



Department of Politics and International Relations, PGT Optional Courses, 2018/19

PR5418 Contemporary Continental Political Thought, Professor Nathan Widder

The course aims to introduce students to key questions and arguments concerning the relationship between identity, power, meaning and knowledge, through examination of key figures in contemporary Continental political thought. It should lead students to appreciate critiques of modern Western societies and their values, which not only underpin recent “postmodernist” or “post-structuralist” thought, but also form crucial theoretical elements in debates about gender, multiculturalism, nationalism, post-colonialism, new social movements, etc., across the social sciences. It aims to develop in students the ability to critically reflect about the nature and scope of politics and ethics through engagement with texts that have sought to provide insights and new ways of thinking about these realms.

Assessment: Two 2,500-3,000 word essays (each worth 50% of overall mark).

PR5424 Internet and New Media Politics, Dr Donna Arrondelle

This course provides an advanced level analysis of the way the internet and other digital information and communication technologies have influenced everyday life and our sense of self. It may be taken as a standalone MSc option or as the second core course on the MSc in Media, Power, and Public Affairs. Drawing on academic journals, new media art, popular culture and fiction (film, books, television series and games), it focuses on a number of important contemporary debates about the role and influence of new technologies on the values and processes around history, work, subjectivity, privacy and time. It also examines persistent and controversial policy problems generated by digital media, such as internet governance and surveillance, the nature of contemporary media systems, and the balance of power between older and newer media logics in social and political life. By the end of the course students will have an understanding of the key issues thrown up by the internet and new media, as well as a critical perspective on what these terms actually mean.

Assessment: Two 2,500 word essays (each worth 50% of overall mark)

PR5445 Identity, Power and Radical Political Theory, Professor Nathan Widder

This course aims to introduce students to new conceptualizations of identity, difference, power, and politics that are associated most notably with what has been termed “Post-Marxist” or “New Left” politics and political philosophy. Its premise is that recent changes in both political theory and practice – some of which are associated with changes linked to globalization and the emergence of new social movements – are compelling a paradigm shift in the way politics is understood. It will focus on four concepts – identity, power, resistance, and otherness – that have become salient in contemporary political philosophy and international relations theory and on four theorists – Althusser, Gramsci, Laclau & Mouffe, and Foucault – whose thought on these issues has underpinned a great deal of “New Left” political theory and practice. It will also look at how these issues and theories have become prominent in the theory and politics around feminism and lesbian politics and at new problematics for

thinking about political thought and practice, with particular focus on what has been called the “micropolitical” realm.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays (each worth 50% of overall mark)

PR5907 Media, War and Conflict, Professor Ben O’Loughlin

This course provides an advanced examination of theories, concepts and issues surrounding the role of media in war and conflict in the early twenty-first century. The post-9/11 global security situation and the 2003 Iraq war have prompted a marked increase in interest in questions concerning media, war and conflict. This course examines the relationships between media, governments, military, and audiences/publics, in light of old, new, and potential future security events. It reviews theories of media effects in conflict situations, and focuses on a number of important themes, including embedding, sanitisation, legitimacy, and terrorism and publicity. It explores the role of ethics, technology, and professional norms that inform war reporting. Students will be encouraged to analyse a range of media and consider conceptual, theoretical and methodological issues in light of ongoing conflicts around the world.

Drawing on debates in sociology, politics and IR, and media studies, students will analyse the most significant themes and developments in the contemporary intersection of media, war and conflict. These developments will be situated within the longer history of the subject. The course will help students define key terms in the political analysis of media, war and conflict, and to apply empirical and normative theories of politics in order to understand how media affect politics and how politics affects the media. Students will examine the links between theories, evidence and explanation in political and IR, and apply these to the production and consumption of media coverage of war and conflict.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5908 US Foreign Policy, Dr David Wearing

This course provides graduate students with an advanced knowledge of the key concepts, themes and issues in US Foreign Policy. The course covers both the history of US foreign policy as well as contemporary issues. It utilizes close readings of key texts on a weekly basis to provide the students with an in-depth exploration of the key issues facing the United States and how Americans think about foreign affairs.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 40% of overall mark and one class presentation, worth 20% of overall mark.

