Concepts & Theories for Understanding World Politics: MA (4 credits, fall term 2017)

The purpose of the course is to give students a sense, and explore a part, of the vastness of the archive that contains both major and minor knowledges, vocabularies and intellectual resources to make world politics thinkable and to problematize it in different ways. Many of these “languages” and concepts play only minor roles in how many of us, in everyday (academic) life, in traditional and new media, communicate about, listen to and understand world politics. They are marginalised in or excluded from the everday and its phenomenologies. After covering the main “languages” and concepts that constitute what might be called the inherited common sense in the study of world politics (constructivist, liberal, realist IR), the course will thus turn towards thought that operates, at a shorter or greater distance, from what a great 20th century German thinker (T.Adorno) referred to as thinking structured by “the continuity of the familiar”. This will be done both by looking at particular vocabularies or approaches such as feminist and Marxist IR, as well as by looking at particular issues. We will thus problematise the agency/freedom couple by thinking about subjectivation; hear about unexpected forms of resistance to the neoliberal structuration of the world; ask ourselves what the arguments are for thinking that geopolitical multiplicity will persist versus arguments that we are heading towards a world state; we will ask ourselves how the discursive and the non-discursive can be thought together; and we will inquire into how we and the communities in which we live are governed by often invisible technologoes of power.

The course should be of interest to those who think, or have a feeling, that our neoliberal world is not, or should not be, the unsurpassable horizon of thinking and acting. At the same time, it should also be of interest to those who think with Hegel and Fukuyama that humankind’s ideological development has come to an end with liberal market societies, but who understand that this does not mean an end to history. History always throws up new problems and challenges, and we cannot expect to solve them if we are stuck in the intellectual clearing that we inhabit and that encloses us. We will need to break out from these beaten paths and think new and variegated ideas to be in a position to solve the new problems of the future.

**Aims**

* The aim of the course is to introduce students to both mainstream and alternative theoretical approaches to the study of world politics;
* enable them to see research on world politics and foreign policy as historically and culturally contingent practice;
* equip them with the cognitive skills required to critically analyse world politics;
* enable them to recognise that empirical research is invested with interests, values and norms.

**Learning Outcomes**

* By the end of the course students will be able to compare, contrast and evaluate different interpretations and explanations of world politics;
* detect the ontological assumptions that are the launch pad for empirical investigations;
* recognise the interpretative possibilities in any given world political phenomena;
* critically reflect upon and evaluate their own standpoints on world politics and those of others;
* distinguish between a well-reasoned argument about world politics and an incoherent one.

**Method of Assessment**

Each student will be assessed through a combination of seminar contributions, oral presentations, written work and an exam.

The final grade is made up of the following components:

1. Seminar attendance (mandatory) and participation (20%).
2. Seminar presentation of assigned texts (20%). Students are expected to give a 20 – 30 minute presentations on one of the seminar readings. Presentation guidelines are posted on the e-learning site.
3. Within 2 weeks of the oral presentation, students have to submit a written position paper of about 2000 words on their readings (30%).
4. Final Exam (30%)
5. Please note that these requirements may be modified depending on how many students enrol in the course.

**Schedule of Seminars & Readings**

### **Seminar 1: Introduction**

This first seminar will act as a brief introductory seminar where the nature of the course will be discussed, together with the goals and expectations of both the students and the course convenor/TA. Moreover, student presentations will be assigned.

### **Seminar 2: no class**

### Preparatory Reading

**I. THINKING WITH/ALONGSIDE/BENEATH THE MOST POWERFUL ACTORS IN THE WORLD**

## Constructivist IR

### **The Constructivist Paradigm 1**

* Alexander Wendt, 1992: Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics, in: *International Organization* 46(2): 391-425.
* Risse, Thomas (2000) '“Let’s Argue!” Communicative Action in World Politics', *International Organization*, vol. 54, no. 1, pp. 1-39.

