**UNIVERSITY OF JOS**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**POL 319: THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Course Outline, 2020/2021 Academic Session**

**Credit Unit: 3**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course is aimed at providing students with a general knowledge of the major foundational theories of international relations and their growth along with the subject. These theories are diverse and dynamic, they keep changing, expanding and transforming. This course, POL 319, cannot lay claim to an exhaustive consideration of them. However, it provides an entry point into the theoretical mindset of IR. Thus, those who seek to pursue the subject further will engage the theories at higher levels later on. We will discuss the theories in their historical context and show not only how many of them are related in their epistemology, but also how they contribute to the understanding of international relations. We will consider the strengths and weaknesses of these theories. By the end of the course, students are expected to have an understanding of scholarly assumptions about how international politics works. Students should be equipped with the approaches, debates, models, and skills of analyzing international relations.

1. **THEORIES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS**

* What is a theory?
* What are the functions of theory?
* How do these functions apply to international relations theory?

1. **THE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS IN IR**

Selecting an appropriate level of analysis is invaluable to every discussion of

IR. Often, a combination of the levels is necessary. The main levels are:

* + Decision-maker or individual level of analysis
  + Domestic, societal or state level of analysis
  + Multilateral level: regional ad sub-regional level of states
  + Systematic, Global or inter-state level of analysis

1. **EARLY THEORIES OF INTERATIONAL RELATIONS**

* War as the foundational subject matter of international relations and the search for the causes of war
* Realist theory Versus Idealist theory and their assumptions
* Collective security as Idealism and its challenges
* The League of Nations as expression of collective security and its failure
* The impact of Idealism and Realism on IR theory

1. **THE MARXIST CHALLENGE**

* Marxist theory of international relations challenging realism and idealism
* Lenin on the theory of Imperialism
* Neo-Marxist and dependencia theories of IR
* Political economy theories of international relations: what does this mean? Is political economy also Marxist theory? Hobson and other liberal theories of political economy.

1. **NEO-LIBERAL THEORIES: COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE**

* Complex interdependence as response to classical realism
* NOSTAC Study and the power of non-state actors in IR
* The assumptions of complex interdependence theory
* The limitations of the theory

1. **FUNCTIONALISM AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

* Functionalist theory as economic theory of IR
* Functionalism and regional integration schemes
* The assumptions of functionalism
* Strengths and limitations.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL THEORIES OF IR**

Looks at the role of environment in IR

* The geographical factors of national power
* The seas, geopolitics, power and security

1. **BEHAVIOURALISM AND EFFECTS ON IR THEORY**

The Behaviouralist revolution of the 1950s affected IR theory in methodology, and by its association with social science subjects. Therefore, mathematical and statistical formulae were employed to analyse IR. This gave rise to theories like:

* Decision-Making theory in foreign policy, using themes from public administration. Graham Allison’s use of decision-making theory to analyse foreign policy and how governments reach decisions.
* System theory employed from David Easton’s system theory in political science, to analyse how the international system operates as a political system.
* Game theory, simulation and bargaining theory. Thomas Schelling for instance, insisting that IR is a “game” played by states.

1. **MILITARY/SECURITY THEORIES**

The military theories seek peace and security in the building of strong armed forces by nations and their allies. It is powered by the realist assumptions of the independence, sovereignty and national interest of nations defined as power.

* Military theories and doctrines of the cold war
* Deterrence theory and its assumptions
* Alliance theory of IR: Military alliances as security and path to peace, and alliance as superior to collective security theory.
* Nuclear arms race, spiral of insecurity and the theories of security
* **Communication theory** after the Cuban Missile Crisis

1. **FEMINISM, POST MODERNISM…**

* Feminist and gender theories of international relations
* Post modernism in international relations
* Critical theory in international relations

1. **HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION AND INTERVENTION THEORY**

* Conflict, war and the need for intervention
* Forms of intervention: peacekeeping, peace support operations, complex emergencies, humanitarian intervention….
* The theories of intervention*: jus ad bellum, jus in bello,* and the right to intervene in the face of atrocities, crimes against humanity and genocide, as against the sovereignty, independence of states and non-interference in the domestic affairs of states.

1. **THE FUTURE OF IR THEORY**

Like the international system and IR itself, the theory terrain is dynamic and will continue to change. The character and structure of international relations will determine the future of theory, also based on the way power is expressed by states, international organizations, and based on major changes in the global political economy.

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