Power and Order in World Politics (Bachelor Year 3 / Fall)

Bachelor in Social Sciences / Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics and Law

Introduction

This course examines the fragile coexistence between the pursuit of power and the aspiration for international order in global politics. More specifically, it analyzes the contemporary liberal order, as shaped largely by US power. Rather than presuming its stability or legitimacy, we seek to interrogate the principles, norms, interests and asymmetries that shape it, as well as those that threaten to dismantle the prevailing international architecture. Students will engage with the fundamental issues that constitute “order” in a world lacking any form of global sovereign authority. Areas of emphasis include the redefinition of power in our present world, the existence and influence of “great power competition”, the scope and limits of multilateralism nowadays, the role of values and institutions. Additionally, we will analyze the legal, ethical and operational dilemmas posed by US military interventions and the resulting imbalance in global power configurations.

Class sessions

Session I. Power and order: An introduction
- Anarchy in world politics: The need to survive
- Power in world politics: The will to exist
- Order in world politics: The ambition to dominate
Part I. Defending US Power and the liberal order

Session 2. What context for US power? The debates about the nature of International Relations
- A post-Westphalian world? The importance of state power
- A unipolar world? The importance of US power
- A homogeneous world? The Importance of US values

Session 3. What vision for US power? The schools of US foreign policy
- A general classification: An analysis of US foreign policy approaches
- A specific classification: A study of US foreign policy singularity
- A practical classification: A comparison of US contemporary Administrations

Session 4. What guarantees for US power? The consolidation of the liberal order
- Capitalism and Democracy promotion: Defending values
- International organizations: Using institutions
- Europe and traditional allies: Relying on others

Part II. Challenging US Power and the liberal order

Session 5. The shadow of destabilization: The instability of the Middle-East
- Terrorism and the War against terror
- The dilemma of authoritarian regimes

Duration

1 semester

Teaching languages

- English

Conditions of submission

If you need more information about this course, kindly send an email to: incomingdri@icp.fr

- The permanent Arab-Israeli conflict

Session 6. The shadow of competition: The return of global Russia
- Facing Russian ambition
- The issue of NATO enlargement
- Dealing with Russian aggressions

Session 7. The shadow of confrontation: The rise of hegemonic China
- Facing Chinese ambition
- The issue of the trade war
- Dealing with Chinese aggressions

Each “TD” will be focused on a policy paper presented by a group of students. Students are part of the US Department of State. As a group, they need to write a policy paper for the Secretary of State. This policy paper will focus on a specific issue that could impact the liberal order, making it a considerable topic for US foreign policy. The goal is to convince the US Secretary of State of both the importance of the problem and the coherence of the proposed actions.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
-Understand the theoretical and historical foundations of the international order;
-Assess the mechanisms and institutions constituting the "rules-based order" and interrogate their legitimacy, effectiveness and susceptibility to contestation by rising and revisionist powers;
-Analyze the role of asymmetry in shaping global power configurations;
-Critically evaluate the legal, ethical and political justifications for military interventions and their long-term impact on international order.

Admission

Prerequisite

Prerequisites training

English B2 Level.

Program

Assessment and Final Grade

Lectures (60% of the final grade)
- Final written exam (2h): grade /20
Tutorials (40% of the final grade)
- Policy paper: grade /20 (Written paper 50% and oral presentation 50%)
- Participation: bonus/penalty from -2pts to +2pts on the grade in TD

Course Requirements

Basic knowledge of core concepts in international relations is strongly recommended. Prior knowledge of major schools of thought in International Relations Theory (realism, liberalism and constructivism) is helpful but not required.

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