Course objectives
The course aims at facilitating a discussion of some of the issues currently debated in International Relations theory. The course is centred around some of the theoretical debates in contemporary International Relations theory and is aimed at enhancing students’ ability to analyse the way various theoretical approaches are constructed and interact with each other. Although this puts together rather diverse approaches, all of them are united by their focus on the place of language in IR theorising. What is really in question, however, is the relation between language and politics. This does not mean that students are expected to convert to the ‘linguistic turn’ in IR regardless of their individual research focus. In fact, one of the tasks of the course is to critically question the validity of any theoretical turn. So students must focus primarily on their own research questions but learn to relate them to the theoretical debates and practical concerns that animate the field as a whole. Being an important theoretical skill in its own right, this exercise should also contribute to the students’ ability to meet one of the specific requirements of a doctoral project: awareness of the state-of-the-art theoretical discussions within the discipline.

Accordingly, both in their oral presentations for specific seminars and the two papers required for the course students are expected not merely to discuss the texts included in the syllabus but to draw on the literature from their respective sub-fields and to show how/why the questions raised in the texts from the syllabus may be important for the better understanding of those sub-fields. Put differently, the main outcome of this course is students’

Aims
The course’s main aim is to provide students with a strong understanding of:

➢ theorising in international relations;
➢ the way theories evolve as answers to context-specific questions;
➢ how these contexts in turn are shaped by practices;
➢ how advances in understanding, once these occur, may be seen as outcomes of dialogical engagements between theories.
Learning outcomes
By the end of the course students will:

✓ enhance their ability to place their own research-questions into the overall context of IR theorising, on the one hand, and the possible configuration of global political order, on the other;
✓ critically engage with ideas discussed by various theorists and schools of thought;
✓ get an overview or some of the state-of-the-art theorising in the filed.

Course outline

Requirements:
Active participation in the seminar - 20%
Presentation - 20%
Midterm essay (circa 5,000 words) - 30%
Final essay (circa 5,000 words) - 30%

Week 1
Seminars 1 & 2
Introduction and general discussion, allocation of assignments

Week 2
Seminar 3

Seminar 4
Hannah Arendt, 'Introduction into Politics': 153-200.

Week 3
Seminar 5

Seminar 6

Week 4
Seminar 7

Seminar 8

**Week 5**
Seminar 9

Seminar 10

**Week 6**
Seminar 11

Seminar 12

**Week 7**
Seminar 13

Seminar 14
Week 8
Seminar 15

Seminar 16
Hayden V. White, Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground, History and Theory, 12, 1, 1973: 23-54.

Week 9
Seminar 17

Seminar 18

Readings for the next three seminars will be selected based on the discussions in class.

Week 10
Seminar 19
TBA

Seminar 20
TBA

Week 11
Seminar 21
TBA

Seminar 22
TBA

Week 12
Seminars 23 & 24
Concluding discussion