



*International Relations Theory (RRII)*  
*Guía docente 2025-26*

**INTRODUCTION**

**Course Description:**

International Relations is an interdisciplinary subject of study that is usually approached through history, political science or law. International Relations theory, however, perhaps constitutes the only corpus of literature that provides the subject of International Relations its distinctiveness. Therefore, this course which attempts to provide an overview of the various theories of International Relations is arguably the most important course in the study of international relations.

In today's world, there is no scarcity of information, there is, in fact, what is being called a "data smog". With such overwhelming access to information, it is critical to have the tools to sort through these facts and to make sense of these facts. Theory in general, and specific to IR serves the same purpose. It helps understand and explain various international phenomena by providing us with unique lenses to sort through the facts. The course will attempt to provide the students with a detailed overview of the various schools of IR such as Realism, Liberalism, Marxism, Constructivism and other post-positivist schools of IR. The field of IR Theory has also been exploring the impact of posthuman factors such as Artificial Intelligence, Climate Change and pandemics on the way the discipline is studied. By the end of this course the students would have made a self-informed and deliberate choice amongst the various schools of IR, which will shape their understanding of the world. The course will seek to explain the various schools of IR through the analysis of past and current international events thus making the subject application oriented. This will provide the students with very practical tools that will come to their aid in real life scenarios and work environments. The objective of the course is also to hone the critical and analytical skills of the students while providing them with the required knowledge.

- **Degree:** International Relations
- **Module:** International Relations Theory
- **ECTS:**3
- **Year:**First Year, First Semester
- **Type of Course:** Obligatorio(Compulsory)
- **Instructor:** Dr. Shahana Thankachan
- **Language:** English
- **Lecture Schedule:** Thursday, 10:00-11:30, AMI-S1-Aula B1

**RESULTADOS DE APRENDIZAJE (Competencias)**

CB2	Que los estudiantes sepan aplicar sus conocimientos a su trabajo o vocación de una forma profesional y posean las competencias que suelen demostrarse por medio de la elaboración y defensa de argumentos y la resolución de problemas dentro de su área de estudio
CB3	Que los estudiantes tengan la capacidad de reunir e interpretar datos relevantes (normalmente dentro de su área de estudio) para emitir juicios que incluyan una reflexión sobre temas relevantes de índole social, científica o ética



CB4	Que los estudiantes puedan transmitir información, ideas, problemas y soluciones a un público tanto especializado como no especializado
CG01	Analizar, valorar y razonar las diferentes situaciones internacionales a la luz de los conocimientos adquiridos.
CG04	Usar el inglés con propiedad según la terminología científica y académica propia de la Relaciones internacionales.
CG08	Manejar con destreza las nuevas tecnologías de la información y comunicación aplicándolas a las relaciones internacionales.
CE01	Conocer los conceptos y técnicas aplicadas al análisis de los actores y relaciones internacionales.
CE02	Analizar la naturaleza y características de las relaciones entre los actores internacionales y particularmente entre los Estados.
CE05	Conocer y comprender las teorías y concepciones de las relaciones internacionales en perspectiva histórica.
CE09	Comprender la estructura, competencias y funcionamiento de las instituciones y organizaciones internacionales.
CE14	Conocer y analizar la cooperación internacional como elemento fundamental en la reducción de las desigualdades y la pobreza, conociendo los mecanismos para la implementación de la ayuda al desarrollo.
CE16	Analizar los diferentes conflictos internacionales, sus causas, desarrollo y efectos sobre los países y la sociedad internacional.



CE17	Analizar los problemas jurídicos y sociales que se derivan de las relaciones internacionales en todos los ámbitos con base en el conocimiento adecuado de los principios y normas de Derecho internacional.
CE18	Analizar las realidades internacionales (económica, social y política) como método de prevención de focos de conflicto.