### **The Constructivist Paradigm 2**

* Hopf, T. (2010) 'The Logic of Habit in International Relations'. *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 539-61.
* Adler-Nissen, R. and Pouliot, V. (2014) 'Power in Practice: Negotiating the International Intervention in Libya'. *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 889-911.

Further Readings:

* Kratochwil, F. (2000) 'Constructing a New Orthodoxy? Wendt’s “Social Theory of International Politics” and the Constructivist Challenge'. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, p.pp. 73-101.
* Guzzini, S. (2000) 'A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations'. *European Journal of International Relations*, **Vol. 6**, **No. 2**, p.pp. 147-82.
* Emanuel Adler, 1997: Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics, in: *European Journal of International Relations* 3(3): 319-63.
* Ruggie, John Gerard. (1998) Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization. London: Routledge.
* James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, 2002: Rationalism vs. Constructivism: A Skeptical View, in: Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (eds.): Handbook of International Relations, pp. 52-72.

### **International Institutions: Norms, Rules & Identities**

* Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, 2004: *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*, pp. 16-44.
* Johnston, A. I. (2001) ‘Treating International Institutions as Social Environments’, International *Studies Quarterly* 45(4): 487–515.

Further Readings:

* Risse, Thomas, Stephen Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink (eds.) *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
* Finnemore, Martha (1996) National Interests in International Society, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press).
* Jeffrey T. Checkel, 2005: ‘International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework’, International Organization 59(3): 801-26.
* Barkin, J. Samuel (2010): *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), chapter 9!
* Sterling-Folker, Jennifer (2002): 'Realism and the Constructivist Challenge: Rejecting, Reconstructing, or Rereading', *International Studies Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 73-97.

## Liberal IR

### **Liberal IR Theory - Overviews**

* Mark W. Zacher and Richard A. Matthew, 1995: ‘Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands’, in: Charles W. Kegley (ed.): Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge, pp. 107-140.
* Andrew Moravcsik, 1997: ‘Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics,’ in: *International Organization* 51 (4): 513-553.

Further Readings:

* Michael W. Doyle 1997: Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism, New York: Norton.
* Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed., 1995: *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic* Structures *and International Institutions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **Global Order & Governance**

* Ikenberry, G.J. (2015) 'The Future of Multilateralism: Governing the World in a Post-Hegemonic Era'. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 16, No. 03, pp. 399-413.
* Lake, D.A. (2014) 'The Challenge: The Domestic Determinants of International Rivalry Between the United States and China'. *International Studies Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, p.pp. 442-7.

Further Readings:

* Ikenberry, G. J. 2011. *Liberal Leviathan: The Rise, Decline and Renewal*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
* Ikenberry, G. John, 2001: *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after* Major *Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
* Hewson, Martin, and Timothy J. Sinclair, 1999: ‘The Emergence of Global Governance Theory’, in *Approaches to Global Governance Theory*, edited by Martin Hewson and Timothy J. Sinclair. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

## Movie 1 - Wag the Dog

**II. COUNTER-THEORISING**

## Realist IR

### **Structural Realisms 1: Defensive vs Offensive Realism**

* Waltz, Kenneth N. (1988): ‘The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 615-28.
* Mearsheimer, John J., 2001: *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, pp. 29-54.

Further readings on realism (histories, overviews, critiques):

* Booth, K., ed. 2010. *Realism and World Politics*. London: Routledge.
* Bell, D., ed. 2010. *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
* Brian C. Schmidt 1998: The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations, Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, pp. 209-25.
* Michael Joseph Smith 1990: Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press
* Joseph Grieco 1997: ‘Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics’, in: Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry (eds.): New Thinking in International Relations Theory, Boulder: Westview, pp. 163-177.
* Hans J. Morgenthau 1985: Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, 6th ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, pp. 3-17.
* Robert Gilpin 1988: War and Change in World Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **Structural Realisms 2: To Balance or Not to Balance**

* Rosato, S. (2015) 'The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers'. *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 48-88.
* Glaser, C.L., Kydd, A.H., Haas, M.L., Owen, J.M. and Rosato, S. (2016) 'Correspondence: Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?'. *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 197-215.
* Parent, J.M. and Rosato, S. (2015) 'Balancing in Neorealism'. *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 51-86.

