Seminar: Field Seminar in International Relations

1st Term, Academic Year 2025-2026
Mondays, 15.00 – 17.00 (Seminar room 2, Badia)
(Additional guest lectures / ad hoc seminars, Thursday, 9-11, usually Seminar room 2)

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Brightspace: https://mycourses.eui.eu/d2l/home/16606

Description

This seminar surveys the state-of-the-art in the field of international relations (IR) theory and its application. Its theoretical part is based on two developments that concern the understanding of theory itself and its substantive content. First, IR, but the social sciences more generally, have become more self-aware of the fact that theorising serves different purposes and comes in different forms. While theory, in its instrumental purpose, can be the result of (empirical) knowledge, it can also be the very condition for the possibility of knowledge, as in the constitutive function of 'analytical lenses'. And besides empirical generalisation, the various forms of theorisation include, for instance, empirically driven designs that abstract by constructing ideal-types or generate hypotheses that can be translated into other empirical contexts, as well as theory-driven designs like concept analysis aiming at better understanding central phenomena of the social world or indeed meta-theory, which reflects on the assumptions with which we construct our theories in the first place. Second, recent decades have seen several substantive developments. IR dramatically widened its research fields beyond its classical concerns with war, diplomacy, and world order / global political economy (e.g. emotions, environment, big data). It draws on new meta-theoretical inspirations (e.g. new thinking on causality, uncertainty, relational and process ontologies, new materialism) and an engagement with different theoretical traditions (e.g. feminism, post-colonialism, non-Western IR).

    Drawing on the different modes and functions of theorisation, the second part of the seminar focuses on how theories, perspectives, and concepts come into play – and can be applied – when analysing specific issue-areas in IR. For instance, what can IR theory tell us when analysing the international relations of specific regions in world politics, and how do different types of theories (and theorisation) highlight different aspects and challenges of regional politics? In which way can the relationship between interests, identities and security be conceptualized? How do these conceptualizations contribute to our explanation or understanding of specific developments in world politics? In which way can insights from International Political Economy (IPE) contribute to our understanding of international politics? What do post-colonial and feminist perspectives

add to our problematization and understanding of global phenomena? And how can we think about regional order(s) and its relationship to the (changing) global order?

As it is impossible to cover the state of the art of our empirical knowledge in as vast a field within 10 weeks, the seminar focuses on our ways to establish knowledge, that is, on the different ways of building and using theory, as well as chosen applications. Students are encouraged to reflect on how these different modes of theorisation come to understand, select and problematise challenges and opportunities of global politics in the 21st century.

Learning Outcomes

- Researchers will gain an in-depth understanding of contemporary international relations theory by reflecting on the variety of modes of IR theorising and their respective ways to evaluate and assess knowledge in IR
- They will (start to) develop their own perspective on the pluralism that has come to define IR over the last decades
- They will reflect on how to use theory (and theorisation) when seeking to understand and/or explain phenomena and developments in global politics

Format

The class will be run as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm. For **Sessions 2 - 10**, response memos – ideally prepared by 1-2 researchers for each session – will inform and guide our debates. **Additional (and voluntary) 'ad hoc seminars'** will be organised. The seminar is worth 20 credits.

Requirements

- **Required course**: Researchers taking the seminar as a requirement will prepare two response papers / memos of about 3-4 pages and a final paper of about 10-15 pages. Over the course of the seminar, they are also required to make two short presentations to inform and lead the discussion. The first response memo is to be handed in by the end of week 4, the second by the end of week 8. The final paper is to be handed in by 19 December.
- **Elective**: Researchers taking the seminar as an elective are required to prepare response papers / memos of about 3-4 pages. Over the course of the seminar, they are also required to make two short presentations to inform and lead the discussion. The first response memo is to be handed in by week 4, the second by week 8.

Schedule

Session 1 (29 Sept. 2025). The three domains and four modes of theorising IR … and its confusions

Guest lecture (30 Sept 2025. 17-19, Sala del Capitolo): Prof. Matthew Evangelista, Cornell University: "Alternatives to Nuclear Deterrence: Is Estonia Defensible?" (Swiss Chair Seminar Series)

Guest lecture (2 Oct 2025, 9-11, Seminar Room 2): Prof. Cecelia Lynch, University of California at Irvine: "Is Decolonized Humanitarianism Possible in an Age of Authoritarian Recolonization?" (Swiss Chair Seminar Series)

See also her workshop on *Trends and Issues in Critical Interpretive Research* (3 October, 9-11, Sala del Capitolo)

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Session 2 (6 Oct. 2025). Theorisation by abstraction: Ideal types. The English School and the rationalisation of (idealized) European practice

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Session 3 (13 Oct. 2025). Theorisation as concept analysis: The concept of power in International Political Economy (IPE)

Guest lecture (16 Oct 2025, 9-11, Seminar room 2):

Prof. Rahel Kunz, Université de Lausanne: "Decolonising gender and peacebuilding: Feminist dis/connections around the expertization of gender in Nepal"

See also her **workshop on the previous day** "Before, during and after: how to work with fieldwork in IR?" (15 October,15-17, Sala Triaria,)

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Session 4 (20 Oct. 2025). Theorisation by generating hypotheses / frameworks of analysis: Models and Approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis

Guest lecture (22 Oct 2025, 14-16, Seminar room 2):

Prof. Dirk Moses (Anne & Bernard Spitzer Chair in International Relations, City University of New York (CUNY): "*Historical (in)justice as an emancipation paradox: Gaza and the failure of Frankfurt school critical theory*" (Swiss Chair Seminar Series)

Voluntary ad hoc seminar (23 Oct 2025, 9-11, Seminar room 2): The agency-structure problematique in the social sciences, or: a typology of meta-theories (SG)

See also the **workshop organised by RDS** on "Unpacking Reactionary Politics on Both Sides of the Mediterranean" (23-24 October, Villa Schifanoia, Sala Triaria).

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Session 5 (27 Oct. 2025). Meta-theorising: Relational and process ontologies

Guest lecture (28 Oct 2025, 17-19, Emeroteca):

Prof. Matthias Leese, ETH Zürich: "Holding Schengen together: Complexity and care in multi-level information systems"

See also the **method workshop** on *Studying-up: Field research with security actors* (Sala Triaria, 29 October, 15.00-18.00)

Voluntary ad-hoc seminar (30 Oct, 9-11, Seminar room 2): Lecture on student demand (e.g. understanding varieties of realism in IR (maybe followed in the evening with a documentary on Kissinger, if there is demand), constructivism in IR, concept analysis in the social sciences, or other)

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Session 6 (3 Nov. 2025). IR Theory meets (regional) reality

Guest lecture, 3 November 2025 (17:30-19:00, Villa Schifanoia, Sala Belvedere): Prof. Oren Yiftachel, prof. emeritus, Ben-Gurion University, and co-founder of 'A Land for All': Triality: Gaza and the Political Geography of Israel/Palestine

Session 7 (10 Nov. 2025). Interests, identities, security

Guest seminar (13 November 2025, 9-11h, Seminar room 2): Prof. Simone Tholens, John Cabbott University / EUI: 'Interests, identities, security'

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Session 8 (17 Nov. 2025). Political economy and IR

Guest lecture (20 November 2025, 9-11h, Seminar room 2): Prof. Kenneth Amaeshi, EUI STG: 'Africapitalism: An economic philosophy for rethinking business-government relations'

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Session 9 (24 Nov. 2025). Orientalism, post-colonialism, feminist IR

No guest lecture / ad hoc seminar

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Session 10 (1 Dec. 2025): International order, regional order —and beyond

Guest lecture (4 December 2025, 9-11h, Seminar room 2): Prof. Mark Gilbert, Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe: 'The Limits of Normative Liberalism in International Relations'

Deadline for final paper: 19 December 2025

Seminars and Readings

Session 1. The three domains and four modes of theorising IR … and its confusions (SG)

Whereas most social sciences in the West evolve as a reaction to the differentiation of modern societies, where the economy, civil society, but then also the political system become autonomous fields warranting a new expertise knowledge, the differentiation into sovereign states happened well before. Hence, by the time social sciences are institutionalized, IR was not looking for new knowledge but for ways to account for its already existing practical knowledge. The discipline was not there to produce (new) knowledge; knowledge established its discipline. The first debate (realism versus idealism), and in particular (classical) realism played a major role for translating the maxims of (European) diplomatic and military behaviour into the laws of a (US) social science. This first session therefore introduces into this peculiar history and showcases one particular debate in which this mix of practical and observational knowledge can be observed.

