

# **MPhil in Politics and International Studies 2020-2021**

## **Michaelmas Term 2020**

### **Global Capitalism and the Anthropocene - Dr Jeremy Green**

The effects of human-induced climate change are widespread and intensifying. Carbon-intensive economic development is the major cause of climatic transformation. This course critically examines the relationship between capitalism and environmental transformation from a historical and global perspective.

### **China and International Security - Dr KC Lin**

This module focuses on the geopolitical and multilateral governance challenges arising from the People's Republic of China's ascendancy in global politics in the 21st Century. It evaluates mainstream theories of power transition in juxtaposition to critical perspectives from Asian epistemic communities. Strongly referential to current events, covering traditional and non-traditional security issues.

### **Comparative Political Economy - Dr James Wood**

This module introduces students to the key concepts, theories and issues in the comparative study of capitalism through the interplay between politics and economics in advanced industrial democracies. The module provides students with concrete knowledge of such variations in key areas of economic policy making and their different economic, political and social outcomes.

### **Cultures of War - Ian Shields**

The media is saturated with reports of war, ethnic and political conflict in various countries around the world. While there are rules of engagement for war, crimes are nevertheless committed during conflicts. Cultures of War will offer you the opportunity to consider and evaluate the concept of 'war', through the conduct of governments and international bodies as well as combatants and non-combatants.

### **International Relations and International Law: Theories and Histories - Dr Giovanni Mantilla**

This module focuses on the study of international law by scholars of International Relations. It debates the dominant ways of IR thinking about international legal rules (and in some cases, related institutions) through the combined reading prominent IR work on the origins, development, and effects of various bodies of international law alongside the recent (often revisionist) histories of those same bodies of rules. We will explore questions such as: To what extent has IR grappled with the political history of various strands international law? How do the findings emerging from new histories complicate or confirm IR's assumptions or findings? What are the different ways in which history and historical methods can be applied to produce IR research on international law? In terms of specific areas of law, potential foci might include: the law on the use of force, the law of human rights, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, international investment or trade law, the law of international organizations, or the law of statehood, self-determination, and state recognition.

### **Transnational Authority in World Politics - Dr Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**

Global governance is no longer the preserve of states and international organizations (IOs). Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil society actors (CSO) have expanded their influence and inputs into the making and implementation of global policy and through the

delivery of essential public goods that governments and IOs are unable or unwilling to provide. Through advocacy, protest and policy advice, as contractors for service delivery, standard-setters, and monitors or enforcers of domestic and international laws, NGOs have become increasingly influential actors in global politics. Their voice and action increases pluralism, but also raises questions of effectiveness, accountability and legitimacy. The first 4 weeks of the course will examine theories and practices of transnational activism and reflect on different types of influence-seeking; from agenda-setting and ‘inside’ lobbying to mass protest, strategic litigation, and direct action. Weeks 5 and 6 will focus on the impact of transnational activism in two domains of global politics; human rights and the environment. The final week looks at current opportunities and challenges posed by new social media and information technologies and by the rise of right-wing populism.

### **The Crisis of Multilateralism - Dr Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni**

Multilateral organizations have come under increasing fire during the past few decades. Around the world, the tide seems to be shifting away from globalization and global governance towards growing economic and political nationalism. Failure to solve the European and global financial crises or to agree binding targets for global Co2 emissions, cuts to the funding of international organizations like the WHO, and high-profile state withdrawals from, inter alia, the European Union, the International Criminal Court, UNESCO, the World Trade Organization, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership are viewed by many as signs of a multilateral system in crisis. Ditto political developments in the United States which call into question the future of security institutions which have formed the bedrock of the international order since World War II - including NATO. But we have also witnessed the rise of new multilateral institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. To what extent is global multilateralism in crisis? If so, what are the main sources of dissatisfaction with incumbent institutions for global governance? And how might long-standing international organizations cope with growing discontent and challenges to their legitimacy?

### **Montesquieu - The Spirit of the Laws – Dr Sylvana Tomaselli**

Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* is a challenging text by any standard. The scope of the book, its sustained reflection, its impact on the period’s social and political debates throughout Europe as well as its enduring influence make it an exceptional work. As its subtitle indicates, it purports to examine the relation laws must have to the specific constitution, civil society, and physical circumstances of the country in which they are being made or enforced. The class will therefore have two ends: to understand Montesquieu’s *magnus opus* through a close reading of the text, and to reflect on some methodological issues which it raises.