## PROGRAMA

### **I. *The Nuts and Bolts of IR Theory: Introduction***

#### **Topics:**

- What is IR Theory and why do we need it?
- Classification and Debates in IR Theory

#### **Readings**

##### Compulsory

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

##### Recommended

Kenneth N. Waltz, "Laws and Theories" in his Theory of International Politics; J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations" World Politics, 14 (1), October 1961, pp. 77-92;

### **II. *Pessimism Galore?: Classical Realism***

#### **Topics:**

- Elements of Realism
- Classical Realism -Thucydides Machiavelli, Hobbes and the Security Dilemma, Kautilya, Sun Tzu

#### **Readings:**

##### Compulsory

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

##### Recommended

Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue," History of the Peloponnesian War; Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince, Chs 14-20,21

Kautilya, The Arthashastra- Part III,X and XI; Sun Tzu, The Art of War,

### **III. *The many faces of Realism:***



**Topics:**

- Neorealism, Strategic Realism, Hegemonic Realism, Defensive and Offensive Realism, and Neoclassical Realism

**Readings:**

Compulsory

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

Recommended

Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 3-26; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Political Structures", from *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 79-101; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," *Journal of International Affairs* 44 (1) (Spring-Summer 1990), pp. 21-37.

Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics," *International Security*, 17 (1) Summer 1992, pp. 177-98; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, chapters 1 & 2; Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, 51 (1), 1998, pp. 144-72; Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18:4 (Spring 1988), pp. 591-613; Mohammed Ayoob, "Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory Meets the Third World," Stephanie Neuman, ed., *International Relations Theory and the Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 31-54

**IV. *Cautious optimism or unbridled idealism?: Liberal Theory in IR***

**Topics:**

- Classical Liberal Theory, Sociological Liberalism, Interdependence School
- Institutional Liberalism, Republicanism, Neorealist Critique of Liberalism

**Readings:**

Compulsory

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

Recommended

Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. 3-31; John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett, "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations, 1885-1992," *World Politics*, 52:1 (October 1999), pp. 1-37.

G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0," *Perspectives on Politics* 7:1 (March 2009), pp. 71-87; Kenneth Oye, "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies," *World Politics* 38:1 (October 1985), pp. 1-24; Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 80:4 (December 1986), pp. 1151-69.

**V. *International Society/English school: state or the individual?***

**Topics:**

- Basic International Society Approach; The Three Traditions: Theory; The Three Traditions: Practice; Order and Justice; Statecraft and Responsibility

**Readings:**

Compulsory



# Universidad de Navarra

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

## Recommended

Hedley Bull, "The Emergence of a Universal International Society" & "The Revolt Against the West," Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, pp. 117-126 & 217-228.

Alex J. Bellamy, "Introduction: The English School and International Society," Alex J. Bellamy (ed.), *International Society and its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 1-26;

## **VI: *Constructivism: "Anarchy is what states make of it"***

### **Topics:**

- Cultures of Anarchy; Norms of International Society; The Power of International Organizations; Domestic Formation of Identity and Norms

### **Readings:**

#### Compulsory

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

#### Recommended

Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (2), Spring 1992, pp. 391-425; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4, 2001, pp. 391-416.

## **VII: *International Political Economy: "Is it all about the money?"***

### **Topics:**

- Mercantilism, Economic Liberalism, Marxism and Gramscian IR

### **Readings:**

#### Compulsory

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen

#### Recommended

Andrew Linklater, "Marxism," Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, et al, eds., *Theories of International Relations*, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2005, second edition, pp. 129-154; Alex Callinicos, "Does Capitalism Need the State System?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20 (4), 2007, pp. 533-549.

## **VIII: *Post-Positivist Theories in IR: "Reality is contingent, interpretative and unstable"***

### **Topics:**

- Post-structuralism, post-colonialism and Feminist Theory

### **Readings:**

#### Compulsory



# Universidad de Navarra

Relevant Chapter from "Introduction to international relations : theories and approaches" /Robert Jackson, Georg Sørensen.

## Recommended

Jacqui True, "Feminism," Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, eds., *Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 210-251; J. Ann Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17 (3), 1988, pp. 429-440.

