

***STV 9042 - Field Seminar in International Relations Theory  
(13 – 17 January 2025)***

### Course Content

This course surveys the state-of-the-art in international relations (IR) theory. Social theoretically, theoretically and substantively, we range broadly, exploring: the multiple meta-theoretical bases of IR (how new thinking on ontology and uncertainty affects the theory, method and ethics of IR); research that links governance/order/ordering to legitimacy; experimental IR and IR survey experiments; China & IR theory / non-Western IR; new work on the micro-foundations of international norms; practice theory and the practice turn; and research on international institutions, hierarchy and closure. We also engage and assess recent special issues of journals that have come to represent two different ways of doing IR – the *European Journal of International Relations* and *International Organization*.

A theme throughout the seminar will be if all this new IR theory is ready for prime time. That is, does it help us better explain, understand, and critique a 21st century marked by the return of large-scale conflict; global health crises; the rise of China; a populist backlash against globalization; climate change; and a new, deeply national and inward-looking identity politics?

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will gain an in-depth understanding of contemporary international relations theory.
- You will learn how to evaluate IR along various dimensions: meta-theory; theoretical breadth and depth; ethics; western/global; causal inference; interpretive understanding; and empirical insight.
- You will develop your own perspective on the pluralism that has come to define IR over the past 15 years.

### Admission

The course is open to PhD students in political science and related disciplines; there is no participation fee. PhD candidates at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oslo should apply for the course via Studentweb; other PhD candidates should use the Application Form. After the application deadline, students will be notified about the outcome of their application as quickly as possible.

### Teaching Format

The course, which takes place over 5 days at the University of Oslo (Monday through Friday, 13-17 January 2025), will be run as a seminar, where the emphasis is on debate and collective learning. Written discussion questions and response memos will serve as our starting point on days #1, #2, #4 and #5, helping us set an agenda for each session.

On day #3 – 15 January - we take a break from formal deliberations and engage in two activities. In the morning, the instructor will have one-on-one meetings with course participants, the purpose being to strategize over how students can turn their response memos into the required course essay (see below, 'Requirements'). If you are taking the seminar for credit, these morning meetings are mandatory. In the afternoon, Checkel will again meet individually or in small groups with course participants. These afternoon sessions are different: They are for you – and thus voluntary. Is there a particular topic

covered in the seminar that you want to explore in more detail? Do you want advice on the theoretical set up and framing of your thesis? Are you curious about Checkel's views on how the European and North American IR communities and discourses differ?

On the first day of the seminar (Monday, 13 January), Checkel will circulate sign-up lists for all the meetings on Wednesday (morning and afternoon).

### Obligatory Activities / Requirements

There are five requirements.

- 1) Reading: Read the assigned literature in advance.
- 2) Discussions: Active participation in them.
- 3) Discussion Questions: Prepare them for all sessions on days #1-2 and #4-5
  - ➔ Students should prepare 2-3 questions for each session, with your questions reflecting a critical engagement with and assessment of the readings. What are their strong and weak points? Their meta-theoretical, theoretical, methodological, ethical, or empirical contributions-omissions? Preparing these questions/comments is not intended as a writing exercise; indeed, they can be quite short!
- 4) Response Memo: Choose one session on days #1-2 and #4-5 and prepare a response memo to its readings.
  - ➔ These memos will be three-pages (double-spaced) and should critically interrogate the readings for that session. What works and why? Are there meta-theoretical, theoretical, ethical, or methodological problems? Is there something new in the readings or are they just 're-inventing the wheel'?
- 5) Analytic Essay: Students should prepare an analytic essay based on their response memo; it will be 3,000 - 4,000 words and be based on – but go beyond - the course literature.

### Writing Exercise / Analytic Essay

The analytic essay is due on 15.04.25.

### Schedule & Reading List

#### *Day #1: Monday, 13 January*

#### **Session I (0900–1100): Philosophy of Science & IR – Philosophies; Relational Ontologies / Post-Newtonian Conceptions of the Social World; Uncertainty and IR**

della Porta, Donatella and Michael Keating, Editors, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) – Chapter 2.

Jackson, Patrick, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics, Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 2016) – Chapters 1, 2.

Emirbayer, Mustafa, "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," *The American Journal of Sociology* 103/2 (1997): 281-317.

Jackson, Patrick and Daniel Nexon, "Relations Before States: Substance, Process and the Study of World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 5/3 (1999): 291-332.

Der Derian, James and Alexander Wendt, Editors, *Quantum International Relations: A Human Science for World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022) – Chapter 1.

Katzenstein, Peter J., Editor, *Uncertainty and its Discontents: Worldviews in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) – Chapter 1.

### **Session II (1100-1200; 1330-1430): Realism in the New Millennium**

Kirshner, Jonathan, *An Unwritten Future: Realism and Uncertainty in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022) – Chapters 1, 2, 6.

Behr, Hartmut and Michael C. Williams, "Interlocuting Classical Realism and Critical Theory: Negotiating 'Divides' in International Relations Theory," *Journal of International Political Theory* 13/1(2017): 3-17.

### **Session III (1430-1600): Constructivism & Norms - Micro-Foundations**

Price, Richard and Kathryn Sikkink, *International Norms, Moral Psychology, and Neuroscience. Elements in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

## ***Day #2: Tuesday, 14 January***

### **Session IV (0900-1200): Practice Theory – Critical Realist, Interpretive, or All of the Above?**

Adler, Emanuel, *World Ordering: A Social Theory of Cognitive Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) – Chapters 2, 3, 4.

Pouliot, Vincent, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) – Chapter 1, Appendix.

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca and Alena Drieschova, "Track-Change Diplomacy: Technology, Affordances, and the Practice of International Negotiations," *International Studies Quarterly* 63/3 (2019): 531–545.

Drieschova, Alena, Christian Bueger, and Ted Hopf, Editors, *Conceptualizing International Practices: Directions for the Practice Turn in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) – Chapters 1, 2, 4.

### **Session V (1330-1600): China & IR Theory; International Relations 'Before the West' / Non-Western IR**

Johnston, Alastair Iain, "China in a World of Orders: Rethinking Compliance and Challenge in Beijing's International Relations." *International Security* 44/2 (2019): 9-60.

Pan, Chengxin and Emilian Kavalski, Editors, *China's Rise and Rethinking International Relations Theory* (Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 2022) - Part I, "Theorizing China's Rise: Beyond Eurocentric Knowledge Production," Chapters 1, 2.

Zarakol, Ayşe, *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) – Chapters 1, 5, 6.

### ***Day #3: Wednesday, 15 January***

#### **Session VI (0900-1200): Individual Meetings on Course Essays**

#### **Session VII (1330-1600): Individual/Small-Group Meetings (Various Topics)**

### ***Day #4: Thursday, 16 January***

#### **Session VIII (0900-1200): Governance & IR – Institutions, Hierarchy & Legitimacy**

Viola, Lora Anne, *The Closure of the International System: How Institutions Create Political Equalities and Hierarchies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) – Chapters 1, 2.

Zuern, Michael, *A Theory of Global Governance: Authority, Legitimacy and Contestation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) – Introduction, Chapters 3, 10.

#### **Session IX (1330-1600): Experiments / Survey Experiments & IR**

Phillips, Trisha, “Ethics of Field Experiments,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 24 (2021): 277–300.

Barnfield, Matthew, “Misinformation in Experimental Political Science,” *Perspectives on Politics* 21/4 (2023): 1210-1220.

Sagan, Scott and Benjamin Valentino, “Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran: What Americans Really Think about Using Nuclear Weapons and Killing Non-Combatants,” *International Security* 42/1 (2017): 41–79.

Carpenter, Charli, Alexander Montgomery, and Alexandria Nylen, “Breaking Bad? How Survey Experiments Prime Americans for War Crimes,” *Perspectives on Politics* 19/3 (2021): 912-924.

### ***Day #5: Friday, 17 January***

#### **Session X (0900-1030): European IR - *European Journal of International Relations*, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue (2020)**

Daxecker, Ursula, Annette Freyberg-Inan, Marlies Glasius, Geoffrey Underhill and Darshan Vigneswaran, “Introduction: Interdisciplinarity and the International Relations Event Horizon,” *European Journal of International Relations* 26/S1 (2020): 3–13.

Standfield, Catriona, “Gendering the Practice Turn in Diplomacy,” *European Journal of International Relations* 26/S1 (2020): 140-65.

Kahraman, Filiz, Nikhil Kalyanpur and Abraham L. Newman, “Domestic Courts, Transnational Law, and International Order,” *European Journal of International Relations* 26/S1 (2020): 184-208.

#### **Session XI (1030-1200): North American IR - *International Organization*, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue (2021)**

Lake, David, Lisa Martin, and Thomas Risse, "Challenges to the Liberal International Order: Reflections on International Organization," *International Organization* 75/2 (Spring 2021): 225-57.

Simmons, Beth and Hein E. Goemans, "Built on Borders: Tensions with the Institution Liberalism (Thought It) Left Behind," *International Organization* 75/2 (Spring 2021): 387-410.

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca and Ayşe Zarakol, "Struggles for Recognition: The Liberal International Order and the Merger of Its Discontents," *International Organization* 75/2 (Spring 2021): 611-34.