*Borrowed from MPhil in Political Thought*

### **Religion and Politics - Dr Tomas Larsson**

This course will explore the relationship between religion and politics, introducing students to a diversity of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, and to a wide range of religious contexts. The central aim of the course is to provide students with analytical tools for understanding the role of religion, broadly conceived, in processes of political change. The following topics will be covered: the evolutionary origins of religion and politics; religion and political imaginaries; religious identities and politics; “religion” and politics; political economy of religion; politics of religious action; political power and the religious field.

### **The Middle East in Global Politics** - Dr Glen Rangwala

The Middle East is usually studied in international relations with an emphasis placed on power politics and inter-state relations, with attention given principally to crisis events that happen within the region. This course starts with this traditional literature, but moves quickly on to two approaches largely overlooked in it. First, it develops an understanding of the Middle East's politics that looks to the importance of transnational factors, including regional economic change, diasporas and refugee movements, and the politics of global religious movements. Secondly, it looks to how the Middle East figures in global political change; it interrogates the 'crisis perspective' on the Middle East through exploring international advocacy groups around the world which present the Middle East as a problem region, and it looks at how a conception of the Middle East shapes political sensibilities in other parts of the world. The course presumes pre-existing knowledge of the modern history and politics of the region. There will be no lectures accompanying the seminar series.

### **The Politics of Africa: Past, Present, Future** - Dr Sharath Srinivasan

The African continent is arguably of central importance to world politics in the 21st century. This option uses close reading of major books to introduce students to the politics of Africa, past, present and future.

## **Lent Term 2021**

### **Advanced Political Analysis** - Dr James Wood

This module teaches students to critically reflect on the merits and limitations of different theoretical forms of analysis and methodology adopted in the study of Politics and International Relations, as revealed in debates about ontology and epistemology. The aim of this module is to enable students to be reflexive about their research practices and to make considered choices on the methods they deploy in their own research project.

### **Architecture and Political Theory** - Prof Duncan Bell

This class will examine some of the ways in which politics and architecture intersect. Although this is a popular topic of analysis in a variety of scholarly fields, political theorists today rarely address it. This is a major intellectual gap. During the twentieth century and into our own times – the main historical focus of the course – architecture and politics have been deeply interwoven, though in often complex and unpredictable ways. Architects have frequently sought to shape (or even radically transform) social and political life, while studying architecture involves grappling with many of the central concerns of political theory: power, democracy, rights, citizenship, and justice, to name but a few.

### **Communication Technology and Politics** - Dr Sharath Srinivasan

From the printing press to social media, information and communication technologies have played an important role in political change. This option takes a historicised approach to the relationship between communication technology and politics to understand authority, power and political contestation in a digital age.

### **The crisis of party democracy: origins, consequences, remedies** - Dr Chris Bickerton

This course is a comparative politics course focusing on the crisis of political parties and the problems faced by representative government across advanced democracies. The course begins by studying party democracy as a distinctive political regime rooted in 20th century mass politics. It then considers the pressures and challenges faced by party democracy since

the 1970s, culminating in the contemporary “populist explosion”. The course then ends looking at possible remedies to the crisis, including alternatives to political parties.

### **Crisis, Decline and Change in International Politics** - Dr Ayse Zarakol

Many observers think that we are at a critical juncture in international politics but disagree as to the causes. Some argue that the main driver of change is a power transition between the US and China, others argue that the Liberal International Order is no longer sustainable, yet others point to larger changes, e.g. climatological, economic or demographic trends. In this class, students will read works (both classics and state-of-the-art) that deal with the grand themes of order, disorder and decline in International Relations (and cognate disciplines). This option is especially suitable for students who are interested in big picture approaches to world politics and history and/or for students who may continue onto a PhD program in IR.

### **Ecology and Violence** - Dr Mark Shirk

All politics takes place within a natural ecology and this course will explore the relationship ecology has with political violence. The course will explore different approaches to this relationship from statistical testing on the relationship between ecological change and the incidence of conflict to political ecology and environmental history approaches.

