

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Course code	<i>POL104</i>
Course name	<i>International Relations</i>
Study Level	<i>Undergraduate</i>
ECTS credits	<i>6 credits: 24 hours lectures; 24 hours of seminars; 112 hours of individual work; 2 hours of consultation</i>
Language of Instruction	<i>English</i>
Coordinating lecturer	<i>Dr Jonathan Boyd jonathan.boyd@faculty.ism.it</i>

Aims of the course:

This elective course in International Relations (IR) is open to students of Politics, Economics, and Finance, providing insights into the global political, social, and economic systems that shape our world. It explores the roles of states, international organisations, and non-state actors, examining the dynamics that drive war, peace, and global governance.

The course equips students with a foundational understanding of key theories—Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism—while linking these to practical issues such as foreign policy, conflict, and global trade. For Politics students, the course offers vital insights into the mechanics of power and strategy; for Economics students, it illuminates the global systems shaping trade and development; and for Finance students, it highlights the geopolitical forces underpinning markets and economic stability.

Divided into three parts, the course covers the historical evolution of the modern international order, the causes and consequences of conflict, and the governance challenges of a rapidly changing global landscape.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES (See Annex), ASSESMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives)	BS Degree level learning objectives (Number of LO)	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
Compare and contrast the primary concepts and traditional theoretical approaches to the study of international politics.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Explain the the Strategic Perspective's response to traditional theories of IR.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Analyse case studies of international relations and foreign policies according to the methods of strategic theory, selectorate theory, and game theory.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Model causes of war, brinkmanship, the security dilemma, bargaining, deterrence and compellence processes.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Explain the rationale behind the formation of alliances; apply the concept of alliance portfolio to the analysis of the preferences of national leaders.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.

Analyse the logic of terrorism and attendant issues of credibility.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Assess the empirical evidence supporting democratic peace theory.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Explain the purposes and formations of several international organisations and assess the extent to which common problems constrain their effectiveness and level of cooperation.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Analyse climate change agreements as collective action problems.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.
Critically assess the constructivist and strategic approaches to the formation of international law, norms and human rights.	1.1;1.2;4.1;4.2;4.3	Lectures, seminars, individual study	Examinations, seminar presentations.

Quality issues

The lecturer assures a variety of teaching methods as well as modes of self-assessment. The feedback from students will always be highly valued and appreciated.

Cheating issues

The teaching and testing methods are chosen taking into account the purpose of the minimisation of cheating opportunities. The ISM regulations on academic ethics are fully applied in the course.

Topics:

Week	Topic	Contact Hours		Readings
		Lecture	Seminar	
1	Introduction to course and topics	2		
	The modern international order		2	GWP: Part Two (pp 39 -102)
Part 1: Theories of world politics				
2	Liberal internationalism	2	2	GWP: Chap 7
3	Realism	2	2	GWP: Chap 9
4	Constructivism	2	2	GWP: Chap 13
5	US Foreign policy	2	2	Select W.R.Mead articles
Part 2: War and Conflict				
6	War and Security	2	2	GWP: Chap 14, 15
7	Terrorism	2	2	GWP: Chap 29
8	Weapons of mass destruction	2	2	GWP: Chap 30
Part 3: Peace, Governance and World Order				

9	Institutions	2	2	GWP: 19, 20, 21
10	Global trade and finance	2	2	GWP: 16, 28
11	Human rights and intervention	2	2	GWP: 33
12	The New World Order: Competing Visions of the Global Future	2	2	Select readings from: Ferguson, Harari, Gray, and Fukuyama
Final Examination				

Individual work and assessment:

TYPE	TOPICS	TOTAL HOURS	EVALUATION %
Group component (30%)			
Group assignment	1 – 12	34	30
Individual component (70%)			
Midterm Exam	1 -- 6	28	25
Final Exam	7 -- 12	33	30
History quiz (week 2)	1	17	15
TOTAL		112	100

Course assignments and evaluation:

History quiz

Students will complete a quiz testing their basic knowledge and understanding of key events and themes presented in the Netflix series Turning Point: The Bomb and the Cold War. The quiz will count towards 15% of the final grade.

Midterm exam

The midterm will be a written exam and will count towards 25% of the final grade. The midterm test will be based on topics 1-6.

Group assignment

Details of the assignments will be provided during the first week of the course. Students will work in groups of 3-4 to lead seminar discussions based on case studies sourced from the Harvard Kennedy School, The Case Centre, or similar repositories. Each group will present their analysis of the case, facilitate a class discussion, and connect the case to relevant theories and concepts. Group assignment will count towards 30% of the final grade.

Final exam.

The final exam will count towards 30% of the final grade. It will be a closed-book test, including multiple choice questions, open questions and problem solving. It will test conceptual and analytical skills acquired in the course of the semester. The exam will be based on topics 5-12.

In the case of a negative final grade, students are allowed a retake exam. It will cover all course material. The weight of a retake is 55%. The assignments cannot be re-done, but their evaluations (if positive) will not be annulled.

Main readings:

TBA : In the course of the semester students will receive a packet of materials via e-Learning, containing both the required as well as the supplementary readings.

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Business Management

*Programmes:
International Business and Communication,
Business Management and Marketing,
Finance,
Industrial Technology Management,
Entrepreneurship and Innovation*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	BLO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the business disciplines
	BLO1.2. Students will be able to conduct a contextual analysis to identify a problem associated with their discipline, to generate managerial options and propose viable solutions
Students will be socially responsible in their related discipline	BLO2.1. Students will be knowledgeable about ethics and social responsibility
Students will be technology agile	BLO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	BLO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	BLO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	BLO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	BLO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Social Science

*Programmes:
Economics and Data Analytics,
Economics and Politics*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	ELO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the key economics disciplines
	ELO1.2. Students will be able to identify underlying assumptions and logical consistency of causal statements
Students will have skills to employ economic thought for the common good	ELO2.1. Students will have a keen sense of ethical criteria for practical problem-solving
Students will be technology agile	ELO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	ELO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	ELO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	ELO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	ELO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper