

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public and International Affairs
with effect from Semester A 2024/25**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title: Theory in International Studies

Course Code: PIA5025

Course Duration: One Semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: P5

Medium of Instruction: English

Medium of Assessment: English

Prerequisites:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Precursors:
(Course Code and Title) Nil

Equivalent Courses:
(Course Code and Title) AIS5025 Theory in International Studies

Exclusive Courses:
(Course Code and Title) AIS5022 Theory and Methodology in Asian and International Relations

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course seeks to ground students in the so-called “root discourses” of international relations (IR) – the field’s core theoretical paradigms, concepts, debates, and questions – analysing how they relate one to another and exploring their implications for understanding contemporary global issues. Students will learn how to use the theories to critically analyse and explain real-world events, tendencies, and institutions. The subject matter will include inter- and intra-state violence (such as wars and civil wars), patterned international economic exchanges, transboundary flows of ideas and images, the complex impacts of globalization, how state identities shape foreign policies, the evolving roles of international non-governmental organizations, and more. Students will participate actively in the class-wide discussions held as a part of every lecture session and will give presentations on how the theories can be used to illuminate contemporary global issues.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Explain the core theoretical traditions in international relations – the root discourses – and how they differ and inter-relate	40	✓	✓	
2.	Discuss and critically evaluate the newer IR theories and show how they evolved from the root discourses	20	✓	✓	✓
3.	Develop the capacity to use IR theories critically to analyse and interpret real-world events, tendencies, and institutions	20	✓	✓	✓
4.	Cultivate the synoptic, high-level understanding of international relations theories that is necessary for conducting advanced and compelling research	20	✓	✓	✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4			
1	Prepare the assigned readings prior to each class session	✓	✓	✓	✓			
2	Listen actively and in an engaged way to the class lecture and PPT presentation	✓	✓	✓				
3	Watch the short documentary material with an analytical mindset	✓	✓	✓	✓			
4	Participate actively in class discussions, linking concepts covered in the readings and lectures to the real-world material presented in the documentary and in news sources	✓	✓	✓				

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4				
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
Class Participation	✓	✓	✓				20	
Take-Home Quiz #1	✓	✓	✓				25	
Take-Home Quiz #2	✓	✓	✓	✓			25	
Group Research Paper	✓	✓	✓	✓			30	
Examination: 0% (duration: N/A , if applicable)								
							100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Class participation	Active engagement in classroom activities. Attentive listening to lectures (no phone use, etc.) and participation in discussions.	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.	Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of low quality, including in discussions.	Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.
2. Take-Home Quiz #1	Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.	Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of low quality, including in discussions.	Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.
3. Take-Home Quiz #2	Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse	Excellent understanding of theories of international	Good to very good understanding of theories of international	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a	Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed	Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
	international relations theory	relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically.	relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically.	partial ability to use them critically.	ability to use them critically.	concepts analytically and critically.
4. Group Research paper	Working in a group of approximately five students to produce a research paper of 12,000-15,000 words comparatively assessing the explanatory power of competing IR theories in interpreting a significant pattern, process, or event in international relations	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically and analytically.	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically and analytically.	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically and analytically.	Flawed understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a flawed ability to use them critically and analytically.	Failure to demonstrate any understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Class participation	Active engagement in classroom activities. Attentive listening to lectures (no phone use, etc.) and participation in discussions.	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of consistently high quality, including in discussions.	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of good quality, including in discussions.	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically. Analysis provided in all assessment activities is of decent quality, including in discussions.	Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically. Attendance is irregular; assessment activities are not completed.
2. Take-Home Quiz #1	Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically.	Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
		critically.	them critically.		critically.
3. Take-Home Quiz #2	Written responses to questions posed by the instructor requiring students to analyse international relations theory	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically.	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically.	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically.	Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.
4. Group Research Paper	Working in a group of approximately five students to produce a research paper of 12,000-15,000 words comparatively assessing the explanatory power of competing IR theories in interpreting a significant pattern, process, or event in international relations	Excellent understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a demonstrated ability to use them critically and analytically.	Good to very good understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a generally skilled ability to use them critically and analytically.	Partial understanding of theories of international relations, as well as a partial ability to use them critically and analytically.	Failure to demonstrate any decent understanding of IR theories, or any ability to apply concepts analytically and critically.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

International Relations Theory; Liberalism; Realism; Neo-Neo Debate; Regime Theory; Prisoner's Dilemma; English School; Constructivism; Post-Modernism; Gender and IR; Critical Theory; Globalization; Non-State Actors; War; International Political Economy; Global Communication

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Viotti, Paul R. and Mark V. Kauppi. <i>International Relations Theory</i> , 6 th edition. New York: Pearson, 2019.
2.	Reus-Smit, Christian and Duncan Snidal, eds. <i>The Oxford Handbook of International Relations</i> . Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Buzan, Barry and Richard Little, <i>International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations</i> (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
2.	Robert Axelrod, <i>The Evolution of Cooperation</i> (New York: Basic Books, 1984).
3.	Hedley Bull, <i>The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics</i> , 2 nd edition, with a new foreword by Stanley Hoffman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).
4.	J. Ann Tickner, <i>Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security</i> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
5.	Alexander Wendt, <i>Social Theory of International Politics</i> (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
6.	Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., <i>Becoming National: A Reader</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
7.	John Keane, <i>Global Civil Society?</i> (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).