UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Key Information

Module code: ISSU0042
Taught during: Session One: Monday 1 July - Friday 19 July 2019
Module workload: 45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leader: Dr Outi Donovan
Department: Political Science, Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences
Credit: 0.5 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US Level
Level: Level 1, first year Undergraduate
Pre-requisites: Standard entry requirements
Assessment: In-class test (40%), Essay (60%)

Module Overview

World politics today is characterised by increasing complexity. Alongside states, a myriad of international and regional organisations, interest groups, civil society organisations and even terrorist networks shape the dynamics of international politics. These interactions and alternative ways of understanding them are at the core of this course that examines the key issues in contemporary international relations. The course will first offer students an introduction to the discipline of International Relations to understand some of the key questions that scholars and policy makers have focused on, and how the field has been transformed as the world has changed around them. It will then study a series of pressing contemporary issues, including war, security, development, human rights and terrorism. These cases and questions will be analysed through different theories including realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism and feminism.

Week One:
- Introduction to the study of world politics
- Introduction to realist theories and changing balance of power (the growing power of China)
- Introduction to liberal theories of international politics and the liberal foreign policy goal of democracy promotion

Week Two:
- Introduction to constructivism
- Application of constructivism to the practice of humanitarian interventions
- Introduction to Marxist theories and underdevelopment

Week Three:
- Introduction to feminist theories
- Investigation of the phenomenon of transnational terrorism through different theoretical lenses
- Change and future of world politics
Module Aims
The module provides students with a broad introduction to the discipline and the study of International Relations. It is organised around the key International Relations’ theories and approaches. Teaching of the module material combines concepts and theories with illustrations and case studies from international politics and current foreign affairs with emphasis on different ways of analysing and understanding the world of international politics. The module also aims to stimulate students’ critical thinking and debating skills through seminar activities.

Teaching Methods
The module is taught through a combination of lectures and seminar activities. Lectures provide a detailed introduction to the topic at hand. Seminars, on the other hand, are organised around class debates, role-play and simulation exercises. Students will also learn about the practical side of international politics through a field trip to the UK Foreign Office or an International Organisation based in London (subject to confirmation).

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this module, students will:
- Gain and/or deepen understanding of the key theoretical approaches and debates in the contemporary IR
- Gain familiarity with key trends and developments in contemporary international politics
- Develop the ability to engage with ontological, epistemological and methodological questions relating to the study of IR
- Develop the ability to critically appraise arguments, assumptions and methodologies
- Apply the above skills in the context of the essay
- Consolidate public speaking skills

Assessment Methods
- In-class test (40%)
- 2,500 word essay (60%)

Key Texts
Introductory textbooks:

Advanced textbooks: