

LSE WAR, POWER & MORALITY: POLITICAL THEORY & INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Overview

The course will provide both an introduction to political theory and to key approaches to international relations.

By examining the development of international political theory, from the Ancient Greeks to the present, this course will explore and criticise theories and arguments that have been offered to defend or challenge the power of political communities and explain the sources and varieties of conflict and cooperation that can occur within and beyond political communities.

The course will examine the ideas of great political thinkers from Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes to Kant, Hegel and Marx as well as the use to which these arguments have been put in the world of politics and international relations by contemporary thinkers. These thinkers and the concepts they identify and use will provide us with a window into the structures that shape much international politics such as states' rights and international humanitarian obligations; the nature and status of international law, and the prospects for global democracy and democratisation.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.

Outcomes

The course will provide both an introduction to political theory and to key approaches to international relations.

Key topics

- The polis at war- Thucydides and Classical Realism
- The emergence of natural law and the law of nations
- Just wars, European conquests and slavery- Augustine to Vitoria
- Machiavelli- reasons of state and the art of war
- Hobbes- the pure theory of Sovereignty
- Natural rights, conquest and colonial expansion- Grotius, Pufendorf and Locke
- Commercial society: Montesquieu, Hume and Smith
- Rousseau, Autarchy, independence, and Republican freedom
- Kant, liberalism and global peace
- Hegel, the modern state and war
- Marx- capitalism and globalisation and the overcoming of the State
- The law of peoples: states and globalism and non-state actors.

Course structure and assessments

The structure of this course will be a mixture of lectures and classes. The assessment will consist of an essay (worth 25% of the mark) and a two hour exam (worth 75% of the final mark).

Reading materials

- The main course readings can be found in:
- C. Brown, T. Nardin and N. Rengger eds., *International Relations in Political Thought*, Cambridge University Press (2002).

See also D. Boucher and P. Kelly eds., *Political Thinkers: from Socrates to the Present*, 2nd edition (2009).

- Students should purchase both books. Additional reading and lecture notes will be available online on the course Moodle page.