### **European Foreign Policy** - Dr Geoffrey Edwards (CANCELLED)

The course would take on both the structural challenges to any coherent foreign policy as well as the external challenges it faces, not least from Russia and China, and the continuous ambiguities of its relationship with the United States.

### **Geopolitics 1555-1763** - Prof Brendan Simms

The course will show how some of the themes which dominate international politics today have their roots in the old European balance of power as it evolved into the global system we know today: the German question, British exceptionalism, colonialism, maritime versus continental hegemony, the Muslim threat, conditional sovereignty, the Rise of Russia, slavery, and humanitarian intervention. Each seminar will involve the discussion of primary sources as well as secondary literature.

### **Political Regimes: The End of Democratisation?** - Dr Pieter van Houten

The development of and variation in political regimes are a central concern in the study of comparative politics. While for decades the main focus was on processes of democratisation and the conditions under which democracies emerge and persist, in more recent years - as a result of political trends around the world - authoritarian and 'hybrid' regimes have received increasing attention again. This module will provide students with a sense of different strands of contemporary research on political regimes. Themes will include an overview of different approaches to the study of political regimes and democratisation (partly based on some 'classical' works on these topics in comparative politics), the relation between inequality and democratisation or democratic stability, recent research on the social bases of political regimes, factors and strategies supporting authoritarian regimes, the nature and prevalence of 'hybrid' regimes, and the alleged current 'democratic recession' in long-standing democratic states. The core readings use a variety of methodological approaches and draw and data and case studies from different parts of the world.

### **The political thought of Michel Foucault** - Dr Chris Brooke

Michel Foucault's lectures and other interventions following his election to the chair in the History of Systems of Thought at the Collège de France in 1970 constitute a remarkable

intellectual resource for scholars of politics, whether in terms of thinking about the history of political thought or with respect to the elaboration of key concepts such as governmentality, biopolitics, and neoliberalism. This option will survey a wide range of Foucault's texts in English translation and consider their legacy for political enquiry down to the present.

### **Politics and the Anthropocene** - Prof Duncan Kelly

The Anthropocene is both a problem of modern politics, and a problem for politics. It is a problem of modern politics, for although there is no fixed agreement upon when exactly the Anthropocene might have emerged stratigraphically, the two most relevant proposals for its modern development, the industrial revolution and the nuclear age, are coterminous with the origin and fraught evolution of modern, representative politics. Yet the Anthropocene is also a problem for politics. For although it seems unlikely that any kind of politics as we have known it, democratic or otherwise, could unilaterally deal with all the globally connected problems thrown up by environmental threats in the modern age of the Anthropocene, without politics, there is nothing that might authorize, legitimate or constrain any choices peoples might make about how best to proceed in its wake. The Anthropocene, in other words, raises questions both about how we consider the responsibility of modern politics for having brought about the challenge of the Anthropocene, and raises questions about the practice of politics, because only through political action can claims about responsibility be understood and developed. The seven classes for this course consider various dimensions of this relationship between politics and the Anthropocene, primarily from the perspective of the overlapping intellectual histories of modern political and economic thought. Likely topics for consideration will be, the competing temporalities of the Anthropocene and modern politics; questions of economic growth amid finite resources; issues of debt and indebtedness; the centrality of capitalism and colonialism; problems of value and political/humanistic versus scientific argumentation.

### **Religion and Politics: Islam, Secularism, Global Movements** - Dr Iza Hussin

This 7 week session will be organised around three major themes in the study of religion and politics: Islam and Politics, Secular/ism, Global Movements. With readings drawn from recent published work in the field, it applies comparative political analysis to key theoretical, historical, methodological, and policy issues in religion and politics research: is Islam an exception in the study of religion and politics? How do modern states define, order, and reproduce religion? How does mobility, and mobilisation, matter for research and policy on religion and politics?

### **States, Corporations and Robots** - Prof David Runciman

This course will explore what the history of thinking about states, corporations and other kinds of artificial agents can teach us about the coming age of artificial intelligence. Drawing on intellectual history, political and IR theory and technology studies, it will examine questions of state identity and corporate responsibility to discover where power lies in the age of AI: with states, with corporations, with individuals or with the machines themselves? Source material will range from classic texts in the history of ideas (Hobbes, Arendt) to the latest writing on machine learning.

