Syllabus

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS - 58528

Last update 29-10-2014

HU Credits:  4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: International Relations

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Piki Ish-Shalom

Coordinator Email: pikiis@huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday 1430-1530

Teaching Staff:
  Prof Piki Ish-Shalom
Course/Module description:
Theory is an important academic tool, but it is also a fascinating social phenomenon and a powerful socio-political mechanism. As such theories have political lives that researchers should study. Some relevant examples are the role that the democratic peace thesis played in the Iraq War, and the functioning of Joseph Nye's soft power in the Obama administration. Thus, alongside mainstream questions that are concerned with how to use theories to better explain events and patterns, we can also raise critical questions about the essence of theory, its relations to other idea phenomena like morality and ideology. Accordingly we will discuss the moral and social responsibilities of theorists, their positioning vis-à-vis the government and civil society, and how ought they discharge their responsibilities.

Course/Module aims:
Learning and questioning the essence of theory and its political functioning, as well as the responsibilities of theorists, and to understand how political theory can benefit social scientists.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
To examine the role of theory in the social world
To identify the real-world ramifications of theory
To evaluate real-world ramifications of theory
To explain the role of theory in the social world
To criticize the way we theorize
To judge the ways theorists discharge their responsibilities

Attendance requirements(%):
100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Discussions in class and independent research

Course/Module Content:
Is IR theory scientific?

Evaluating scientific progress

The political lives of theory

The responsibility of theorists

Required Reading:
Introduction


Is IR theory scientific?


K. J. Holsti, “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Which are the Fairest Theories of All,” International Studies Quarterly 33/3 (September 1989), pp. 255-261.


Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979), chapter 1.

Colin Wight, “Philosophy of Social Science and International Relations,” in Handbook of International Relations, pp. 23-51.

(December 1991), pp. 363-386.

Ole Weaver, “The Rise and Fall of the Inter-Paradigm Debate,” in Smith, Booth, and Zalewski, International Theory: Positivism and Beyond, pp. 149-185.

Evaluating scientific progress


William Wohlforth, “Reality Check- Revising Theories of International Politics in Response to the End of the Cold War,” World Politics 50 (July 1998).


Power


(2005): 803-826.


The Political Lives of theories


Bruce Kuklick, Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger (Princeton University Press, 2007).


The responsibilities of theorists


Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 25 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 50 %
Assignments 25 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:
A short term paper. The paper's length is 2-3 pages.
The deadline for handing in the paper will be scheduled according to the progress of the course.

A final research (seminar) paper will be handed by the end of September 2014. Its length is up to 30 pages (for technical details see Hebrew version). The subject of the paper must be authorized by me.