Readings

Cohn, Carol. 1987. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12 (4): 687-718.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. "The Ends of International Relations Theory: Stages of Reflexivity and Modes of Theorizing." *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (3): 521–41.

Mearsheimer, John J. 1994/95. "The False Promise of International Institutions." *International Security* 19 (3): 5–49.

Wendt, Alexander. 1995. "Constructing International Politics." *International Security* 20 (1): 71–81.

Additional readings

- For realists by realists

Aron, Raymond. 1962. *Paix et guerre entre les nations*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy. (Engl.: 2003. *Peace & War: A Theory of International Relations*. New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers.)

Aron, Raymond. 1976. *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz. II: L'âge planétaire*. Paris: Gallimard.

Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.

Carr, Edward Heller. 1946. *The Twenty Years' Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan.

Morgenthau, Hans J. 1946. *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Morgenthau, Hans J. 1960. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 3rd ed. New York: Knopf.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1959. *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wolfers, Arnold. 1962. *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*. Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

For a recent attempt to revive specifically Classical Realism:

Kirshner, Jonathan. 2022. *An Unwritten Future: Realism, Uncertainty, and World Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- For the theoretical analysis of realism(s) within IR's disciplinary history

Donnelly, Jack. 2000. *Realism and International Relations.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guilhot, Nicholas. 2017. *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-20th Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobson, John M. 2012. *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- For feminist critiques

Tickner, J. Ann. 1988. "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17 (3): 429-40.

Sjoberg, Laura. 2012. "Gender, Structure, and War: What Waltz Couldn't See." *International Theory* 4 (1): 1-38.

- For a more general critique of the origins of US IR, see

Vitalis, Robert. 2015. *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- For what the enemy thinks (not obligatory):

Guzzini, Stefano. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold*. London, New York: Routledge.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2004. "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 10 (4): 533–68.

- For linking the three domains of international theory in a critique of realism:

Guzzini, Stefano. 2020. "Embrace IR Anxieties (or, Morgenthau's Approach to Power, and the Challenge of Combining the Three Domains of IR Theorizing)." *International Studies Review* 22 (2): 268–88.

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Guest lecture (2 Oct 2025, 9-11, Seminar Room 2): Prof. Cecelia Lynch, University of California at Irvine: "Is Decolonized Humanitarianism Possible in an Age of Authoritarian Recolonization?" (Swiss Chair Seminar Series)

See also her workshop on *Trends and Issues in Critical Interpretive Research* (3 October, 9-11, Sala del Capitolo).

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Session 2. Theorisation by abstraction: Ideal types.
The English School and the rationalisation of (idealized) European practice (SG)

A relatively rare form of theorization in IR, but a very classical one in Political Science, is the elaboration of ideal-types and typologies. Comparative Government used to be mainly about (more or less explanatory) typologies (e.g. democracy – authoritarianism – totalitarianism, with all the sub-types). When typologies are not fundamentally descriptive (hence: taxonomies), they, like ideal-types, are abstractions that serve as heuristic devices to capture something fundamentally important about social phenomena. Against this backdrop, the seminar deals with the English School of IR, also called the "international society approach". The seminar will concentrate on the original formulation and two of its developments. The more specific engagement with ideal-types will be part of the ad hoc seminar.

Readings

Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan (Introduction + chapters 1-3: pp. xxxii-73.)

Buzan, Barry. 2004. *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (chapter 4: 90–138).

Friedner Parrat, Charlotta. 2024. "Change in international order? An institutional analysis." *European Journal of International Security* 9 (3): 449-67.

Additional readings
- From within the English School

Bain, William. 2003. *Between Anarchy and Society: Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power*. Oxford University Press.

Butterfield, Herbert and Martin Wight, eds. 1966. *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, Barry. 2014. *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations: The Societal Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Buzan, Barry & Laust Schouenburg. 2018. *Global International Society: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, Ian. 2005. *Legitimacy in International Society*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Dunne, Timothy. 1995. "The social construction of international society." *European Journal of International Relations* 1 (3): 367–89.

Dunne, Tim and Christian Reus-Smit. 2017. T*he Globalization of International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Friedner Parrat, Charlotta. 2024. "What Watson can teach us about war and order: revisiting *The Evolution of International Society*." *International Politics* (doi: 10.1057/s41311-023-00550-9).

Gong, Gerrit W. 1984. *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hall, Ian. 2006. *The International Thought of Martin Wight*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holsti, K. J. 2004. *Taming the Sovereigns: Institutional Change in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hurrell, Andrew. 2007. *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, J. D. B. and R. J. Vincent, eds. 1990. *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Nantermoz, Olivia. 2020. "International refugee protection and the primary institutions of international society." *Review of International Studies* 46 (2): 256–77.

Reus-Smit, Christian. 1999. *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wheeler, Nicholas J. 2002. *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. Oxford University Press.

Wight, Martin. 1977. *Systems of States*. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Wight, Martin. 1979 [1946]. *Power Politics*. Edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad. Harmondsworth: Penguin/RIIA.

Yao, Joanne. 2019. "'Conquest from barbarism': The Danube Commission, international order and the control of nature as a Standard of Civilization." *European Journal of International Relations* 25 (2): 335–59.

- Critiques and discussions of the English School

Basu-Mellish, Jack, et al. 2023. English School Special Section. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 51 (2): 552–614.

Copeland, Dale C. 2003. "A Realist critique of the English School." *Review of International Studies* 29 (3): 427–41.

Kaczmarska, Katarzyna. 2019. "Reification in IR: The Process and Consequences of Reifying the Idea of International Society." *International Studies Review* 21 (3): 347–72.

Keene, Edward. 2002. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Linklater, Andrew and Hidemi Suganami. 2006. *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Linklater, Andrew. 2021. *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Rengger, N.J. 2000. *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order: Beyond International Relations Theory?* Abingdon: Routledge.

Weber, Cynthia. 1998. "Reading Martin Wight's 'Why is There No International Theory?' as History". *Alternatives* 23 (4): 451–69.

Wæver, Ole. 1992. International society – theoretical promises unfulfilled? *Cooperation and Conflict* 27 (1): 97–128.

Forum on the English School. 2001. *Review of International Studies* 27 (3): 465–513 (includes an opening intervention by Barry Buzan to revive the English School, followed by rejoinders of Andrew Hurrell, Stefano Guzzini, Iver Neumann, Martha Finnemore)

- On ideal types:

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2016. *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics*. 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge. (pp. 154-166).

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2017. "The Production of Facts: Ideal-Typification and the Preservation of Politics." In Richard Ned Lebow, ed., *Max Weber and International Relations*, 79–96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keene, Edward. 2009. "International Society as an Ideal Type." In Cornelia Navari, ed., *Theorising International Society: English School Methods,* 104–24. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Swedberg, Richard. 2018. How to use Max Weber's ideal type in sociological analysis. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18 (3): 181–96.

- *Other approaches / applications of typologies*

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gerhardt, Uta. 1994. The Use of Weberian Ideal-Type Methodology in Qualitative Data Interpretation: An Outline for Ideal-Type Analysis. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique* 45 (1): 74–126.

