in *The Precariat: the new dangerous class*, Bloomsbury, p.1-25.

Peet, Richard. 2003. "The Washington-Wall Street Alliance," in Peet, Richard. 2003. *Unholy trinity. The IMF, World Bank and WTO*. London, New York: Zed Books.

5: Globalization and anti-globalization responses (July 17th)

This week explore cases where material domination and asymmetries in power are at stake.

Multinational corporations are a fairly new actor in global governance which has sparked a lot of critical response.

Discussion questions

What are the reactions to neoliberal globalization?; What are the downsides of globalization?

How are globalization and corporations linked?; How do multinational corporations change world politics?

Required Readings

George, Susan. 1994. "The Debt Boomerang" in *50 Years is Enough. The case against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund*. Danaher, Kevin and Muhammad Yunus (eds). South End Press

Recommended

Wade, Robert Hunter. 2004. "Is Globalization Reducing Poverty and Inequality?" *World Development*. 32, 4: 567-89.

Naomi Klein, "The Discarded Factory: Degraded Production in the Age of the Superbrand," ch. 9 of *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), pp. 195-229.

Haslam, Paul Alexander. 2007. "The Firm Rules: multinational corporations, policy space and neoliberalism". *Third World Quarterly*. 28:6.

6: Discourse, Power and the Power of Discourse (July 19th)

This week, we see a different kind of critical theories, associated to post-structuralism and the study of discourse. Those approaches present more pervasive forms of power, such as structural or discursive power. We apply these approaches to international organizations like the World Bank.

******SECTION 1 study guide due in class**

Discussion questions

What actors are powerful in world politics?; How can discourse be linked to power?; How does categories, concepts and knowledge diffuse?; How are approaches linked to discourse different from Marxist approaches?

Readings

Rudolph, Suzanne. 2005. "The Imperialism of Categories: Situating Knowledge in a Globalizing World", *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1): 5-14.

Ferguson, James (1994). "Anti-Politics Machine", *The Ecologist*, 24(5): 176-181.

Recommended

Barnett, Michael and Duvall, Raymond. (2005). "Power in International Politics", *International Organization*. 59(1): 39-75.

Rojas, Cristina, 2001. "Development": What's in a Word? Views from the Paradigms", *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*.

7: Constructing the "Other": Postcolonial Interventions (July 24th)

This week we explore postcolonial challenges to the way mainstream IR is theorized and practiced. We will discuss the concept of necropolitics to understand violent, colonial, and imperial global politics.

Discussion Questions:

What role do race and colonialism play in the development of IR theory and practice?; Who has been 'othered' and who does the "othering" in IR theory and why?; How do the interrelated concepts of "necropolitics" and "the state of exception" help us understand colonial and racial power dynamics in contemporary political relations?

Required reading

Membe, JA. 2003. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture*. Vol 15, 1. 11-40

Giordanengo, Davide. 2016. "The State of Exception"
<http://www.e-ir.info/2016/06/21/the-state-of-exception/>

Recommended:

Kothari & Wilkinson. 2010. "Colonial Imaginaries and Postcolonial Transformations: exiles, bases, beaches." *Third World Quarterly*, 31(8), 1395-1412.

Shohat, E. (1992) Notes on the "Post-Colonial" Social Text, No. 31/32, pp. 99-113

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. (1988) "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review*, 30: 61-88.

Doty, R.L. (1993) "The bounds of 'race' in international relations," *Millennium* 22, 3: 443-61.

8: Exploring the Legitimacy of HR in a global world (July 26th)

Building on the role of discourse in world politics, we will reflect critically on the political dimensions of the human rights practices.

Discussion Questions:

What are human rights and who decides them?; Are human rights universal? If not, can they be human rights?; Does globalization challenge or strengthen human rights? How?

