

Part IIA Paper 5(c)
International Relations I
Politics, Psychology and Sociology Tripos
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Paper Content

The subject of International Relations (usually given capital letters, as opposed to international relations as events) has a huge range. Some see it as covering everything that has happened on the globe during recorded history, and requiring a multidisciplinary approach to do justice to it. This is not the approach taken here, not least for reasons of manageability. Although the course still has a wide scope, it is structured around four main themes, each of which takes a different 'cut' at the subject and selects certain key areas of knowledge, or debates, from which (in conjunction with your supervisor) you may choose your topics for supervisions. The themes are as follows:

- (1) *History* – the way the international system has evolved from a world in which the interaction between continents was limited, through the rising predominance of the European states system and balance of power, to the current post-imperial and multi-level structure, which has 192 states as members of the United Nations, together with a small number of unrecognised states, thousands of international organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, and even more private sector 'international actors'.
- 2) *Order*: What are the key concepts of international relations, and how is such order as exists in international politics sustained? What are the respective roles played by states, regions, organisations, law and economic exchange in the international political system?
- 3) *War*, as a major part of the human experience – what it represents, why it happens, and what are its effects. Is war in decline, or simply changing its nature?
- (4) *Ethics*: what is it reasonable to expect of states in terms of ethical behaviour in international relations? How may competing ethical systems, or cultural traditions, be reconciled in a world which is both globalising and competitive? What are the major moral dilemmas thrown up at the global level?

Aims and Objectives

The course aims to introduce students to the subject of International Relations (IR), whose main focus is the nature of politics at the international level. Students should acquire the empirical and conceptual foundations needed to understand a complex world which is neither pure anarchy nor close to any form of global government. The starting point is the notion of 'international society', which refers to the set of institutions and common procedures generated by states over the last three and a half centuries in their attempts to manage co-existence, but which has evolved to include many non-state actors and a number of different levels of activity – military, diplomatic, economic and cultural. By the end of the course you should be able to have an informed discussion about the historical origins of the present system, what is distinctive about international politics as opposed to politics inside the state, and the main challenges which confront humanity in the twenty-first century.

Modes of teaching

The paper is taught by a combination of 24 lectures, six hours of supervision, and two classes in the Easter term. The lectures will usually be accompanied by an illustrative outline on PowerPoint, which will subsequently be made available on CamTools. This outline is **not** a full summary of the lecture, and thus not a substitute for attendance. In their turn the lectures are intended to provide a structure for your work, and must be built upon by your reading and by your supervisory discussions.

There will be two lectures a week in the Michaelmas term and one a week in the Lent term. The classes in the Easter term are provided as a way of pulling together the main ideas and themes examined in the course, and of assisting you in your revision.

Mode of Assessment

There will be a three hour unseen examination paper in the Easter term, in which you will be required to answer three questions from a choice of twelve. These questions will focus on the four main themes outlined above. In the reading list which follows lists of essay questions for supervisions are given at the end of each of the four sections. Last year's examination paper is provided at the end of this guide. Given that this is only the second year in which the course has been offered, a further sample paper is also attached.

Reading

The following books are recommended both for preparatory reading before the course, and for background during it. All of the below, except for Brown and Ainsley, and Mayall, both of which reward reading straight through, are best read selectively, according to interest. The course is not designed around any single book, but if you wish to purchase one or two for regular reference then those by Baylis et. al and Hanhimaki et. al. would be the best investments.

Baylis, John, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (eds.), *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations* 5th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). This best-selling text covers a wide range of theoretical and empirical material, with the help of boxes and other study aids. Its overviews are reliable starting points for many of the issues which you will encounter.

Brown, Chris and Kirsten Ainsley, *Understanding International Relations*, 4th edition, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). This is the most coherent and concise introduction available. It has a theoretical leaning but always stays close to real world concerns. It is written in a lively and engaging style.

Hanhimaki, Jussi, Joseph A. Maiolo, Kirsten Schulze, and Anthony Best, 2nd edition, *An International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2008). This collaborative work provides comprehensive coverage of world history since 1900, broken down by periods and by regions.

Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomacy* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1994). As the twentieth century's most famous scholar-diplomat Kissinger's views on the 'high politics' of great power politics deserve attention. This is both a stylish history of international relations and an exposition of realist thought.

Mayall, James, *World Politics: Progress and its Limits* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000). Professor Mayall, a member of POLIS and a Fellow of Sidney Sussex, produced in this book a marvel of compression. Its 155 pages contain incisive discussion of the main ideas, institutions and debates in international society, from a broadly English School (or liberal) perspective.

Watson, Adam, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992). (eBook: <http://search.lib.cam.ac.uk/?itemid=eresources|5011715>). This is a lucid account of how human societies since the earliest times have dealt with each other, forming what we now call 'states-systems'. It is divided into three sections: the ancient world; European international society; and global international society.

Please contact the Faculty of Politics, Psychology, Sociology and International Studies for further information.

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