Sienknecht, Mitja and Antje Vetterlein. 2024. "Conceptualizing Responsibility in World Politics." *International Theory* 16 (1): 26-49.

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Session 3. Theorisation as concept analysis:
The concept of power in International Political Economy (IPE) (SG)

Ideal-types are a particular form of conceptualisation which are used as heuristic means in an analysis. They allow classification and are components of explanations. But concepts can be

also themselves the end of the analysis. Rather than using the ideal type to highlight certain aspects of social reality in its diversity, we may use the latter to get a better understanding of certain central social phenomena. And this, in turn, can inform the way we build theories, as vetted assumptions about social reality are fundamental in theory-building.

Here, concepts are the building blocks of theories. More strongly: concepts are the condition for the possibility of knowledge. They literally make us "see" (conceive of) certain things, rather than others. Their meaning is informed by the overall logic of theories, the so-called theory-dependence of concepts. Accordingly, concept analysis can take different forms. Most fundamentally, it is about the meaning of the terms used in an analysis. But that meaning may be conditioned by the theory in which the analysis is taking place. Hence, a critique can inquire whether there is an incoherence of the usage or whether, for the subject at hand, the concept "blends out" significant aspects of the phenomena to be studied. Besides a coherence and relevance check of the concept, concept analysis can also inquire the performative effect of categorisations that not only describe but interact with the social world and how concepts have acquired certain meanings and functions in our political discourse (conceptual history and genealogy, not further covered here).

Readings

Baldwin, David A. 1979. "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends Versus Old Tendencies." *World Politics* 31 (1): 161-94.

Gill, Stephen and David Law. 1989. "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital." *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (4): 475–99.

Leander, Anna. 2005. "The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3): 803–26.

Additional readings on power analysis in IR
- on power

Barnett, Michael, and Raymond Duvall. 2005. "Power in International Politics." *International Organization* 59 (1): 39-75.

Berenskoetter, Felix, and Michael J. Williams, eds. 2007. *Power in World Politics*. London, New York: Routledge.)

Strange, Susan (1988) *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*, New York: Basil Blackwell (Prologue and chap. 2: pp. 1-6, 23–42).

- General (IR and elsewhere)

Berenskoetter, Felix, ed. 2016. *Concepts in World Politics*. London et al.: Sage Publ.

Berenskötter, Felix. 2018. "Deep Theorizing in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (4): 814–40.

Berenskötter, Felix, and Stefano Guzzini. 2025. "Contested Essential Concepts in International Relations," in Cameron G. Thies, ed., *Handbook of International Relations* (Cheltenham, UK et al.: Edward Elgar Publ.), pp. 89-105.

Bevir, Mark, and Asaf Kedar. 2008. "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology." *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (3): 503-17.

Connolly, William E. (1993) *The Terms of Political Discourse*, 3rd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Gerring, John. 2011. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 5 (Concepts), pp. 107-140.

Goertz, Gary (2006) *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, (chapter 2: Structuring and Theorizing Concepts, pp. 27–68.)

Ish-Shalom, Piki, ed. 2021. *Concepts at Work: On the Linguistic Infrastructure of World Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Palonen, Kari (2014) *Politics and Conceptual Histories: Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives* (Nomos: Baden-Baden).

Richter, Melvin (1995) *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Richter, Melvyn. 2005. "More than a two-way traffic: analyzing, translating, and comparing political concepts from other cultures." *Contributions* 1 (1): 7-20.

Sartori, Giovanni (1970) "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics", *American Political Science Review* 64 (4): 1033–53.

Sartori, Giovanni (2009 [1975]) "The Tower of Babel," in David Collier and John Gerring, eds, *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori* (London et al.: Routledge), pp. 61–96.

Schaffer, Frederic Charles Schaffer (2016) *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide* (New York: Routledge).

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 15–44).

- For my own take

Guzzini, Stefano. 1993. "Structural Power: The Limits of Neorealist Power Analysis." *International Organization* 47 (3): 443–78.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2000. "The Use and Misuse of Power Analysis in International Theory." In Ronen Palan, ed., *Global Political Economy: Contemporary Theories*, 53–66. London, New York: Routledge.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2005. "The Concept of Power: A Constructivist Analysis." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (3): 495–522.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2016. "Power." In Felix Berenskoetter, ed., *Concepts in World Politics*, 23–40. London et al.: Sage.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2022. 'Power in World Politics', in *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Politics*, edited by William Thompson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Guest lecture (16 Oct 2025, 9-11, Seminar room 2):

Prof. Rahel Kunz, Université de Lausanne: "Decolonising gender and peacebuilding: Feminist dis/connections around the expertization of gender in Nepal"

See also her **workshop on the previous day** on "Before, during and after: how to work with fieldwork in IR?" (Sala Triaria, 15-17)

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Session 4. Theorisation by generating hypotheses / frameworks of analysis:

Models and Approaches in Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is an important subfield in International Relations that after its heyday in the 1970s, has recently seen a revival (also connected to diplomatic studies, see Session 4). It originated in the attempt to systematise diplomatic history. The watershed was the publication of Graham T. Allison's research on the Cuban Missile Crisis, which featured three models for understanding the decisions during the Crisis. As such, FPA developed a mainly event-centered analysis where case studies are used for theory-development. Focusing on decision-making processes, it attempted to find generalisable frameworks of analysis which, in the more positivist tradition, could perhaps be turned into causal theories once scope conditions could be established. Yet, the more ambitious promises have stayed largely unfulfilled. As a result, FPA changed from its sole focus on decision-making and branched out by developing frameworks of analysis inspired by other theoretical inspirations, like constructivism and post-structuralism. Moreover, some of the initial inspiration to include psychology into the analysis was developed in the systematic study of beliefs and emotions.

Readings

Allison, Graham T. 1969. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisisv." *American Political Science Review* 63 (3): 689–718.

Mercer, Jonathan. 2010. 'Emotional beliefs.' *International Organization* 64 (1): 1–31.

Weldes, Jutta. 1999. *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (chapter 3: 97–119).

Hansen, Lene. 2006. *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London, New York: Routledge (chapter 2+3: 'Discourse analysis, identity, and foreign policy' + 'Beyond the Other', pp. 15–48)

Additional readings (very extensive as it covers also the different -isms in IR)

- Rationalist FPA

Baldwin, David A. 1985. *Economic Statecraft*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Goldstein, Judith, and Robert O. Keohane. 1993. "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework." In their *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, 3–30. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press

- Extensions and critiques of Allison's models

Steinbruner, John D. 1974. *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kaarbo, Juliet. 1998. 'Power Politics in Foreign Policy: The Influence of Bureaucratic Minorities.' *European Journal of International Relations* 4 (1): 67–98.

Krasner, Stephen. 1972. 'Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison's Wonderland).' *Foreign Policy*, vol. 7, pp. 159–79.

Smith, Steve. 1980. "Allison and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Review of the Bureaucratic Politics Model of Foreign Policy Decision-Making." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 9 (1): 21–40.

Steiner, Miriam. 1983. "The Search for Order in a Disorderly World: Worldviews and Prescriptive Decision Paradigms." *International Organization* 37 (3): 373–413.

Welch, David. 1992. "The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms." *International Security* 17 (2): 112–46.

- Constructivist FPA

Biswas, Shampa. 2001. "'Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position: Race as a Postcolonial Resource?" *Alternatives* 26 (4): 485–522.

Doty, Roxanne Lynn. 1993. "Foreign Policy as a Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines." *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (3): 297–320.

Lafer, Celso. 2004. *A identidade internacional do Brasil e a política externa brasileira: passado, presente e futuro*. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

McSweeney, Bill. 1999. *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ringmar, Erik. 1996. *Identity, Interest and Action*. Cambridge University Press.