## *IX. Posthuman and Environmental IR: How to study IR in the age of AI, pandemics and climate change*

## ACTIVIDADES FORMATIVAS

### I. CLASSROOM TEACHING ACTIVITIES

1. **Lectures:** Most classes will include lectures given by the Professor using the blackboard, powerpoint slides, videos and audio clips. The slides will be posted on ADI before each class. The students are required to engage with the lectures and participate in class.
2. **Seminars:** (They Include)
  1. Lectures on current topics by the Professor or by a guest lecturer who might be a practitioner or expert of the field.
  2. Group presentations on a topic related to the subject. The students have to choose from a list of topics provided by the Professor. Students will be divided into groups of 5-6, and are required to conduct a thorough investigation of their topic and make presentation before the class in a format of their choosing. Each presentation will be followed by a discussion.
  3. Responses to students questions by the Professor and classmates.
  4. Discussion of the pre-assigned reading at the end of every class.
3. **Evaluation:** Exams to assess the successful accomplishment of the objectives.

### II. PERSONAL WORK

1. The students have to devote regular study hours outside of the lectures to gain the maximum from the subject.
2. The students are compulsorily required to come prepared to class having read the pre-assigned reading in order to fully understand the lecture. The students should also be able to display their understanding of the reading and the lecture through their engagement with the instructor and other classmates during the lecture.



3. The students are required to study the powerpoint slides provided by the instructor, take notes during the lecture to use it for study, and also study the compulsory readings assigned for the subject.
4. The students also have the conduct research and prepare a group presentation.

**III. Credits/hours distribution of the activities. 3 ECTS= 75 h**

1. Lectures 30 h
2. Seminars 13 h
3. Evaluation 2 h

---

Total classroom activities 45 h

4. Personal work 30 h

---

Total 3 ECTS 75 h

## EVALUACIÓN

FINAL EXAM	50%
MID-TERM EXAM	20%
GROUP PRESENTATIONS	20%
CLASS PARTICIPATION, DEBATE AND DISCUSSIONS	10%

### **Class Participation and Debates: 10%**

The students will be assessed for active participation and engagement in the classroom. The participation and performance of the students in the debates and discussions initiated by the professor at the end of every class, will also be assessed. Students will also be judged for class preparation and regular reading of course material.

### **Mid-Term Exam: 20%**

A partial exam will be conducted in the middle of the semester. Please refer to the chronogram to check the date. The student is required to study everything taught in the course until the date of the exam. The exam will be a combination of Multiple Choice Questions .

### **Group Presentations: 20%**

The most important role of theory is to help us understand and make sense of the world around us. Therefore in order to test the understanding of various theories taught in this course, the



# Universidad de Navarra

students will be required to make presentations of case studies through the prism of the various theories of IR.

The students will be divided into different groups for this exercise, and the teacher will randomly assign a case study to each group. A list of case studies based on major past and current international events will be provided by the teacher. Detailed instructions regarding the presentation and the criteria for evaluation will be provided during class.

## Final Written Exam: 50%

The final exam will and will consist of a series of questions in which the student must demonstrate the acquisition of factual and theoretical knowledge and conceptual clarity acquired from the content taught in class. The exam will also evaluate whether students can translate theoretical concepts into practical application. The written exam will include long essay type questions and multiple choice questions. The students need to study the slides provided by the Professor and the compulsory readings for each topic. The students need to study the entire content of the course, including the part covered in the partial exam.

## Criteria to pass the course

- Students whose final grade is 5 points or more will pass the course.
- Students whose final grade is below 5 points will not pass the course and will be graded as *Suspense*.
- Students who do not take the final exam will not pass the course and will be graded as *No presentado*.

## Exams review

- Students will be able to review the exams in an interview with the professor, after publication of the grades, in a day and place that will be indicated.

## CONVOCATORIA EXTRAORDINARIA

- If the students fail to attain a GPA of 5, and does not pass the subject, they will get another chance to write a single exam in June. This exam will be worth 100% of the total grade of the subject. If the student does not pass this exam either, they will have to retake the subject the next academic year.