Further Readings:

* Brooks, S. G., and W. C. Wohlforth. 2008. *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapter 2.
* Glaser, C. L. 2010. *Rational Theory of International Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press), chapter 3.
* Waltz, Kenneth N., 2000: ‘Structural Realism After the Cold War’, International Security 25:5-41.
* Walt, Stephen M., 2002: ‘Keeping the World “Off Balance”: Self Restraint and U.S. Foreign Policy’, America Unrivalled: The Future of the Balance of Power, edited by G. John Ikenberry, pp. 121-54. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
* Layne, C. 2007. *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the* Present. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, chapter 1
* Bacevich, A. J. 2002. *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, chapters 1 & 6.

## Feminism and the International

1. ***Feminist Critiques***
* Wilcox, Lauren (2015): *Bodies of Violence: Theorizing Embodied Subjects in International Relations*.  Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 5
* Cowen, Deborah, and Amy Siciliano (2011); "Surplus Masculinities and Security." *Antipode* 43, no. 5 (2011): 1516-1541.

Additional Readings:

* Parpart, Jane, and Marysia Zalewski, eds. *Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender and Violence in International Relations*. London: Zed Books, 2013.
* Mohanty, C. T., ed., 2003: *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press
* Youngs, G. (2004). Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms? Or: why women and gender are essential to understanding the world ‘we’ live in. *International Affairs*, *80*(1), pp. 75-87

## Historical Materialism and the International

1. ***Historical Materialist IR***
* Teschke, Benno. "Theorizing the Westphalian System of States: International Relations from Absolutism to Capitalism." *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 1 (2002): 5-48.
* Van der Pijl, Kees. "Rebellion in Athens." 2015.

Additional Readings:

* Stephen, M.D. (2014) 'Rising powers, global capitalism and liberal global governance: A historical materialist account of the BRICs challenge'. *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 4, p.pp. 912-38.
* Tansel, C.B. (2016) 'Geopolitics, social forces, and the international: Revisiting the ‘Eastern Question’'. *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 03, pp. 492-512.
* Desai R (2013) Geopolitical Economy: After US Hegemony, Globalization and Empire. London: Pluto.
* Robert Cox, 1987: Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History, New York: Columbia University Press.
* Gill, S. 2008. *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*. Houndmills: Palgrave.
* Panitch, L., and S. Gindin. 2012. The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Empire. London: Verso, 1-21.
* Callinicos, A. 2009. Imperialism and Global Political Economy. Oxford: Polity, pp.188-227.

## Movie 2 – The Cuban Missile Crisis

**III. TOPICS/THEMES IN COUNTER-THEORISING**

**Focus on the Human/Non-Human or Material/Non-Material Divide**

1. ***The Entanglement of Materiality & Meaning: Cultural Political Economy:***
* Jessop, Bob and Stijn Oosterlynck. "Cultural Political Economy: On Making the Cultural Turn without Falling into Soft Economic Sociology." *Geoforum* 39, no. 3 (2008): 1155-1169
* Best, Jacqueline, and Matthew Paterson, eds. *Cultural Political Economy*. London: Routledge, 2009, chapter 6: “Joyless Cosmopolitans: The Moral Economy of Ethical Tourism”

Additional readings

* Sum, Ngai-Ling and Bob Jessop. *Towards a Cultural Political Economy: Putting Culture in Its Place in Political Economy*.  Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013,
* Best, Jacqueline, and Matthew Paterson, eds. *Cultural Political Economy*. London: Routledge, 2009
1. ***The Non-Modern Turn: New Materialism & the Agentiality of Vibrant Matter***
* Mitchell, Timothy. "Carbon Democracy." *Economy and Society* 38, no. 3 (2009): 399-432.
* Sheller, Mimi. "The Vital Materiality of Aluminum: Light Modernity and the Global Atlantic." *Atlantic Studies* 11, no. 1 (2014): 67-81.

Additional readings:

* Coole, Diana. "Agentic Capacities and Capacious Historical Materialism: Thinking with New Materialisms in the Political Sciences." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41, no. 3 (2013): 451-469.
* Bennett J, 2010: *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, Durham, NC)
* Coole, Diana, and Samantha Frost, eds. 2010: *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Duke University Press Books
* Barad, K. 2003. “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28(3): 801–31.
1. ***Critiques of the Non-Modern Turn:***
* Rosenberg, Jordana 2014: "The Molecularization of Sexuality: On Some Primitivisms of the Present." *Theory & Event* 17, no. 2 (2014).
* Kirsch, Scott, and Don Mitchell 2004: "The Nature of Things: Dead Labor, Nonhuman Actors, and the Persistence of Marxism." *Antipode* 36, no. 4 (2004): 687-705.

Additional readings:

* Lundborg, Tom, and Vaughan-Williams Nick. "New Materialisms, Discourse Analysis, and International Relations: A Radical Intertextual Approach." *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 01 (2015): 3-25.

**Single Topics**

1. ***Many States or An Emerging Global State***
* Callinicos, Alex. "Does Capitalism Need the State System?". *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2007): 533-549.
* Wendt, Alexander. "Why a World State Is Inevitable." *European Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 4 (2003): 491-542.

Additional readings

* Cambridge Review of International Affairs, special issue 2007, issue 4
1. ***Subject Manufacturing***
* Butler, The Psychic Life of Power Theories in Subjection, chapter 3
* Kurki, Milja. "Governmentality and EU Democracy Promotion: The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Construction of Democratic Civil Societies." *International Political Sociology* 5, no. 4 (2011): 349-366.

Additional readings

* Gros, Frédéric, 2016:. "Is There a Biopolitical Subject? Foucault and the Birth of Biopolitics." In *Foucault and Beyond*, edited by Vernon W. Cisney and Nicolae Morar. 259-273. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
* Butler, Judith. "Performative Agency." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 3, no. 2 (2010): 147-61.
* Read, Jason. "A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity." *Foucault Studies* 6, no. 25 (2009): 25-36.
1. ***Neoliberalism & Forms of Resistance***
* Di Feliciantonio, Cesare 2016: "Subjectification in Times of Indebtedness and Neoliberal/Austerity Urbanism." *Antipode* 48, no. 5 (2016): 1206-1227
* Crossan, John, Andrew Cumbers, Robert McMaster, and Deirdre Shaw 2016: "Contesting Neoliberal Urbanism in Glasgow's Community Gardens: The Practice of Diy Citizenship." *Antipode* 48, no. 4: 937-955.
1. ***Genealogies in How to Constitute and Govern a Realm of Normality***
* Foucault, M. (1991) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin), chapter 3 (Panopticism), pp. 195-228 & chapter on The Carceral, pp. 293-308.
* Broome, A. and Quirk, J. (2015) 'Governing the world at a distance: the practice of global benchmarking'. *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Special Issue 05, pp. 819-41.

Additional Readings:

* Krause Hansen, H. (2012) 'The power of performance indices in the global politics of anti-corruption'. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 506-31.
* Joseph, Jonathan. The Social in the Global: Social Theory, Governmentality and Global Politics.  Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
* Innes, Alexandra Jayne, and Brent J. Steele. "Governmentality in Global Governance." Chap. 716- In *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*, edited by David Levi-Faur. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
* Davis, Kevin, Angelina Fisher, Benedict Kingsbury, and Sally Engle Merry, 2012: *Governance by Indicators: Global Power through Quantification and Rankings*.  Oxford: Oxford University Press

### **Wrap-up**

1. ***Final Exam***