- Role Theory in FPA

Harnisch, Sebastian, Cornelia Frank, and Hanns W. Maull, eds. 2011. *Role Theory in International Relations*. London: Routledge.

Holsti, K. J. 1970. "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy." *International Studies Quarterly* 14 (3): 233–309.

Thies, Cameron G. 2010. "Role Theory and Foreign Policy." In Robert A. Denemark, ed., *International Studies Encyclopedia, Vol. X*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Walker, Stephen G., ed. 1987. *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wehner, Leslie E. 2020. "The Narration of Roles in Foreign Policy Analysis." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 23 (2): 359–84.

Wehner, Leslie E., and Cameron G. Thies. 2021. "Leader Influence in Role Selection Choices: Fulfilling Role Theory's Potential for Foreign Policy Analysis." *International Studies Review* 23 (4): 1424–41.

- Post-structuralist FPA

Campbell, David. 1992. *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Laffey, Mark. 2000. 'Locating identity: performativity, foreign policy and state action.' *Review of International Studies* 26 (4): 429–44.

Neumann, Iver. 1999. *Uses of the Other: The East European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Chapter 1: 'Uses of the Other in World Politics', pp. 1–37).

Wæver, Ole. 2004. "European Integration and Security: Analysing French and German Discourses on State, Nation, and Europe." In David R. Howarth and Jacob Torfing, eds, *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance*, 33–67. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Gender in Foreign Policy Analysis

Aggestam, Karin, and Ann Towns. 2019. 'The Gender Turn in Diplomacy: A New Research Agenda.' *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 21 (1): 9–28.

Basu, Soumita. 2016. "The Global South Writes 1325 (Too)." *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 362–74.

Haastrup, Toni. 2020. "Gendering South Africa's Foreign Policy: Toward a Feminist Approach?" *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16 (2): 199–216.

Pratt, Nicola. 2014. "Reconceptualizing Gender, Reinscribing Racial–Sexual Boundaries in

International Security: The Case of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security'." *International Studies Quarterly* 57 (4): 772–83.

Shepherd, Laura J. 2016. "Making War Safe for Women? National Action Plans and the Militarisation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda." *International Political Science Review* 37 (3): 324–35.

Towns, Ann. 2020. "Gender, Nation and the Generation of Cultural Difference across 'the West'." In Andrew Phillips and Christian Reus-Smit, eds, *Culture and Order in World Politics*, 271–93. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Psychology / Emotions in FPA

Hutchison, Emma 2010. 'Trauma and the Politics of Emotions: Constituting Identity, Security and Community After the Bali Bombing.' *International Relations* 24(1): 65–86.

Hutchison, Emma. 2016. *Affective Communities in World Politics: Collective Emotions after Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jervis, Robert. 2006. "Understanding Beliefs." *Political Psychology* 27 (5): 641–63.

Mercer, Jonathan. 2014. 'Feeling like a state: Social Emotion and Identity.' *International Theory* 6 (3): 515–35.

Ross, Andrew G. (2006) 'Coming in from the Cold: Constructivism and Emotions', *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (2): 197–222.

Sasley, Brent. 2011. "Theorizing States' Emotions." *International Studies Review* 13 (3): 452–76.

Saurette, Paul. 2006. "You Dissin me? Humiliation and post 9/11 global politics." *Review of International Studies* 32 (3): 495–522.

- For some background on FPA, incl. classics and Handbooks

Carlsnaes, Walter. 2013. "Foreign Policy." In Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, eds, *Handbook of International Relations*, 298–325. London et al.: Sage.

Carlsnaes, Walter and Stefano Guzzini, eds. 2011. *Foreign Policy Analysis,* 5 vols. *Sage Library of International Relations*. London et al.: Sage.

Kaarbo, Juliet, and Cameron G. Thies, eds. 2024. *The Oxford Handbook of Foreign Policy Analysis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mello, Patrick A. and Falk Ostermann, eds. 2023. *Routledge Handbook of Foreign Policy Analysis Methods*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- For my own take on some of the issues

Guzzini, Stefano. 1998. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold*. London, New York: Routledge (chapter 5).

Guzzini, Stefano. 2012. 'The framework of analysis: geopolitics meets foreign policy identity crises.' In his ed., *The return of geopolitics in Europe? Social mechanisms and foreign policy identity crises*, 45–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2017. "Militarizing Politics, Essentializing Identities: Interpretivist Process Tracing and the Power of Geopolitics." *Cooperation and Conflict* 52 (3): 423–45.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2022. "'Vision of Itself' in Foreign Policy Analysis: From the Role of Ideas to Identity and Recognition." *Teoria Polityki* (6): 33–57 [Open access]. (A shorter version is published as "Ideas and Identity from Rationalism to Theories of Recognition." In Patrick A. Mello and Falk Ostermann, eds, *The Routledge Handbook of Foreign Policy Methods*, 21–38. Abingdon: Routledge, 2023.)

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Session 5. Meta-theorising: Relational and process ontologies (SG)

Meta-theorising inquires the assumptions – ontological, epistemological, methodological – that undergird social and political theories. Becoming prominent in the late 1980s and 1990s, around the so-called "Third Debate" (Holsti, Hollis & Smith, Lapid), it became a way to criticize the (in)coherence of certain theorisations in IR. For instance, Alexander Wendt (1987) became famous by showing that Kenneth Waltz' theory of neorealism, although allegedly a structural theory, ultimately relied on a market analogy and therefore on methodological individualism which unconsciously blends out certain aspects of reality (as also structuralist theories do). In a slightly different vein, Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie showed that regime theory's ontology clashed with its epistemology. Its ontology is informed by intersubjectivity (regimes, norms) that can become internal reasons for action, whereas its positivist epistemology can conceive of norms merely as objects that are external causes for action.

This type of theorizing is illustrated by a recent "relational turn" in IR. Although the ideas were already out for a while, they gathered pace in the last decade. This was informed by attempts to rethink the agency-structure problem through a more processual ontology, which led to social theories that would be able to offer this. And it was informed by "Global IR", that is, the attempt not to merely assume that concepts and theorisations derived from the West are (to be) shared in other cosmologies. Relation(al)ism is often considered a hallmark of Chinese or more widely Asian cosmologies. The seminar readings are on the social theory side, but the link to the discussion in Global IR is in the additional readings, and to some extent followed up in session 9.

Readings

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

Qin, Yaqing. 2016. "A Relational Theory of World Politics." *International Studies Review* 18 (1): 33–47.

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus, and Daniel H. Nexon. 2019. "Reclaiming the Social: Relationalism in Anglophone International Studies." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32 (5): 582–600.

Kurki, Milja. 2022. "Relational Revolution and Relationality in IR: New Conversations." *Review of International Studies* 48 (5): 821–36.

Additional readings (which also connect the issue to Global IR)

Fierke, Karin M., and Vivienne Jabri. 2019. "Global Conversations: Relationality, Embodiment and Power in the Move Towards a Global IR." *Global Constitutionalism* 8 (3): 506-35.

Kavalski, Emilian. 2018. *The Guanxi of Relational International Theory*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

Kurki, Milja. 2020. *International Relations in a Relational Universe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ling, Lily H. M. 2014. *The Dao of World Politics: Towards a Post-Westphalian, Worldist International Relations*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Trownsell, Tamara, Navnita Chadha Behera & Giorgio Shani, "Pluriversal Relationality." Special Issue of *Review of International Studies* 48 (5): 787–929.

Weber, Martin. 2020. "The Normative Grammar of Relational Analysis: Recognition Theory's Contribution to Understanding Short-Comings in IR's Relational Turn." *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (3): 641–48.

Zalewski, Marysia. 2019. "Forget(Ting) Feminism? Investigating Relationality in International Relations." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32 (5): 615–35.

