All discussion of international politics rests on conceptual foundations and assumptions; these are sometimes made explicit and sometimes not. Disagreements about policy choices are often have their roots in disagreements about these conceptual foundations. This course examines the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of international politics, both inside and outside the discipline of International Relations.

It is intended to support students who have research projects that involve international politics by providing a range of examples of IR research and exploring their theoretical foundations and approaches to concepts.

Requirements

Class participation 50%

Final exam 50%

Required Texts


Schedule of Topics and Readings
Friday January 10th - Introductions


Thursday January 16th - talk by Helen Kinsella, 5pm.

Friday January 17th - Power


theme:
- consider variations in how ‘power’ is conceptualized in IR scholarship

Friday January 24th - Isms


themes:
- what if anything differentiates these approaches from each other?
- what if anything do they share?

Friday January 31st - no class

Friday February 7th - Norms, Ideas and Power


theme:
- how to conceptualize norms in IR

Friday February 14th - Global Order


themes:
- how to conceptualize global order
- liberal internationalism
- finding and hiding ‘politics’ in liberal internationalism

Friday February 21st - Emotion


theme:
- how to conceptualize emotions in IR scholarship

Friday February 28th - Method and Discipline


theme:
- identifying the faultlines in discussions of methods and the discipline of poli.sci.

Monday March 3rd -- talk by Brian Rathbun, noon Ripton room, on ‘Homo Diplomaticus: Mixed Method Evidence of Variation in Strategic Rationality.’

Friday March 7th - extra readings added due to schedule changes:
- Wendt, 1992
- Lake and Powell, intro chapter to Strategic Choice and World Politics
- Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998
- Robert Cox, 1986
- Helen Milner, 199
- Hafner-Burton