## HORARIOS DE ATENCIÓN

Dr. Shahana Thankachan .....([sthankachan@unav.es](mailto:sthankachan@unav.es))

- Despacho 1721, Edificio- Biblioteca Central Planta 1
- Horario de tutoría: Monday- 1400-1500; Tuesday -1200-1300

## BIBLIOGRAFÍA

### Bibliography and Resources

The students have to compulsorily follow the textbook "JACKSON, R. & SORENSEN, G., Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Approaches", 2022, Eighth Edition. The students are advised to have a personal copy with them. The book is easily available on Amazon Spain. [https://www.amazon.es/Introduction-International-Relations-Georg-S-C3-B8rensen-dp-0198862202/dp/0198862202/ref=dp\\_ob\\_title\\_bk](https://www.amazon.es/Introduction-International-Relations-Georg-S-C3-B8rensen-dp-0198862202/dp/0198862202/ref=dp_ob_title_bk)



# Universidad de Navarra

The students are also advised to get into the habit of reading academic articles that are recommended for the course as part of each topic. This will greatly enhance their understanding of the course. The students can also find some copies of the latest copies of the compulsory textbook in the university library.

## Compulsory Textbook

JACKSON, R. & SORENSEN, G., *Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Approaches*, Eighth Edition, Oxford University Press (OUP), Oxford and New York, 2022 (Student Online Resource Centre: [www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/jackson\\_sorensen6e](http://www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/jackson_sorensen6e)). [Localízalo en la Biblioteca \(ed. 2016\)](#) [Localízalo en la Biblioteca \(Ed. 2022\)](#)

## Recommended Readings

Kenneth N. Waltz, "Laws and Theories" in his *Theory of International Politics*; J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations" *World Politics*, 14 (1), October 1961, pp. 77-92;

Thucydides, "The Melian Dialogue," *History of the Peloponnesian War*; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 50-59. Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, pp. 541-579; Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, pp. 72-99;

Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 3-26; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Political Structures", from *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 79-101; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory," *Journal of International Affairs* 44 (1) (Spring-Summer 1990), pp. 21-37.

Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics," *International Security*, 17 (1) Summer 1992, pp. 177-98; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, chapters 1 & 2; Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, 51 (1), 1998, pp. 144-72; Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18:4 (Spring 1988), pp. 591-613; Mohammed Ayoob, "Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory Meets the Third World," Stephanie Neuman, ed., *International Relations Theory and the Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 31-54

Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. 3-31; John R. Oneal and Bruce Russett, "The Kantian Peace: The Pacific Benefits of Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations, 1885-1992," *World Politics*, 52:1 (October 1999), pp. 1-37.

G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0," *Perspectives on Politics* 7:1 (March 2009), pp. 71-87; Kenneth Oye, "Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies," *World Politics* 38:1 (October 1985), pp. 1-24; Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 80:4 (December 1986), pp. 1151-69.

Hedley Bull, "The Emergence of a Universal International Society" & "The Revolt Against the West," Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, pp. 117-126 & 217-228.

Alex J. Bellamy, "Introduction: The English School and International Society," Alex J. Bellamy (ed.), *International Society and its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 1-26;

Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (2), Spring 1992, pp. 391-425; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4, 2001, pp. 391-416.

Andrew Linklater, "Marxism," Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, et al, eds., *Theories of International Relations*, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2005, second edition, pp. 129-154; Alex Callinicos, "Does Capitalism Need the State System?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 20 (4), 2007, pp. 533-549.



Universidad  
de Navarra

Jacqui True, "Feminism," Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, eds., *Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 210-251; J. Ann Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17 (3), 1988, pp. 429-440.

### Useful Links to IR Journals

Cambridge Review of International Affairs, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccam20>

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://carnegieendowment.org/>

Contemporary Politics, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccpo20>

European Journal of International Relations, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Foreign Affairs, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Foreign Policy, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Foreign Policy Analysis, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Harvard International Review, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

International Organization, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

International Affairs, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

International Studies Quarterly, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

International Studies Review, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

International Studies Perspectives, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

International Theory, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Perspectives on Politics, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Review of International Studies, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

Washington Quarterly, <https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/>

World Policy Journal, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

World Politics, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics>

The World Today, [Localízalo en la Biblioteca](#)

YaleGlobal Online, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/>