Zanotti, Laura. 2018. *Ontological Entanglements, Agency and Ethics in International Relations: Exploring the Crossroads*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge. (see also the Forum on the Book in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49, 1, (2020))

- For some of the classical control of inconsistencies

Kratochwil, Friedrich, and John Gerard Ruggie. 1986. "International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State." *International Organization* 40 (4): 753–75.

Wendt, Alexander. 1987. "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory." *International Organization* 41 (3): 335–70.

- For the "third debate"

Holsti, K. J. 1985. *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory*. Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Lapid, Yosef. 1989. "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era." *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (3): 235–54.

Hollis, Martin, and Steve Smith. 1990. *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Still

Guzzini, Stefano. 2017. "International Political Sociology, Or: The Social Ontology and Power Politics of Process." In Xavier Guillaume and Pinar Bilgin, eds, *Routledge Handbook of International Political Sociology*, 366–75. Abingdon: Routledge. [also accessible as DIIS Working Paper 2016: 06].

Guzzini, Stefano. 2024. 'Relationism(s) Unpacked: Engaging Yaqing Qin's Relational Theory of World Politics', *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 17 (2): 187–205.

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Guest lecture (28 Oct 2025, 17-19, Emeroteca):

Prof. Matthias Leese, ETH Zürich: "Holding Schengen together: Complexity and care in multi-level information systems"

See also the **method workshop** on *Studying-up: Field research with security actors* (Sala Triaria, 29 October, 15.00-18.00)

Voluntary ad-hoc seminar (30 Oct, 9-11, Seminar room 2): Lecture on student demand (e.g. understanding varieties of realism in IR (maybe followed in the evening with a documentary on Kissinger, if there is demand), constructivism in IR, concept analysis in the social sciences, or other)

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Session 6. IR Theory meets (regional) reality (RDS)

Regions and their relationship to international security and global order are a major issues in IR theory. But in spite of important theoretical advances, applying IR theory to understand and explain regional dynamics and their place in global politics have remained challenging, particularly – and perhaps counterintuitively—in the case of the Middle East. There are of course very different ways of how regions in world politics can be approached theoretically, ranging from (neo)realism to security complex theory, and from English School to liberal internationalism, with the question of how to bridge the gap between IR and Middle Studies, or more generally, the 'Area Study Controversy', remaining salient.

Readings

Buzan, Barry and Ole Wæver (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; chapter 7 ('The Middle East: A Perennial Conflict Formation'), pp. 187-218.

Solingen, Etel (2007) '*Pax Asiatica* versus *Bella Levantina*: The Foundations of War and Peace in East Asia and the Middle East', *American Political Science Review* 101(3): 757–80.

Teti, Andrea (2007) 'Bridging the Gap: IR, Middle East Studies and the Disciplinary Politics of the Area Studies Controversy', *European Journal of International Relations* 13(1): 117-45.

Valbjørn, Morten (2017) 'Strategies for Reviving the International Relations/Middle East Nexus after the Arab Uprisings', *PS: Political Science and Politics* 50(3): 647-51.

Additional readings

Aarts, Paul (1999) 'The Middle East: A Region without Regionalism or the End of Exceptionalism?, *Third World Quarterly* 20(5): 911–25.

Acharya, Amitav (2011) 'Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World,' *International Studies Quarterly* 55(1): 95-123.

Barnett, Michael N. (1998) *Dialogues in Arab Politics,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Bilgin, Pinar (2004) 'Whose "Middle East"? Geopolitical Inventions and Practices of Security,' *International Relations* 18(1): 25-42.

Bilgin, Pinar (2010) *Regional Security in the Middle East: A Critical Perspective,* London: Routledge.

Bilgin, Pinar (2015) 'Region, Security, Regional Security: "Whose Middle East?" Revisited', in *Regional Insecurity after the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat*, ed. Elizabeth Monier, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 19–39.

Buzan, Barry and Ole Wæver (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; the remaining chapters.

Cammett, M., I. Diwan, A. Richards, and J. Waterbury (2015) *A Political Economy of the Middle East,* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Darwich, May (2019) *Threats and Alliances in the Middle East: Saudi and Syrian Policies in a Turbulent Region,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Darwich, May, and Tamirace Fakhoury (2016) 'Casting the Other as an Existential Threat: The Securitisation of Sectarianism in the International Relations of the Syria Crisis, *Global Discourse* 6(4): 712–32.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A. (2017) 'Contentious Borders in the Middle East and North Africa: Context and Concepts', *International Affairs* 93(4): 787–97.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A., and Eduard Soler i Lecha (2024) 'Regionalism and Alliances in the Middle East, 2011-2021: From a "Flash in the Pan" of Regional Cooperation to Liquid Alliances', *Geopolitics* 29(4): 1447-1473.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A., Helle Malmvig and Eduard Soler i Lecha (2025) 'Lost in Change: A Framework for Understanding Change in the Middle East Regional Order', in *Order and Region Making in the Middle East*, eds. Marc Lynch and Simon Mabon, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 32-61.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A., Helle Malmvig and Eduard Soler i Lecha (2019) *Interregnum: The Regional Order in the Middle East and North Africa after 2011,* MENARA Report no. 1, February.

Fawcett, Louise (2020) 'Regionalism', in *SAGE Handbook of Political Science*, ed. D. Berg-Schlosser, B. Badie, and L. Morlino, Vol. 3, chapter 80, London: SAGE.

Fawcett, Louise (2023) 'The Iraq War 20 Years on: Towards a New Regional Architecture', *International Affairs* 99(2): 567–85.

Fawcett, Louise, ed. (2023) *International Relations of the Middle East*, 6th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gause, F. Gregory (2014) *Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War*, Doha: Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper no. 11.

Halliday, Fred (2005) *The Middle East in International Relations: Power Politics and Ideology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; especially chapter 1 ('International Relations Theory and the Middle East.')

Halliday, Fred (2009) 'The Middle East and Conceptions of "International Society"', in *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level,* eds.

Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-23.

Hinnebusch, Raymond (2009) 'Order and Change in the Middle East: A Neo-Gramscian Twist on the International Society Approach', in *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level,* eds. Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 201-225.

Lawson, Fred (2006) *Constructing International Relations in the Arab World,* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lawson, Fred (2023) 'International Relations Theory and the Middle East', in *International Relations of the Middle East*, ed. Louise Fawcett, 6th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 1.

Lynch, Marc (2016) *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East,* New York: Public Affairs.

Walt, Stephen M. (1987) *The Origins of Alliances,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

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Guest lecture, 3 November 2025 (17:30-19:00, Villa Schifanoia, Sala Belvedere): Prof. Oren Yiftachel, prof. emeritus, Ben-Gurion University, and co-founder of 'A Land for All': Triality: Gaza and the Political Geography of Israel/Palestine

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Session 7. Interests, identities, security (RDS)

There are very different ways of conceptualizing the relationship between interests, identities, and security in IR, depending on different ontologies and epistemologies. As is well known, traditional (neo)realist theory treats interests as given, primarily defined by survival and power. With states being conceived of as rational actors pursuing objective 'national interests', security is then a zero-sum quest for relative advantage. Identities may kick in subsequently, for instance in the context of framing security interests. Neoliberal institutionalism and in particular the concept of regimes maintain an ambiguous relationship to the place and nature of identities and ideas (are they constitutive of regimes or not?). Conversely, constructivist and critical approaches argue that interests are not pre-existing or given but socially constructed, with a state's identity influencing what it perceives as valuable or threatening. The meaning and 'type' of security can thus vary considerably, ranging from an allegedly fixed, exogenous, and objective goal to a reflection of particular identities and (socially constructed) interests, and from ontological (as opposed to physical or material) security to the co-constitution of interests and identities. The referent object of security can also vary, as illustrated by the securitization approach on the one hand, and the expansion of security beyond military defence to include human security, economic welfare, migration, or environmental degradation on the other. And although the relationship between interests, identities and security has been debated for decades in IR, many questions remain open…

Readings

Goldstein, Judith, and Robert O. Keohane (1993) 'Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework', in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, eds. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 3–30.

