The purpose of the course is to give students a sense, and explore a part, of the vastness of the archive that contains both major and minor knowledges, vocabularies and intellectual resources to make world politics thinkable and to problematize it in different ways. Many of these “languages” and concepts play only minor roles in how many of us, in everyday (academic) life, in traditional and new media, communicate about, listen to and understand world politics. They are marginalised in or excluded from the everyday and its phenomenologies. After covering the main “languages” and concepts that constitute what might be called the inherited common sense in the study of world politics (constructivist, liberal, realist IR), the course will thus turn towards thought that operates, at a shorter or greater distance, from what a great 20th century German thinker (T. Adorno) referred to as thinking structured by “the continuity of the familiar”. This will be done both by looking at particular vocabularies or approaches such as feminist and Marxist IR, as well as by looking at particular issues. We will thus problematise the agency/freedom couple by thinking about subjectivation; hear about unexpected forms of resistance to the neoliberal structuration of the world; ask ourselves what the arguments are for thinking that geopolitical multiplicity will persist versus arguments that we are heading towards a world state; we will ask ourselves how the discursive and the non-discursive can be thought together; and we will inquire into how we and the communities in which we live are governed by often invisible technologies of power.

The course should be of interest to those who think, or have a feeling, that our neoliberal world is not, or should not be, the unsurpassable horizon of thinking and acting. At the same time, it should also be of interest to those who think with Hegel and Fukuyama that humankind’s ideological development has come to an end with liberal market societies, but who understand that this does not mean an end to history. History always throws up new problems and challenges, and we cannot expect to solve them if we are stuck in the intellectual clearing that we inhabit and that encloses us. We will need to break out from these beaten paths and think new and variegated ideas to be in a position to solve the new problems of the future.

Aims
- The aim of the course is to introduce students to both mainstream and alternative theoretical approaches to the study of world politics;
- enable them to see research on world politics and foreign policy as historically and culturally contingent practice;
- equip them with the cognitive skills required to critically analyse world politics;
- enable them to recognise that empirical research is invested with interests, values and norms.

Learning Outcomes
✓ By the end of the course students will be able to compare, contrast and evaluate different interpretations and explanations of world politics;
✓ detect the ontological assumptions that are the launch pad for empirical investigations;
✓ recognise the interpretative possibilities in any given world political phenomena;
✓ critically reflect upon and evaluate their own standpoints on world politics and those of others;
✓ distinguish between a well-reasoned argument about world politics and an incoherent one.

Method of Assessment
Each student will be assessed through a combination of seminar contributions, oral presentations, written work and an exam.
The final grade is made up of the following components:

1. Seminar attendance (mandatory) and participation (20%).
2. Seminar presentation of assigned texts (20%). Students are expected to give a 20 – 30 minute presentations on one of the seminar readings. Presentation guidelines are posted on the e-learning site.
3. Within 2 weeks of the oral presentation, students have to submit a written position paper of about 2000 words on their readings (30%).
4. Final Exam (30%)
5. Please note that these requirements may be modified depending on how many students enrol in the course.

Schedule of Seminars & Readings

1. **Seminar 1: Introduction**
   This first seminar will act as a brief introductory seminar where the nature of the course will be discussed, together with the goals and expectations of both the students and the course convenor/TA. Moreover, student presentations will be assigned.

2. **Seminar 2: no class**
   Preparatory Reading

I. THINKING WITH(ALONGSIDE)/BENEATH THE MOST POWERFUL ACTORS IN THE WORLD

**Constructivist IR**

3. **The Constructivist Paradigm 1**

4. **The Constructivist Paradigm 2**

Further Readings:

5. **International Institutions: Norms, Rules & Identities**

Further Readings:

### Liberal IR

6. **Liberal IR Theory - Overviews**

Further Readings:

7. **Global Order & Governance**

Further Readings:

8. Movie 1 - *Wag the Dog*

II. COUNTER-THEORISING

**Realist IR**

9. *Structural Realisms 1: Defensive vs Offensive Realism*


Further readings on realism (histories, overviews, critiques):

10. *Structural Realisms 2: To Balance or Not to Balance*


Further Readings:
Feminism and the International

11. Feminist Critiques


Additional Readings:


Historical Materialism and the International

12. Historical Materialist IR


Additional Readings:


13. Movie 2 – The Cuban Missile Crisis

III. TOPICS/THEMES IN COUNTER-THEORIZING
Focus on the Human/Non-Human or Material/Non-Material Divide

14. The Entanglement of Materiality & Meaning: Cultural Political Economy:

Additional readings

15. The Non-Modern Turn: New Materialism & the Agentiality of Vibrant Matter

Additional readings:

16. Critiques of the Non-Modern Turn:

Additional readings:

Single Topics

17. Many States or An Emerging Global State

Additional readings
Cambridge Review of International Affairs, special issue 2007, issue 4

18. **Subject Manufacturing**

- Butler, The Psychic Life of Power Theories in Subjection, chapter 3

**Additional readings**


19. **Neoliberalism & Forms of Resistance**


20. **Genealogies in How to Constitute and Govern a Realm of Normality**


**Additional Readings:**


21. **Wrap-up**

22. **Final Exam**