# Introduction to International Relations

## Prof. Alessandro Quarenghi

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the tools for interpreting the dynamics of the international political system, starting from the study of some of its constitutive elements, its formation and evolution, its main players, the typical topics of international relations as well as issues which are at the top of today’s international political agenda: democracy, terrorism, environment, migrations and development. Part of the course will focus on the study of the *academic subject* of International Relations: students will analyse the main theoretical approaches that have characterised its development, and then apply them to the study of specific cases.

At the end of the course, students will be familiar with constitutive elements of the international system and with processes which guide its changes. Students will be able to trace the emergence of the international system and use models and interpretative perspectives which have developed within the academic subject, and apply them to the interpretation of contemporary events and processes. In addition, students will learn scientific research techniques, apply their own academic perspectives to the analysis of a contemporary case, improve their ability to work in groups and present their ideas to a group of peers.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Introduction: international relations.

1) The development of the international system

- Origins and the multipolar era

- The bipolar era

- The unipolar era: globalization and security

- Current shifts and issues

2) The players

- The state

- Economic players

- International and supranational organisations

- Non-governmental organisations and international regimes

- The European Union.

3) International relations and its development

- Realism and neorealism

- Liberalism

- Marxism, neo-Marxism and critical theory

- The “English school”

- Analysing foreign policy

- Constructivism

- Postmodernism

- International political economy

***READING LIST***

In addition to the lecture notes, the syllabus includes:

J. Grieco, G. J. Ikenberry – M. Mastanduno, *Introduzione alle Relazioni Internazionali. Domande fondamentali e prospettive contemporanee,*Utet università, 2017

Students who choose to participate in the group work proposal will have a partially modified reading list, which will be communicated to them during the first lecture of the course, compared to those students who choose not to participate.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be carried out mainly through lectures. A small group work will be proposed to students able to participate in the lectures: the analysis of a case or contemporary issue through the perspective and concepts offered by one of the perspectives of the academic discipline of International Relations. The course may include topical seminars and expert testimonies.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The examination is in written form for all sessions and is content-based. Assessment will be based on appropriateness of students’ answers to questions, on the level demonstrated in the written examination as well as linguistic and conceptual accuracy.

The exam for students who did not participate in the group work is in two parts: the first part consists of six closed questions (1 mark each); the second part consists of 3 questions (8 marks each) from a choice of 4 questions. The mark is determined 100% by the final examination.

The exam for students who participated in the group work is in two parts: the first part consists of 6 closed questions (1 mark each); the second part consists of 3 questions (8 marks each) from a choice of 6 questions. The mark is determined 70% by the final mark. The remaining 30% is determined by the group work, assessment of which is based on students’ research skills and therefore quality of students’ knowledge of the case study, ability and originality in students’ use of the theoretical perspective, as well as students’ communication skills.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have basic knowledge of geography, history and law. Furthermore, students should be aware of major contemporary issues and events in international politics. This information should be gathered by regularly reading national and international newspapers before the course starts. It presupposes, moreover, an interest in understanding the issues, dynamics and processes of contemporary international politics.

Although it is not compulsory, participation in lectures and the proposed group work is strongly recommended, as it allows students both to develop skills in communication and in the management of group dynamics, as well as to empirically use international relations theory approaches, thus developing knowledge and understanding.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.