Jepperson, Ronald L., Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein (1996) 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security', in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein, New York: Columbia University Press, chapter 2.

Mitzen, Jennifer (2006) 'Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma', *European Journal of International Relations* 12(3): 341-370.

Additional readings

Adler, Emanuel and Michael Barnett, eds. (1998) *Security Communities,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, especially chapters 1-2.

Barnett, Michael N. (1998) *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, especially chapters 1 and 8.

Berger, Thomas (1993) 'From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-Militarism', *International Security* 17(4): 119-150.

Buzan, Barry (1991) *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed., Hemel Hempstead: Harvester.

Campbell, David (1992) *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Darwich, May (2016) 'The Ontological (In)security of Similarity: Wahhabism versus Islamism in Saudi Foreign Policy', *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12(3): 469–488.

Darwich, May and Tamirace Fakhoury (2016) 'Casting the Other as an Existential Threat: The Securitisation of Sectarianism in the International Relations of the Syria Crisis', *Global Discourse* 6(4): 712-732.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A. (2021) 'Sectarian Securitization in the Middle East and the Case of Israel', *International Affairs* 97(3): 759-778.

Fearon, James and David Laitin (2000) 'Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity', *International Organization* 54(4): 845–77.

Goldstein, Judith, and Robert O. Keohane, eds. (1993) *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hashemi, Nader and Danny Postel (2017) 'Introduction: The Sectarianization Thesis', in *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East,* eds. Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, London: Hurst, pp. 1–22.

Katzenstein, Peter, ed. (1996) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Kinnvall, Catarina (2004) 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security', *Political Psychology* 25(5): 741–767.

Kowert, Paul and Jeffrey Legro (1996) 'Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise, in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein, New York: Columbia University Press, chapter 12.

Krause, Keith and Michael C. Williams, eds. (1997) *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases,* Minneapolis: University of Arizona Press.

Lupovici, Amir (2012) 'Ontological Dissonance, Clashing Identities, and Israel's Unilateral Steps towards the Palestinians', *Review of International Studies*, 38(4): 809–833.

Norton, Anne (1988) *Reflections on Political Identity,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rumelili, Bahar (2013) 'Identity and Desecuritization: The Pitfalls of Conflating Ontological and Physical Security, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 18(1): 52–74.

Tickner, J. Ann (1996). 'Identity in International Relations Theory: Feminist Perspectives', in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, eds. Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, pp. 147-162.

Waever, Ole et al. (1993) *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, London: Pinter.

Weaver, Ole (1996): 'European Security Identities', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34(1): 103–32.

Wendt, Alexander (1994): 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review* 88(2): 384–96.

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Guest seminar (13 November 2025, 9-11h, Seminar room 2): Prof. Simone Tholens, John Cabbott University / EUI: 'Interests, identities, security'

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Session 8. Political economy and IR (RDS)

To understand patterns of interaction and change in international politics, it is obviously important to consider how material forces shape global affairs. Realist approaches consider material factors, resources, and military might while competition over resources or interdependence can explain patterns of conflict or cooperation. But altogether, and with some additional exceptions (as discussed in Session 3), IR theories and IPE and not well integrated. Yet, IPE can provide some important insights, for example by explaining the structure of the international economic order in which global politics take place. It can shed light on how wealth distribution and market mechanisms affect inequality, development, and environmental sustainability. A political economy perspective can also provide insights on how domestic economic structures, such as class coalitions, industrial composition, or fiscal constraints can feed into foreign-policy preferences. Or it can contribute to our understanding of the way in which globalization, digitalization, or the rise of state-capitalist models (such as in China) alter the architecture of the international system, to give some examples. The way in which the consideration of global economic structures can be accommodated with different theories in IR remains however a topic of discussion.

Readings

Cox, Robert (1981) 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium* 10(2): 126-55.

Galtung, Johan (1971) 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research* 8(2): 81-117.

Gilpin, Robert (2001) *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapters 1and 2.

Additional readings

Cardoso, Fernando Henrique and Enzo Faletto (1978) *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A. (2021) *Borderlands: Europe and the Mediterranean Middle East,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, in particular chapter 5 and 6.

Doner, Richard F., Bryan K. Ritchie and Dan Slater (2005) 'Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective', *International Organization* 59(2): 327-361.

Folbre, Nancy (2020) *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems: An Intersectional Political Economy*, London: Verso.

Gerstle, Gary (2022) *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Guazzone, Laura and Daniela Pioppi, eds. (2009) *The Arab State and Neo-Liberal Globalisation: The Re-Structuring of State Power in the Middle East*, London: Ithaca & Garnet Publishing.

Hanieh, Adam (2013) *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*, London: Haymarket Books, chapters 1-4.

Herbst, Jeffrey (2000) *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Roman Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, and Timotheos Frey (2006) 'Globalization and the Transformation of the National Political Space: Six European Countries Compared', *European Journal of Political Research* 45(6): 921-956.

Margalit, Yotam (2012) 'Lost in Globalization: International Economic Integration and the Sources of Popular Discontent', *International Studies Quarterly* 56: 484–500.

Mattei, Clara (2022) *The Capital Order: How Economists Invented Austerity and Paved the Way to Fascism,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Piketty, Thomas (2020) *Capital and Ideology,* Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press.

Schwartz, Herman (2007) 'Dependency or Institutions? Economic Geography, Causal Mechanisms, and Logic in the Understanding of Development', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 42: 115-35.

Sen, Amartya (1992) *Inequality Reexamined*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Slobodian, Quinn (2018) *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Solingen, Etel (2001) 'Mapping Internationalization: Domestic and Regional Impacts', *International Studies Quarterly* 45(4): 517-555.

Stiglitz, Joseph E. (2018) *Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump,* New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Strange, Susan (1986) *Casino Capitalism,* London: Blackwells.

Strange, Susan (1988) *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy*, New York: Basil Blackwell.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (2004) 'World System Analysis: An Introduction', Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

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Session 9. Orientalism, Post-colonialism, Feminist IR (RDS)

With Edward Said's book *Orientalism* being a classic, post-colonial and feminist IR theory advance important lines of criticism toward dominant and supposedly universal theories in 'mainstream' IR. While both approaches maintain that knowledge production itself is a site of power, post-colonial IR theory argues that mainstream IR continues to be Western-centric and ignores power asymmetries forged by colonial domination. Scholars such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Robert J. Cox emphasize that concepts of sovereignty, security, and development reflect colonial epistemologies that marginalize non-Western perspectives. Feminist IR foregrounds gender as a fundamental structuring force in world politics, contending that traditional IR neglects how power relations are gendered. Pioneers such as Cynthia Enloe, J. Ann Tickner, and Christine Sylvester have argued that security, war, and diplomacy are not gender-neutral; they are produced and experienced differently by men, women, and non-binary individuals.

Readings

Said, Edward W. (1978) 'Knowing the Oriental', in *Orientalism*, New York: Penguin Press, pp. 31-49.

Tickner, J. Ann (1997) 'You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists', *International Studies Quarterly* 41(4): 611–632.

Barkawi, Tarak and Mark Laffey (2006) 'The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies', *Review of International Studies* 32(2): 329-52.

Additional readings

Acemogulu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson (2001) 'The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation', *American Economic Review* 91(5): 1369-401.

Acharya, Amitav (2022) 'Race and Racism in the Founding of the Modern World Order', *International Affairs* 98(1): 23–43.

