POL 3: International Organization (2022-23)

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Aims

POL 3 (International Organisation) aims to expand students’ knowledge and understanding of cooperation and conflict in the global system, expanding on themes and concepts introduced in POL 2. It does so by focusing on coordinated attempts to address global problems—both historically and in a contemporary setting—on the many forms such coordination takes, and on the role of norms, ideas, and power in these processes.

The course has the following objectives:

- to develop students’ understanding of the main theoretical approaches to the study of cooperation and conflict in international politics.
- to provide students with a basic grasp of the core purposes and functions of global governance institutions and actors (such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and various non-state actors, such as non-governmental organizations, global civil society networks and private regulatory organizations).

Paper Description

How can international organizations (IOs) help to address the range of global security, economic, human rights, and other problems we face today? How is power exercised over, within and by IOs? The course will analyse the role and functioning of major international institutions and IOs with the aims of (a) developing students’ understanding of how the current system of global governance has evolved, (b) encouraging students to consider whether and how current patterns of international cooperation solve global problems, and (c) inviting students to assess the extent to which processes of international cooperation entrench or reduce power inequalities in world politics.

At the theoretical level, the course will introduce students to competing perspectives on IOs, variously conceived as functional instruments of states in general or of great powers in particular, or as (semi)autonomous bureaucratic actors with interests and agency of their own.

At the empirical level, the course will explore how cooperation problems in areas of international security, trade and finance, international law and human rights are addressed by states, IOs and other international actors, including NGOs and private actors.
Course Structure

The paper is divided into four parts.

I. *The Historical Evolution of International Organization* focuses on international organization before international organizations. The lectures in this part examine the demand for institutionalized co-operation in world politics, before analyzing how co-operation is possible under anarchy.

II. *Perspectives on International Organization* surveys major theoretical and conceptual debates in International Relations relating to processes of international organization. Next, it introduces major theoretical approaches to the study of international institutions and international cooperation—including realist, rationalist, constructivist, and critical perspectives.

III. *Issues and Actors in Global Governance* focuses on practices of institutionalized cooperation among states and non-state actors in different areas of global politics—from international security to human rights, international law, environmental protection, trade, and financial regulation. In addition to analysing institutional cooperation in different domains of global politics, lectures in this part also consider the variety of different actors (states, sub-state agencies, IOs, NGOs, multi-national corporations, transnational crime syndicates, and courts) that both create and resolve these problems.

IV: *Looking into the Crystal Ball*. We end by considering the crisis of the ‘liberal international order’ and the potential for moving from global governance to global government.

Learning Aims

POL 3 aims to help students develop a theoretical as well as practical understanding of the major institutions that govern contemporary global affairs, the nature of the problems these institutions strive to solve, and the causes and consequences of the strategies adopted to address these problems. After completing the course, students should be able to articulate the leading theoretical explanations within the field of International Relations for why international organizations and other actors involved in global governance exist, how they operate, and how they influence the behaviour of both states and non-state actors. They should also be able to apply a range of theoretical arguments to analyse cases of international co-operation and conflict.

Teaching and Assessment

Students will be offered a total of 24 lectures and one revision lecture for the course. In addition, they will have five supervisions plus one revision supervision over the course of the academic year.

Supervisions are designed to allow in-depth discussion of the major themes and topics introduced in lectures in a small group setting.

Students will submit a 2000 to 2500 (max) words essay in advance of each supervision. The list of questions for each of the five mandatory supervisions can be found at the end of this course guide. Supervisors are free to either assign an essay question for you or give you freedom to choose. Please follow your supervisor’s lead. The supervisions will take place around weeks 3, 5 and 8 in Michaelmas term and weeks 2 and 4 in Lent term, with the revision supervision in Easter.

Preparation for Lectures and Supervisions

To get the most out of the paper, students are strongly encouraged to attend all the lectures, being fully prepared, that is, having completed the required readings for each lecture. The lectures and readings are designed to complement each other. A list of supplementary readings is provided for each lecture topic to enable students to broaden and deepen their knowledge of individual topics.
Assessment
Assessment will be by written examination in Easter Term. Students will have THREE hours to answer TWO questions. Questions will be broad and thematic, designed to encourage students to draw on and combine their knowledge of several lecture topics. A list of exam questions from the 2020/2021 and 2021/22 exam can be found at the end of the paper guide.

Readings
Below you will find a list of preparatory readings, grouped into two categories. The first category contains a few classic or important background texts in the field of IO. The second category is general textbooks on International Organization that you may wish to consult to gain a basic understanding of what types of IOs are out there and how they operate.

The assigned weekly readings consist predominantly of journal articles and book chapters, which will generally be available electronically from the University Library’s e-journal resources or e-books provisions.

BACKGROUND TEXTS (Consult all of these, if possible, during the summer break)


RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS (choose one or two of these to support you throughout the course).


