



SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

IR1121 Introduction to International relations, 15 credits

Introduktion till Internationella relationer, 15 högskolepoäng

First Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by School of Global Studies on 2021-02-02 and was last revised on 2023-06-21 to be valid from 2023-08-28, autumn semester of 2023.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: School of Global Studies

Position in the educational system

The course is given as core course at the first year level of the Bachelor's Programme in International Relations. It can also be studied as a single subject course.

The course can be part of the following programmes: 1) Bachelor's Programme in International Relations (S1INT), 2) Bachelors' programme in Global Studies (S1GLS) and 3) Program in Political Science (S1STV)

Main field of studies

International Relations

Specialization

G1N, First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

Entry requirements

General entrance requirements.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Explain central concepts and theories in international relations
- Explain the importance of central historical events, contexts and processes in the development of the study of international relations;

Competence and skills

- Clearly present, summarize, and synthesize basic tenets of a theory;
- Apply theoretical concepts in the study of global politics;
- Apply basic standards of academic writing skills

Judgement and approach

- Compare different theories in international relations and their underlying basic assumptions and premises;
- Reflect on how theoretical perspectives shape understandings of the world;
- Situate global problems in historical context

Course content

The course introduces the students to the field of International Relations as an academic subject. Crucially, the course endeavors to help the students identify how global problems are perceived and explained in different ways, depending on theoretical perspective and historical context. It therefore emphasizes how theory is embedded in and emerges in relation to history and context. The course offers a broad overview of contemporary theoretical perspectives that can be used to understand the real-world events, processes, actors, and problems that International Relations studies. The course also provides the students with the tools with which to critically review the assumptions that lie behind different models of explanation—or theories of International Relations—and to therefore identify the central actors, practices, processes, actors and problems that are considered important according to these different perspectives. In focusing on International Relations theories and the ways in which different theoretical perspectives compose different pictures of the world, students are also introduced to foundational scientific knowledge that prepares them for any field of study: they learn how theories help us to simplify and understand a complex world, and how specific theories give us different perspectives on the world.

The course is divided into two main parts.

Part 1, ‘Foundations of International Relations’ explores the historical and intellectual history of the field and its main institutions. It provides an overview of the development of the academic field of International Relations in relation to historical world events and processes.

Part 2, ‘Theorizing International Relations: Current Perspectives’, introduces students to the different ways of understanding ‘International Relations’ in contemporary academic and policy thinking. It provides the students with a basic knowledge of different theories and perspectives, as well as a discussion of International Relations as it is currently being conceived in different global locations. In order to highlight the similarities and differences between these different perspectives, the course will visit and

revisit a core 'case study', exploring how different theoretical lenses allow us to see the 'case' from different angles. Part 2 will also ask students to identify, formulate and explore key questions of international relations.

Form of teaching

The main forms of teaching on the course will include lectures, interactive sessions and seminars. Additional teaching includes debate sessions and IR Cafés.

Language of instruction: English and Swedish

The course may be given in both English and Swedish. When given in English, students wishing to submit their assignments in Swedish may do so.

Assessment

The course will be examined through the following activities:

- A group assignment;
- An individual short writing assignment;
- An individual take-home exam in the form of writing an essay;
- Peer-review assignments.

A student who has taken two examinations in a course or part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner. The student needs to contact the department for a new examiner, preferably in writing, and this should be approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for special educational support, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, the examiner may decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted examination or alternative form of assessment.

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years, after the course has ceased/been changed. The same applies to placements and professional placements (VFU), although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

- Group assignment is graded U/G (2 hp)
- Individual short writing assignment is graded U/G (4 hp)
- Individual take-home exam in the form of writing an essay is graded U/G/VG (8 hp)
- Peer-review assignments are graded U/G (1 hp)

In order to obtain the grade Pass (G) on the whole course, students need to receive Pass (G) on all of the required assignments.

In order to Pass with Distinction (VG), the student needs to receive the grade Pass with Distinction (VG) on the individual take-home exam and Pass (G) on all other examined assignments.

Course evaluation

The course coordinator is responsible for systematically and regularly collecting the students' views of the course, and for making sure that the results of the evaluations in different forms are taken into consideration when developing the course. The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.