Al-Ali, Nadje (2000) *Secularism, Gender and the State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women's Movement*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in particular chapter 1 ('Up Against Conceptual Frameworks: Post-Orientalism, Occidentalism and Presentation of the Self')

Bhabha, Homi K. (2004) *The Location of Culture,* London: Routledge.

Bhambra, Gurminder K. (2020) 'Colonial Global Economy: Towards a Theoretical Reorientation of Political Economy', *Review of International Political Economy* 28 (2): 307–322.

Bilgin, Pinar (2010) 'The "Western-centrism" of Security Studies: "Blind Spot" or Constitutive Practice?', *Security Dialogue* 41(6): 615–622.

Buruma, Ian and Avishai Margalit (2004) *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism*, London: Atlantic Books.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cooper, Frederick (2005) *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cox, Robert W. (1987) *Production, Power, and World Order*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Enloe, Cynthia (2014) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics,* 2nd ed., Berkeley: University of California Press.

Enloe, Cynthia (2017) *The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging Persistent Patriarchy,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Folbre, Nancy (2020) *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems: An Intersectional Political Economy*, London: Verso.

Gani, Jasmine K. and Jenna Marshall (2022) 'The Impact of Colonialism on Policy and Knowledge Production in International Relations', *International Affairs* 98(1): 5–22.

Mamdani, Mahmood (2022) *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Pratt, Nicola and Sophie Richter-Devroe, eds. (2014) *Gender, Governance and International Security*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Said, Edward W. (1978) *Orientalism*, New York: Penguin Press.

Sylvester, Christine (1994) *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sylvester, Christine (2002) *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tickner, J. Ann (2005) 'What is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions', *International Studies Quarterly* 49(1): 1-21.

Tickner, J. Ann and Laura Sjoberg, eds. (2011) *Feminism and International Relations: Conversations about the Past, Present, and Future*, London: Routledge.

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No guest lecture/ad hoc seminar

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Session 10. International order, regional order(s) – and beyond (RDS)

IR scholars have long debated whether the world is organized around a stable 'international order', what defines that order, and how order changes over time. Are shifts in order best understood as balance of power adjustments as we are now moving towards a multipolar (or multiplex) order? And if so, will this happen peacefully or trigger conflicts? What is the role of international institutions, shared norms, and economic interdependence as the order's normative foundations are increasingly contested by authoritarian models? Are we currently

witnessing a normal re-configuration, away from liberal democratic values towards illiberalism, or is there even a reconfiguration of the very idea of order? And what is the relationship between a changing global order and regional order(s), is there really a one-way relationship? The last session of this IR field seminar will focus on these issues while also trying to wrap up the seminar.

Readings

Acharya, Amitav, Antoni Estevadeordal, and Louis W. Goodman (2023) 'Multipolar or Multiplex? Interaction Capacity, Global Cooperation and World Order', *International Affairs* 99(6): 2339–65.

Acharya, Amitav (2011) 'Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World,' *International Studies Quarterly* 55(1): 95-123.

Ikenberry, G. John (2018) 'The End of Liberal International Order?', *International Affairs* 94 (1): 7–23.

Lake, David A., Lisa L. Martin, and Thomas Risse, eds. (2021) 'Challenges to the Liberal International Order: Reflections on *International Organization*', *International Organization* 75(2): 225-257.

Additional readings

Acharya, Amitav (2007) 'The Emerging Regional Architecture of World Politics', *World Politics* 59(4): 629–52.

Acharya, Amitav (2014) 'Global IR and Regional Worlds', *International Studies Quarterly* 58(4): 647-659.

Acharya, Amitav (2014) 'International Relations Theory and the "Rise of Asia*"',* in *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*, eds. Saadia M. Pekkanen, John Ravenhill, and Rosemary Foot, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 120–138.

Acharya, Amitav and Alastair Iain Jonston, eds. (2007) *Crafting Cooperation: Regional Institutions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adler, Emanuel and Alena Drieschova (2021) 'The Epistemological Challenge of Truth Subversion to the Liberal International Order', *International Organization* 75(2): 359-386.

Börzel, Tanja A. and Michael Zürn (2021) 'Contestations of the Liberal International Order: From Liberal Multilateralism to Postnational Liberalism', *International Organization* 75(2): 282-305.

Broz, J. Lawrence, Jeffry Frieden, and Stephen Weymouth (2021) 'Populism in Place: The Economic Geography of the Globalization Backlash', *International Organization*75(2):464-494.

Bull, Hedley (1977) *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Buzan, Barry and Ole Wæver (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; the remaining chapters.

Cox, Robert W. (1987) *Production, Power, and World Order*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A. (2025) 'Violence and Regional Order in the Middle East after October 7', in *Regional Order-Making after October 7*, eds. Raffaella A. Del Sarto, Marc Lynch and Simon Mabon, POMEPS Studies 56, pp. 17-23.

Del Sarto, Raffaella A., Helle Malmvig and Eduard Soler i Lecha (2025) 'Lost in Change: A Framework for Understanding Change in the Middle East Regional Order', in *Order and Region Making in the Middle East*, eds. Marc Lynch and Simon Mabon, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 32-61.

Duncombe, Constance, and Tim Dunne (2018) 'After Liberal World Order', *International Affairs* 94(1): 25–42.

Fawcett, Louise (2020) 'Regionalism', in *SAGE Handbook of Political Science*, eds. Dirk Berg-Schlosser, Bertrand Badie, and Leonardo Morlino, Vol 3, chapter 80, London: SAGE.

Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization* 52(4): 887–917.

Flaherty, Thomas M. and Ronald Rogowski (2021) 'Rising Inequality as a Threat to the Liberal International Order', *International Organization* 75(2): 495-523.

Goodman, Sara Wallace and Thomas B. Pepinsky (2021) 'The Exclusionary Foundations of Embedded Liberalism', *International Organization* 75(2):411-439.

Hurrell, Andrew (2007) *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Katzenstein, Peter (2005) *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, New York: Cornell University Press.

March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen (1988) 'The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders', *International Organization* 52(4): 943-969.

Mearsheimer, John J. (1990) 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security* 15(1): 5–56.

Mearsheimer, John J. (2019) 'Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order', *International Security* 43(4): 7–50.

Morgan, Patrick M. and David A. Lake, eds. (1997) *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World,* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

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

Solingen, Etel (1998) *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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Guest lecture (4 December 2025, 9-11h, Seminar room 2): Prof. Mark Gilbert, Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe: 'The Limits of Normative Liberalism in International Relations'

Short description of assignments

1. The basis: analytical reading

All assignments necessarily include a component which invite you to read texts analytically and to 'make the arguments your own', not in the sense of you agreeing with them, but being able to independently articulate and comment them.

There is more than one way to do this. However, the following components are almost always present: *what* is the main claim and contribution of the reading? *Why* (and *for whom*) is this significant? *How* and how successful is the claim defended?

1. First, you have to try to understand the intention and main claim of the author. What are the main arguments, what is the main thesis? By establishing the main thesis, keep in mind that academic results – although this seems sometimes hard to believe – are part of a wider communication. To whom is the argument addressed, i.e. to which literature, debate or event does it respond and wants to contribute? What is its exact contribution which we did not yet know? What is hence the purpose of the piece?

The rule of thumb is: 'in which context? says who? what? to whom? for what purpose?'

Example:

John Mearsheimer has published in the early 1990s an article, entitled 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War'. The offensive realist Mearsheimer was puzzled by the Yugoslav wars, i.e. by the fact that the end of the Cold War seemed to herald peace but brought war. His main thesis is that the end of the Cold War was not bringing more, but less stability to Europe, because certain policy-constraining effects of bipolarity no longer held.

2. After the 'what', where you try to succinctly get to the core of the argument, in a second but related step, you have to understand why the topic or argument is significant. *Why* should who care?

