International Relations and International Law: Theories and Histories
Dr. Giovanni Mantilla (gm633@cam.ac.uk)
MPhil in POLIS 2020-2021
Michaelmas Term
Wednesdays, 3-5pm BST on Zoom

Description

This module focuses on the dialogue, still nascent, about the history and theory of international law between scholars of International Relations, International Law, and International History. Principally anchored in IR, we start out debating some dominant ways of IR scholarly thinking about international law (and in some cases, related organizations) and then place that scholarship side-by-side with prominent contributions from International Law and History. The broad learning goal is to convey the complex, contested, and deeply historical nature of the international legal order, to spark discussion among participants about more or less satisfactory ways to theorize and historicize international law, and to motivate original research in this general area.

Topics of focus include: global governance before the twentieth century, the postwar(s) law and organization of war and peace; the laws of war; human rights law; and international law of trade and development.

Although by now mostly finalized, please note that this is a ‘living’ reading list. If the module organizer decides to make changes, these will be communicated promptly to participants.

Mode of Teaching

This course is conducted as an advanced postgraduate seminar. It will consist of 7 two-hour discussion-based seminars with no accompanying lectures.

It is imperative that students attend the seminar ready to engage in constructive debate with others about the topic of discussion. The expectation is that you will devote the time and energy to read the assigned material in a careful and critical fashion, and that you will come with prepared insights and questions for debate. Staying silent is strongly discouraged.

Since this year we will meet via Zoom, I am asking all participants to please keep their cameras on throughout the session, except during our 10 minute break. If there are good reasons why you wish to turn your camera off during a particular session (or part of a session), please be sure to consult with Dr. Mantilla before the session has started.

Dr. Mantilla (or MPhil administrators) will circulate a Zoom link to our seminar session via email.

We will follow University guidance on recordings: https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/supporting-students/policy-recordings

The baseline rule for our module is that, given the interactive nature of the seminar, our seminar sessions will not be recorded. If you foresee the need for the recording of specific sessions, please
be sure to contact Dr. Mantilla well in advance (at least 3 days before the seminar session), who will then consult the MPhil Directors before proceeding.

**Student Presentations**

Students will be expected to make one presentation during the module period. Starting on the second class session (October 21), two to three students will be asked to spark discussion through brief reflection essays (of 2-3 double-spaced pages) about the required readings for the week, and by formulating two-three critical questions related to their reflection and the readings. The papers are meant to be *analytical* and *critical*, perhaps threading together and/or contrasting elements from the different readings *without simply summarizing them*. Presenters’ questions are meant to provoke debate among class participants, so please be sure to think about them in those terms. Each presentation should last no longer than 10 minutes to allow for collective discussion. You may -- but are not obligated to -- use power point during your presentation. Please assume that everyone will have read your essay and will be ready to engage with your reflections and questions.

Reflection essays should be emailed in word or pdf format to all seminar participants (Dr. Mantilla included) on the morning of our class session by **9am** at the latest.

Sign up for the reflection essays/presentations will take place during our first session on October 14.

**Assessment**

Assessment will be conducted via a 3,000-word essay (a book review chosen from a curated list) at the end of term. Dr. Mantilla will discuss the activity in more depth during our first seminar session.

**Attendance will be taken at every session.** For those taking the course not for full credit (i.e. ‘Pass/Fail”), failure to attend more than 2 sessions without prior justification (duly relayed to Dr. Mantilla) will result in a ‘Fail’ mark. Students opting for this modality are expected to be full participants in the seminar and are committed to class presentations.

**Readings**

Assigned readings are available electronically either from the University Library’s e-journals and e-books provisions or as scanned pdfs provided by Mill Lane Library. In addition to the Required Readings for each week, the syllabus also lists ‘Supplementary Reading’. These are intended for students who wish to explore a weekly topic in further depth.

**Some Reference Work on Historical IR and International Law**


**SEMINAR SCHEDULE**


**Supplementary Reading**


**Week 2. October 21. ‘Methodenstreit’: How Should IR study IL? Should We Pursue Interdisciplinarity?**


Supplementary Reading


*Symposium on Method in International Law.* American Journal of International Law, Volume 93, Issue 2, April 1999.


Week 3. October 28. The Historical Governance of International Society: Empires, Concerts, Hierarchies


Supplementary Reading


**Week 4. November 4. The Postwar International Law of Peace and Organization**


**Supplementary Reading**


Finkelstein, Lawrence S. “The United Nations: Then and Now.” *International Organization* 19, no. 3 (1965): 367–93. [This entire issue of *IO* is important to understand how IR scholars saw the organization 20 years after created.]


Week 5. November 11. The Laws of War


**Supplementary Reading**


**Supplementary Reading**


Supplementary Reading