PR5913 China and the World, Dr Jinghan Zheng

As an increasingly crucial force in world politics today, China is much discussed but less well understood. This course is an advanced introduction to China in international relations for graduate students. The aim of this course is to examine critically Chinese foreign policy and China's impact on the international system and society in order to understand the origins, nature and consequences of its current ascendance. Focusing on China's changing modes of interaction with the world, the course is organised in three sections: origins of Chinese foreign policy; China and international order; and

China in the Asian security complex. The focus throughout is on a combination of empirical and theoretical material along the key themes of material power, normative and ideational influence, and the role of institutions. This course will equip and require students to evaluate the options and prospects for the exercise of Chinese power and the role of China in international society in the contemporary era.

Assessment: One 2,000 word essay worth 40% of overall mark and one 3,500 word essay worth 60% of overall mark.

PR5914 Democracy and Citizenship in Europe, Dr James Sloam

This course is designed to introduce students to the theory and practice of democracy and citizenship in Europe. Its aim is to offer students a distinctive perspective on the nature of democracy and citizenship in Western Europe today (with a particular focus on the UK, Germany and France, and using the United States as a comparator). It explores the roots of democracy and citizenship and asks to what extent those basic principles are still valid today. It does so by first looking at the role of political actors and institutions (the supply side) and how recent developments have affected the nature of citizenship and the relationship between individuals and the state: the impact of Europeanisation on national and European politics and the decline in participation in electoral politics (e.g. voting). Weeks 4, 5 and 6 look in more detail at the reasons why the changes in this relationship have taken place: the individualisation of citizens in modern society in terms of their values and life-styles; the withdrawal of the state and the new classification of citizens as consumers; and, the decline in the role of political parties (traditionally the glue that bound citizens to the democratic process). The course then moves on to discuss political participation. Is political participation declining or just evolving? Whilst involvement in electoral politics has certainly declined over recent decades, involvement in non-electoral politics, e.g. new social movements, has increased. The next two sessions look at how the situation might be reformed in the future: how political institutions can be reformed to encourage better connections between politicians and the state, and citizens; and, to help in the formation of 'good and active citizens' through, in particular, civic education.

Assessment: Two 1,000 word seminar papers, each worth 20% of the overall mark; one essay of 4,000 words, worth 60% of overall mark.

PR5921 Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods in International Relations, Dr Kaat Smets

The field of politics and international relations is ultimately aimed at answering questions about human behaviour and the world in which we live. Why are young adults less likely to turn out to vote than older citizens? Does the political ideology of a government influence its welfare state expenditure? What factors explain the severity of civil wars? In seeking answers to such questions, social scientists are interested in the (strength of) the relationship between factors. There are various ways and methods to assess these relationships. Quantitative researchers draw on a set of statistical tools to conduct their research. This course aims at introducing the basics of such quantitative data analysis. The aim of this course is to empower you so that you are confident in handling and interpreting statistical data. No prior knowledge or experience of statistics is needed. During the course, we examine ways in which we can assess theoretical propositions with empirical data. Practice is an indispensable element in developing an understanding of statistical concepts. Therefore, a substantial part of the course will be based in labs where you will learn how to carry out quantitative analysis making use of existing data sets.

Assessment: Tutorial papers worth 20% of overall mark; one 4,000 word quantitative assignment, worth 80% of overall mark.

PR5923 Theories and Qualitative Approaches in Politics and International Relations, Dr Jinghan Zheng

This course aims to provide an introduction to core theories and qualitative approaches in politics and international relations for students on the MSc Politics and International Relations programme who choose this disciplinary training pathway. Students will examine a number of explanatory/theoretical frameworks, their basic assumptions, strengths and weaknesses, and concrete research applications. Students will consider the various qualitative techniques available for conducting search research, the range of decisions qualitative researchers face, and the trade-offs researchers must consider when designing qualitative research.