### **Elections, Polls and Policy in South Asia** – Dr Patrick Clibbens

This course will explore the politics of South Asia since Independence through a focus on elections. It approaches this issue through vibrant and ongoing debates in the fields of contemporary history, anthropology, political science and political theory. We will discuss the establishment of electoral democracy in South Asia and the changing nature of South

Asian elections and electoral campaigning. The course will explore the debates about the meaning of the vote, and about the relationship between public policy, electioneering and electoral success in South Asia's diverse democracies.

India was one of the first countries of the global South to undertake opinion polls and polls are ubiquitous in Indian media today. This course will also investigate concepts of 'the public' in South Asia and the institutional production of 'public opinion', with the aim of understanding how these ideas have shaped South Asia's complex political landscape. Alongside the secondary readings listed below, we will discuss a selection of short primary texts together in each class.

### **The politics of intersectionality: Race, class and gender** – Dr Tobias Müller

The module explores the rapidly rising interest, both academically and politically, in ideas of intersectionality. Introduced through a famous essay by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, the concept of intersectionality has since significantly impacted the humanities and social sciences, and is gaining increasing traction in politics and international relations. Intersectionality seeks to overcome unidimensional analyses that prioritise one single social fault line by urging us to investigate interlocking systems of power, particularly along the lines of race, class and gender.

The course explores how intersectional theorists such as bell hooks, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins and their interlocutors draw on feminist, postcolonial and Marxist theories and how the intersectional analysis has developed into a key concept for politics and international studies today. We will also explore how scholars from various disciplines have sought to expand the scope of intersectionality to include questions of religion, nationality, disability, ecology, among others, and discuss current debates between advocates, activists and critics of the concept.

### **Political Economy of the Global South: Paradigms, Crises, Alternatives** – Dr Mehmet Erol

Since its emergence, the history of global capitalism is marked by its uneven character in terms of development. Some states, mainly in the 'Global North', were quickly industrialised and developed, while others, mainly in the 'Global South', struggled and remained less developed and/or are still developing. Hence, the problem of 'catching-up' with developed countries came to the fore as early as the 19th century. This module focuses on this question and aims to make sense of the roots, alternative paradigms, and empirical issues of development in the Global South, from the 20th century to the contemporary global political economy.

### **Punishment** – Dr Sylvana Tomaselli

The aim of these classes is not only to reflect on various conceptions of the nature, purpose and justification of punishment as was particularly topical for much of the middle to late C20th in Anglo-Saxon philosophy departments, but to consider why it is that we have tended to forget what were its various customary philosophical and theological twins, reward, mercy, forgiveness and pardon. And to do this not only thinking about the Western tradition. Ours continues to be a very punitive culture globally, but it seems to have ceased to be a forgiving one, though the subject of forgiveness has shown some sign of conceptual recovery, e.g. Derrida *Forgiveness* (1999) and the practice of Presidential and other executive pardons makes the headlines from time to time. What is more since the end of Apartheid reconciliation is also receiving increasing philosophical attention. Over the course of the

eight classes we will consider how a greater focus on ideas of mercy, clemency and pardon as well as conceptions of punishment and rewards can enrich our understanding of some of the canonical figures of Western Political Thought such as Plato, Hobbes and Nietzsche, together with casting some light on the nature of contemporary political culture, but extending beyond the Western tradition.

*Borrowed from MPhil in Political Thought*

Modern Democracy: Hobbes to Schumpeter – Prof Richard Bourke

This course looks at a selection of formative theories of democracy in the modern world. The aim of this overview is to explore historical controversies surrounding the relationship between key democratic institutions and values. The topics examined include: the state, the franchise, the popular will, revolution, contract, parliamentarism, parties, government, equality, liberty and representation. The course will investigate the clash between institutions and values as examined in influential arguments extending from seventeenth-century England to revolutionary France, and into the era of modern mass democracy. By the end of the course, you will have an advanced understanding of diverse debates about modern democracy, as well as a deeper understanding of the ideals that underpin this form of politics and its criticism.

*Borrowed from MPhil in Political Thought*