

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



SPOL2103 Theories of international relations

[30h] 3 credits

This course is taught in the 2nd semester

Teacher(s): Michel Liegeois
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Main themes

Two levels of analysis: Actor and system, and structure and normative framework.

The level of analysis of the actor is based on the two normal epistemologies: hermeneutics and the (causal) behaviourist approach; the instrumental and "expressive" rationalities of actors will also be addressed.

The second part of the course is a descriptive theory of the forms produced by competitive and cooperative strategies in international relations. Games theory will explain the strategic choice.

The third part of the course consists of a general theory of security, and includes an examination of:

- (a) multipolar balance;
- (b) collective security;
- (c) nuclear dissuasion;
- (d) bipolarity and the arms race/arms control.

The theory of evolution in international relations will be identified. An "interpretative" hermeneutics of military doctrines will also offer an explanation of the cold war. The "regularity" of forms and the permanence of mechanisms will be illustrated by an examination of diplomatic history and immediate information (the press).

Content and teaching methods

Content

- a) Foreign policy will be explained through its causes and aims (the national interest) (Chapters 1 and 2).
- b) International relations in the strict sense will be explained as follows:
 - the relationship of power and its methods, or means of pressure (Chapter 3);
 - international negotiations and cooperation (games theory) (Chapter 4);
 - the relationship of security to such issues as the balance of forces, "collective security" and nuclear dissuasion (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8).
- c) The international system:
 - stability in multipolarity, bipolarity etc (Chapter 9).
- d) In addition: theories of change in international relations:
 - theories of political integration (Chapter 4 (§3));
 - "creation-maturation-flood" theories.
- e) Conclusion: International relations and "interpretative" hermeneutics, and the end of the cold war.

Methodology

Lectures.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Jean Barrea, 2002, "Théories des relations internationales", Namur, 4th edition, ARTEL-ERASME.

Other credits in programs

POL21/AP	Première licence en sciences politiques (Affaires publiques)	Mandatory
POL21/RI	Première licence en sciences politiques (Relations internationales)	Mandatory
POLS2M1/RI	Master en sciences politiques, orientation générale (option relations internationales) (3 credits)	Mandatory