The course focuses on theoretical approaches in political analysis: rational choice; political culture; normative theory; institutionalism; and Marxism. In addition, the course examines qualitative methodology in political analysis; understanding interviews, focus groups and ethnography; analysing textual data: content and discourse analysis; comparative qualitative methods; and comparative qualitative analysis of history and political change.

Assessment: Two 3,000 words essays, each worth 50% of overall mark

PR5936 Contemporary Anglo-American Political Theory, Dr Michael Bacon

This course provides an overview of some of the key concepts and thinkers in Anglo-American political theory today. The meanings of concepts often used in political discourse such as freedom, justice and democracy is far from clear; there are different plausible interpretations of ideas such as these and energetic debates among these interpretations' proponents about their nature, limits, and relationship to other political ideas. In examining them, the course explores whether we need to provide a moral and political justification for our preferred political arrangements, and suggests that theories have an important independent role in politics; the latter is not merely about conflicting interests.

Assessment: Two essays of 2500 words, each worth 40% of overall mark; class participation, 20% of overall mark.

PR5937 Understanding Defence, Dr Tom Dyson

Defence budgets comprise a significant proportion of national wealth and defence decision-making has profound implications for domestic populations and for citizens caught up in foreign military operations. Military power also forms a central dimension of states' power and influence in the international system. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been significant variation in the extent to which states' defence reforms have delivered strategic advantage, with a number of cases of inappropriate or faulty military innovation and/or emulation.

This module analyses the content and sources of change in defence policy during the post-Cold War era. It focuses on changes to the objectives of defence policy, military capabilities, force structures

and doctrines of selected major military powers (US, UK, China). It analyses how these reforms have helped states meet their central security challenges. In addition, the module describes how defence policies are embedded within regional and international institutions and explores the sources of defence cooperation.

It also explores organisational learning in defence and the sources of adaptation, innovation and emulation in military organisations. Furthermore, the module analyses the role of non-state actors, notably private military companies and their implications for defence policy and practice. This module is informed by the insights of political science and international relations approaches to the sources of military change.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5942 Analysing Public Opinion, Dr Kaat Smets

This course introduces students to theories as well as trends in research of political participation and public opinion. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of different forms of political participation and the role that each of these forms of participation play in advanced industrial democracies. The course also focuses on the interplay between individual attitudes to public opinion and policy change. Throughout the course the impact of systemic features such as the electoral system and the party system will be highlighted so as to provide an understanding of how context shapes attitudes and behaviors. In this way of course serves to develop a more critical understanding of the complexities of political behavior research.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5944 Elections and Campaigning Sofia Collignon

The course will examine why people vote for different political parties, and how their behavior is shaped by the different mobilization strategies political parties and different institutional arrangements. Students will learn how social divisions are translated into political visions come and how the mechanisms of accountability and representation operate in different political and economic contexts. To what extent do people build along always demise Western mark to what extent do they go along social lives? How do campaigns shape voting behavior and influence the criteria citizens use in deciding how to vote? How have these patterns changed over time?

By answering these and other questions, the course will enable students to understand the main factors that shape electoral behavior and election outcomes across western democracies.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5948 International Public Policy, Professor Andreas Goldthau

This course introduces international public policy as a field of contested policy authority in a globalized world. At its core, international public policy is about addressing global collective action problems in policy areas as different as trade, migration, financial regulation, economic development and environment. The course discusses key aspects of contemporary international public policy making, including the challenge of delivering global public goods and the problem of safeguarding the global commons; the role of global networks and global public-private partnerships in producing

transnational policy outcomes; and the dynamics pertaining to policy transfer, diffusion and global best practice. For students in the MSc International Public Policy, this course highlights the 'global policy' dimension of international affairs, complementing PR5432 which focuses on 'classic' IR theory. Though the primary aim of the course is to offer a 'conceptual toolbox' for students interested in international public policy, it also seeks to apply theoretical models to real world problems. The course will therefore draw on a number of practical examples to from various policy fields and levels, from both OECD and non-OECD contexts.