Required Readings

Chowdury, Arjun. 2011. "'The Giver or the Recipient': The Peculiar Ownership of Human Rights." *International Political Sociology*. 5, 35-51

Recommended

John J. Tilley. 2000. "Cultural Relativism," *Human Rights Quarterly* 22: 501-547

Daniel A. Bell. 1996. "The East Asian Challenge to Human Rights: Reflections on an EastWest Dialogue," *Human Rights Quarterly*. 18, 3: 641-67

9: Introduction to Feminist and Gender Theories (July 31st)

This week, we familiarize ourselves with the varieties of gender approaches to international relations: liberal feminism, gender as a variable, materialist feminism, post-structural feminism,

*and feminism in academia. We also go through a set of examples of gender-oriented fields and topics. ***SECTION 2 study guide due in class*

Discussion questions

What do feminist and gender studies bring to the table?; What are the different strands of mainstream and critical feminist approaches?; What kind of study can you do with a feminist lens?; What are the debates among feminist scholars in IR?

Readings

Smith, Sarah, 2017. "Feminism", in McGlinchey, Stephen, Rosie Walters and Christian Scheinpflug, *International Relations Theory*, e-international relations publishing, pages 62-68.

Frye, Marilyn. 2000. "Oppression", in Minas, Anne (ed). *Gender Basics: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Men*. Toronto: Wadsworth.

Recommended

Enloe, Cynthia. (2010). "Eight women, one war", Chapter 1 in "Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War", 1-16.

Carol Cohn. (1983). "Emasculating America's Linguistic Deterrent," in Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (eds.), *Rocking the Ship of State*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 153-170.

Sjoberg, Laura and Tickner, Anne. (2013). "Feminist Perspectives on International Relations", chapter 7 in *Handbook of International Relations*, Carlsnaes, Walter, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (eds).

10: Queering Theory: Exploring the Relationship between Gender, Sexuality and World Politics (Aug 2nd)

Building on Maika's introduction to Feminist IR, this week we wrestle with issues of gender and sexuality in world politics from a Queer perspective.

Discussion Questions

What does it mean to take a Queer approach to world politics?; What does a queer approach add to understanding world politics?; How does IR discourse shape ideas about gender and sexuality?

Required Readings

Theil, Marcus. 2018. "Introducing Queer Theory in International Relations".
<http://www.e-ir.info/2018/01/07/queer-theory-in-international-relations/>

Ruskola, Teemu. 2010. "Raping Like a State," 57 *UCLA Law Review*. 1477.

Recommended

Weber, Cynthia. 2016. "Queer Intellectual Curiosity as International Relations Method: Developing Queer International Relations Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks." *International Studies Quarterly*, 60 (11-23).

Rao, Rahul. 2018. The State of "Queer IR". *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Volume 24, Number 1, pp. 139-149 (Review)

Weber, Cynthia. 2016. *Queer International Relations*. Oxford University Press

11: Knowledge, Power and the Future of IR (Aug 7th)

*This seminar will review and reflect on the asymmetries, inequalities and hierarchies in the production of knowledge in IR that we have discussed throughout the semester. It will reflect on the Euro/Western-centrism of mainstream IR and discuss how IR is being studied from other locations around the world. ***SECTION 3 study guide due in class.*

Discussion questions

How is knowledge production affected by the social structures and orders within which it is constituted?; How does one's location in the world shape one's view of the world?; What are the dangers and benefits of positionality when it comes to International Relations?; Can IR ever be truly 'international' or 'global'?

Required reading

Agathangelou, AM and Ling, L.H.M. 2004. "The House of IR: From Family Power Politics to the Poisies of Worldism." *International Studies Review*, 6:21-49.

Recommended:

Acharya, Amitav and Buzan, Barry. 2007. "Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 12, 33.

Acharya, Amitav. 2011. "Dialogue and Discovery: In Search of International Relations Theories Beyond the West." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. 39(3), 619-637.

Hobson, John and Sajed, Alina. 2017. "Navigating Beyond the Eurofetishist Frontier of Critical IR Theory: Exploring the Complex Landscapes of Non-Western Agency." *International Studies Review*.

Rutazibwa, Olivia Umurerwa. 2016. "From the Everyday to IR: In Defence of the Strategic Use of the R-word." *Postcolonial Studies*, 19:2, 191-200.

12: In-Class Term Test (Aug 9th)