Example:

Mearsheimer's main claim has three implications and hence also three audiences which may not necessarily overlap. Theoretically, Mearsheimer wants to show that realist theories of IR are powerful, since their main variable (changes in the polarity of the international system) can, according to him, explain the puzzle of instability. Empirically, he made sense of the Yugoslav wars. And politically, the article suggested that it was best not to have liberal daydreams about the post-wall system and try to contain such tendencies with force, if necessary (preparing for war to achieve negative peace).

3. Having established the main thesis, purpose and significance, you have to double-check whether the argument is well supported. After 'what' and 'why' comes the 'how'. This, in turn, comes in two steps. First, you have to understand whether the chosen methodology for supporting the argument is appropriate. Second, you have to assess whether the empirical and theoretical evidence can make the point the author wants them to make.

Example:

Mearsheimer's methodology is not very elaborate, since he basically makes 'good sense' arguments with some chosen historical illustration. So, you cannot much control whether the variables he isolates and the arguments he uses are well defended. In this case, you have to control whether *the assumptions* upon which such arguments are built, can hold. For instance, here the assumption is that international politics is generally driven by systemic forces which also explain this particular case. Moreover, the theoretical basis, here realism, has already been criticised from elsewhere: how does this new case live up to former criticisms, does it respond to them? Does the

approach discuss competing explanations? If not, why? If yes, how fair are the other explanations introduced and compared? Is the literature sufficiently well covered? Finally, is the empirical evidence sufficient for the claim; i.e. it is not only important to know whether the evidence is correct (or the interpretation of it reasonable), but whether the case can rest on it, which is a far more demanding requirement.

4. Finally, you have to come to a conclusion on whether the research questions asked (the problematique) is indeed significant, whether the arguments are cogent, whether they are well supported, and whether they succeed in the purpose the author has said for him/herself.

Doing these steps leads you to produce an 'inverted research design', i.e. you re-construct the research design the scholar had by reading backwards from the published result.

2. The seminar-presentation

A seminar-presentation has two purposes. First, it wants to quickly move the agenda of the seminar to the core points of the readings. Second, it wants to raise questions which can structure the discussion later.

1. For the first aim, the presentation relies on the analytical reading just mentioned and hence not much more description is needed here. To restate: A presentation of a reading is not a summary of a text. The worst presentation simply restates the section headings of the readings, following them religiously. This is to be avoided at all cost. It is well advised to think about other readings and about possible comparisons and discussions/debates between them and the text. The expression of a personal judgement (or questions), even tentative but supported by argument, is mandatory.

2. For introducing the discussion, i.e. for asking relevant questions about a text, the presenter has to make sure that his/her own choice of discussion topics is sufficiently justified. That justification can come via an internal and an external critique of the text.

An *internal* critique is the logical follow-up of the analytical reading, step 4. Here, the presenter raises and develops issues which are within the very research design of the author by controlling for consistency and logic in both the theoretical assumptions with which the author works and in their relation to the empirical material. Such a critique is important and is, to some extent, both the 'easiest' for a commentator (since to a large extent, one does not need to think about topics much beyond the text), and often the more damaging and honest towards the author. For at least you make sure not to criticise someone for something he/she never wanted to do in the first place.

But there is also a second, *external*, critique. This also logically follows from the criticisms in the analytical reading and can happen at different steps. At a first step, the historical and sociological context can provide a clue not only why a scholar chooses a topic, but also the emphasis on certain factors which might seem odd in the light of later years. At a second step, if the assumptions of an argument clash, this can have something to do with the insufficiently reflected underlying ethical, political, and also meta-theoretical influences. For instance, Margaret Thatcher's famous 'There is no such a thing as a society' implies this three-fold stance in favour of individualism, as opposed to positive freedom (ethics), social-democracy (politics) and holism (meta-theory). But whereas there is no such a thing as a society when it comes to Thatcherite British Politics, apparently there was such a thing as a British nation, when she went to the Falkland war – an uneasy, if not contradictory combination of individualism and nationalism. Moreover, if the author has not sufficiently covered relevant literature and competing explanations, then an external critique can situate the piece of work with regard to this. Finally, if there seems to be a bias in the selection of the information, the author is unaware of or has not

justified, then the external critique can try to find out the reasons for the bias. These are just examples of external critiques: there can be more.

In short: in an internal critique you probe the argument for internal consistency and that can imply that, with the very same assumptions, other results would have been just as possible. In an external critique you show that the same result can be reached by other and better ways, or that such results should not be looked for in the first place.

3. Important for the presentation is that these questions somewhat 'naturally' follow from the analytical reading. The presenters should, if all functions well, not need to explicitly justify the questions and comments they raise, since they are but the consequence of the analytical reading. This said, some questions can be of a more personal interest, because the presenters have previous experiences or knowledge which can be associated with the readings and which could become an interesting piece for discussion. There, in order to introduce it, some background justification is warranted.

Finally, and equally important, academia is not a place for the 'I-know-it-all' people. So, the obvious questions that need to be asked are about things one is not sure about. Usually other people are not sure about that either – or should not be. Hence, it is not only legitimate, but crucial that those points be raised that were not clear to the presenters, but seemed important for the argument of the reading, and hence for the seminar discussion.

The actual handout of the presentation should include a shortened version of the inverted research design and comments, as well as the questions for discussion. One can either insert questions into the discussion of the research design, or collect them after it. There is no need to have more than 4 (good) questions or so (but the list can get easily longer, if there are many things unclear). The whole should preferably fit on one page.

3. Response memos
Once the analytical reading and the presentation is clear, a response memo is little more. It consists of approx. 3-4 pages which show the inverted research design of the assigned author (or discusses/compares if there is more than one) and raises some questions at the end, both for clarification and discussion in the seminar.

These papers serve several functions. They ensure that you read with the necessary care. They make sure that all can profit from the seminar discussion (otherwise why have a seminar?), since all know the reading. They help you to accumulate knowledge. You can more easily refer back, compare between the readings. At the end of the course, you will have at least 3 in-depth writings on your readings.

But most importantly, they allow a regular flow of information and communication, a continuous feedback between the student and the teacher. All memos will receive written feedback. It offers the opportunity of a more person-tailored teaching, a quasi-tutoring, where your individual interests, curiosity, but also potential lacunae can be accommodated. For this reason, it is compulsory in these memos to include questions about things you did not understand, were not sure about, or which have spurred your curiosity and on which you would like to solicit feedback from the teacher.

4. Final papers / Essays
For those who write a longer paper as final assignment (about 10-15 pages), a separate memo on "how to write an essay" will be distributed. Note that also this assignment can have different functions, not all covered in that memo. Besides write a paper that engages some selected components of the course, researchers can also use the opportunity to link some of the course

literature and modes of theorisation to their own research. But the following could be useful when going about it.

The essay may contain a design including the following in this or similar order:

1. Define and justify the precise problematique you would like to discuss / explain or understand. (Note: this should involve some literature review of the event / theme that helps you to situate the precise problematique). This first step, also called *problematisation*, is meant to indicate the body of knowledge – empirical, theoretical or both – *to* which your analysis will speak and potentially contribute (audience) and the reasons for why the discussion is significant for that body of knowledge.

2. Specify and justify the body of knowledge (usually: theories) *with* which you conduct your analysis. Look for the kind of theories which can be used in the analysis or which have been used already in the debate about the event / topic. Justify your choice of theory/ies. If necessary, justify your choice against alternative theories / explanations. Note that these theories with which you make your analysis can come from the same area as the target audience to which you wish to contribute, but they can also stem from another area.

Smaller, well-defined topics, where aims are explicit, concrete and manageable, tend to produce better papers than broad and sweeping topics that more easily lead to vaguer lines of reasoning and unclear answers. This is not a distinction between 'concrete' versus 'abstract'. Several concrete questions can be imprecise, whereas abstract ones can be sharp.