Assessment: Policy briefing paper, 3000 words, worth 50% of overall mark; research essay, 3000 words, worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5950 European Union Politics and Policy, Dr Giacomo Benedetto

The course provides a background for students to understand the current political structure of the European Union and its regulatory policies. It introduces students to the political institutions and policies of the European Union. By the end of the course, students will have knowledge of the ability to analyse the contemporary politics of the European Union.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 40% of overall mark; one class presentation, worth 20% of overall mark.

PR5952 Political Economy of Development, Dr Ivica Petrikova

Despite growing total economic affluence, the world continues to be characterised by persistent poverty and inequality. To briefly illustrate this reality, close to one billion people globally still lack daily access to sufficient food, more than three billion people live on less than 2.5 USD a day, and more than 22,000 children die each day due to poverty (World Development Indicators, 2015). In theory, 'development' should resolve these problems – but what is development and how can it be achieved? This course explores key development challenges faced across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas and is divided into three sections. The first critically examines some of the major concepts, paradigms, and theories, which have attempted to define what development is, how and why it occurs (or does not), and to whose benefit. The second focuses on some of the key development challenges faced by developing countries in the regions explored: economic (poverty, inequality, unemployment), political (democracy, human rights, role of elites), social (religion, race/ethnicity/caste, urbanization), and natural (climate change, pollution, resource extraction, extermination of species). The final section explores possible remedies to these issues through international cooperation (trade, aid, finance, South-South cooperation), national policies (welfare schemes, laws and regulations), and micro and informal solutions.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5954 Political Economy of the Middle East, Dr David Wearing

The course aims to introduce (1) the central socio-economic and political problems of the countries of the contemporary Middle East; how, historically, they developed; and the conflicts to which they give rise within and among those states; (2) conceptual and practical issues and problems involved in defining and identifying factors that are causally related to different developmental trajectories; and

(3) the fundamental methods, assumptions, and logic of political-economy as an approach to understanding different developmental outcomes.

Most of the Arab countries of the contemporary Middle East exhibit common economic features. After surveying these basic characteristics, the course traces the local, transnational, and global factors that have contributed to their development and reproduction, and explores the changes that would be necessary to transform them.

Assessment: Two 3,000 words essays, each worth 50% of overall mark

PR5956 Political Leaders and Democratic Politics, Dr Nick Allen

PR5956 Political Leaders and Democratic Politics introduces students to political leadership. It explores the political executives of two established democratic systems, one parliamentary and one presidential, and evaluates the processes through which they are selected. It also examines the role of leaders and the alleged importance of leadership effects in democratic elections, including the appeal of new populist figures. The course is intentionally comparative and concludes by examining leadership in non-democratic system and the importance attached to leadership in general.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark

PR5957 Development Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, Dr Thomas Stubbs

This course introduces students to the inter-relationship between politics and socio-economic development in Africa. It examines both how political factors influence poverty, inequality, and economic growth, and how socio-economic factors—in turn—shape the political trajectories of African nations. It explores the following 'big' questions: What does development mean? Why are some countries poor, repressive, and violent? How does globalisation influence development in Africa? How do historical institutions influence development in Africa? To what extent does democracy, urbanisation, and corruption influence development in African, and vice versa? To what extent does foreign aid and humanitarianism promote development in Africa, and what role should it play in the future?

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5960 Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention, Dr Michelle Bentley

The module will equip postgraduate students with an advanced knowledge of the issue of genocide and international responses to this, specifically where these relate to humanitarian intervention. It will provide a critical overview of specific genocide events (e.g. Anfal, Rwanda, and Bosnia) as well as related contemporary issues. The module will allow students to critically evaluate the international policies, laws, and norms surrounding humanitarian intervention, explicitly in terms of whether international actors have respected these in response to genocide.