List of Lectures

PART I: HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF IO

1. International Organization before International Organizations (MES)

Tuesday 11 October, 11:00-12:00 Room 6 – Lecture Block


Recommended


2. Achieving Co-operation under Anarchy: The Role of Institutions (MES)

Thursday 13 October, 11:00-12:00 Room 3 – lecture block


**Recommended**


**3. US Hegemony and World Order (AD)**

*Tuesday 18 October, 11:00-12:00 Room 6 – lecture block*


**Recommended**


**4. The Emergence of the Liberal International Order (AD)**

*Thursday 20 October, 11:00-12:00 Room 3 - lecture block*


Recommended


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**PART II. PERSPECTIVES ON IO**

**Wednesday 26 October, 13:00-14:00 Room 6 Lecture block**

5. **Co-operation under Anarchy: The Role of Power (M.E.S)**


Recommended


### 6. Rational Institutionalism (MES)

*Thursday 27 October, 11:00-12:00 Room 3- lecture block*


**Recommended**


### 7. Constructivist Perspectives (AD)

*Tuesday 1 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 6- Lecture block*


Recommended

8. Critical Perspectives (AD)
Thursday 3 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 3- lecture block

Recommended
PART III. ISSUES & ACTORS

9. Whose Global Economy? (JCS)

Tuesday 8 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 6 Lecture block


Recommended


Thursday 10 November, 11:00-12:00 – NO LECTURE THIS DAY

10. Making Poverty History? (AD)

Tuesday 15 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 6 Lecture block


Recommended


11. The UN Security Council: Power and Legitimacy (ME5)

*Thursday 17 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 3- Lecture block*


Recommended


12. International Peace Keeping (MES)

Tuesday 22 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 6-lecture block


Recommended


13. Governmentality (AD)

Thursday 24 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 3 - lecture block


Recommended


14. Governing the Internet (AD)

Tuesday 29 November, 11:00-12:00 Room 6 – lecture block


Recommended:

15. Corporations and Global Governance (JC3)

**Thursday 1 December, 11.00-12.00 Room 3- lecture block**


**Recommended**


LENT TERM

16. Governance by NGOs and Civil Society (M3S)
Tuesday 17 January, 11:00-12:00


Recommended


17. Protecting Human Rights (M3S)
Thursday 19 January, 11:00-12:00


Recommended


18. A More Effective System? Deliberation, NGOs, and Human Rights *(MES)*


**Recommended**


19. Epistemic Communities (AD)

Thursday 26 January, 11:00-12:00


Recommended


20. International Environmental Politics & Climate Change (AD)

Tuesday 31 January, 11:00-12:00


Recommended:


21. How Do International Courts Impact World Politics? (AD)

Thursday 2 February, 11:00-12:00


Recommended


PART III. THE CRYSTALL BALL

22. The Demise of the Liberal International Order? (AD)

Tuesday 7 February, 11:00-12:00


Recommended


23. From Global Governance to World Government? (MES)

Thursday 9 February, 11:00-12:00


**Recommended**


24: Exam Revision Lecture (MES)

Date TBA
Supervision Essay Questions

Supervision 1:
1. How does the assumption of anarchy affect the prospect of international cooperation? Compare and contrast how Realists, Liberals and Constructivists theorise anarchy and its consequences.

2. Select and compare two of the main theoretical approaches discussed in the lectures and readings for this course. According to these approaches, why and how do states cooperate?

3. Are IOs a constraint on state power or a creature or it?

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5. Barnett and Duvall argue that, "Since E.H. Carr, Realists have tended to treat power as the ability of one state to use material resources to get another state to do what it otherwise would not do. The tendency of the discipline to gravitate toward realism's view of power leads, ironically, to the underestimation of the importance of power in international politics." Evaluate this argument by discussing how other forms of power influence international politics.

Supervision 2:
6. Can international organizations defend and advance the interests of the poorer and weaker countries? As a general rule, do they?

7. Would the international trading system be more or less fair if the current system of global trade governance were abolished?

8. What explains UN Security Council decision-making on military intervention? Why do states resort to it?

9. Has the United Nations since 1945 helped to reduce the incidence of violence in world politics? In what areas has it proven more (or less) effective, and why?

Supervision 3:
10. Has the Internet led to a more democratic or a more authoritarian international order?

11. How can rankings shape state behaviour? Is this a positive feature of global governance?

12. To what extent can firms and NGOs substitute for states in addressing global problems?

13. How can governmental and non-governmental international organizations become autonomous from states? Is such autonomy good or bad?

Supervision 4:
can be best conceptualize and observe the impact of human rights law?

15. Are (I)NGOs or states better placed to advance Human Rights norms?

16. Which role(s) do knowledge and science play in international cooperation?

17. Why is cooperation over climate change proving so difficult?

**Supervision 5:**

18. How do international courts and tribunals shape the conduct of states and non-state actors? What factors explain their relative success or failure in doing so?

19. Will there be more or less international cooperation in the future? Deploy different theoretical perspectives to substantiate your answer.

20. Is a World State possible? Is it desirable?
1. Has the proliferation of international organisations over the last 100 years made anarchy-centred theories like realism obsolete?

2. Is the United Nations Security Council an effective and legitimate guardian of international peace and security?

3. Are rationalism and constructivism compatible when it comes to explaining aspects of international organisation? In your answer, refer to concrete examples of organisations or laws.

4. To what extent do you agree that international law is what states make of it?

5. Can sovereign equality overcome power hierarchies in international organisations?

6. How can we explain that human rights law is both widely adopted yet unevenly applied by states?

7. Some have suggested the United States should lead a “League of Democracies” to defend contemporary global governance. Analyse the potential virtues and drawbacks of this idea.

8. Does international organisation keep up with changing times, or does it tend to stay the same? Explain why.

9. Does the increasing involvement of NGOs in global governance make solving pressing global problems harder or easier? Address with examples from at least two distinct issue-areas (e.g. international security; human rights; international political economy, etc.)

10. International organisations consistently favour peace and the rule of law, while states’ commitments to these goals is patchy. Does this mean that transferring more power from states to IOs would more effectively fulfill these goals?

11. Is the leadership of a hegemon more or less important in providing global public goods in 2021 than immediately after 1945?

12. Would the world’s poor be better off, worse off, or about the same, in a world without IOs?

13. How can the global governance of climate change be improved?