The module content is based around three core aspects of learning. The first section will engage students with the conceptual academic literature surrounding the definition of genocide and the factors that lead to mass killing. The second section will teach students about the formal and informal international expectations concerning humanitarian intervention, by examining primary and

secondary data. The third section will draw on primary and secondary evidence (including documentaries and eyewitness testimony) to empirically inform students as to what happened during specific genocides, looking at a different case study each week. Students will then assess this information with their tutor and peers, specifically where this will require them to critically apply their acquired theoretical and conceptual knowledge on issues of genocide and humanitarian intervention to these case studies.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5961 International Public Policy Practice, Professor Andreas Goldthau

This course allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the processes and structures determining the character and outcome of (global) policy-making. The course complements the academic analysis of IOs, INGOs, policy networks and (global) public-private partnerships provided in other courses (notably IPP) by offering insights into their practical functioning. To this end, the course features a series of guest lectures by selected members of the global policy-making community and puts students in direct contact with practitioners. Students will be exposed to first hand insights from the world of policy making, discuss and debate pertinent policy problems with practitioners 'on the job', and critically reflect on the policy approaches taken in policy fields as different as food security, migration and refugees, global economic governance, energy and climate, budgetary challenges or defence.

Assessment: Two 1,500 course memos, each worth 25% of overall mark; one 3,000 word essay worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5962 The Global Politics of Food Security, Dr Ivica Petrikova

Food insecurity has always been and still continues to be one of the key global development issues. Close to one billion people around the world go to bed hungry every night, two billion people experience micronutrient malnutrition and almost the same number are overweight or obese. Global food security is predicted to worsen further in the near future as climate change hinders agricultural production, by inducing higher temperatures, more frequent droughts and floods, and land degradation, and global population continues to rise, topping nine billion by mid-century. This course will enhance students' understanding of some of the complex issues and controversies that surround globalisation of agriculture and the global food chain, and review and discuss factors that influence food and nutrition security at the global, national, community and household levels.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each worth 50% of overall mark.

PR5963 Islam and West Asia in International Relations, Dr Mohammad Kalantari

This course is intended to achieve three purposes. First, to introduce the modern history of West Asian Countries, including Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Egypt. Second, to provide a series of international and regional themes or lenses through which the politics of these countries can be interpreted. These are explored through a series of events. Third, to direct attention to the specific constellation of national, societal, and individual level phenomena of these countries through the application of a schematic network toolkit.

Assessment: Two 3,000 word essays, each 50% of overall mark.

PR5450 The Israel Palestinian Conflict: A Global Perspective, Dr Yoav Galai

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is more than a persistent struggle for control over land or simply a religious clash. It also serves different material and symbolic functions for different actors both inside and outside of the region, who inject the conflict with their own meanings and pursue their own interests. Conversely, the conflict is projected outwards, with acts, ideas and technologies travelling and impacting well outside of it. This module examines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict both on its own as well and through its intersections with actors and issues in global politics, drawing on a variety of scholarship to interrogate the different ways in which the conflict is globalised.

Assessment: Two 1,000 word editorials, each worth 20% of overall mark; one 4,000 word essay, worth 60% of overall mark.

HS5130 Politics and Religion in the Middle East, Dr James Baldwin

In this module you will develop an understanding of the history of the Middle East in the twentieth century. You will look at the outbreak of the First World War that destroyed the old Ottoman order, the impact of European colonialism, the fortunes of postcolonial states during the Cold War, and the age of American hegemony. You will examine the growth of political Islam that challenged the mainly secularist establishments, considering examples such as authoritarianism in Egypt, sectarianism in Syria and Lebanon, the politics of oil in Saudi Arabia, and the Iranian revolution. You will analyse the creation of the modern Middle Eastern state system in the aftermath of the First World War, and explore the historical roots of the current crisis in the Middle East.

Assessment: TBC

HS5721 The Infidel Within? Professor Humayan Ansari

In this module you will develop an understanding of the history of Muslims in the west. You will look at the foundation of Islam as a world religion and its various denominations and traditions in western states from the 1800s through to the 21st century. You will consider contemporary issues such as identity, divided loyalties, gender relations, and perceptions held by the majority and non-Muslim community. You will examine points of conflict between Muslims and wider society, including continuity, adjustment, and the war on terror.

Assessment: TBC