

International Relations

Dr. Irene Villa

Course aims

The course aims to provide an introduction to the study of international relations, with particular attention to approaches developed within feminist scholarship. Students will become familiar with the classical concepts of the discipline and with its main theoretical traditions, while developing a critical gender perspective and the ability to apply it to the analysis of global politics. The course will also address recent international controversies concerning the term “gender” and provide a critical analysis of their implications for global political dynamics.

Course Contents

The first module will introduce the study of international relations. It will present the key concepts of the discipline (state, sovereignty, international anarchy, balance of power, etc.) and the main schools of thought of the twentieth century. Particular importance will be given to the theoretical comparison between realism and liberalism, which will also be explored through a laboratory activity. The second module will examine the theoretical and methodological contribution of feminist theory to the study of international relations. Through dialogic lectures, seminar readings, analysis of multimedia materials, and engagement with concrete experiences, students will be guided in the examination of the feminist rethinking of traditional theories and concepts, and in the discussion and application of a gender-informed approach to international politics. The third module will shift the focus from gender as an analytical concept to “gender” as a polemical term. Contemporary controversies surrounding the term will be examined, in particular the political and cultural reactions it provokes, and the implications of these conflicts for international politics, human rights, and democracy.

Exam

The exam consists of an oral interrogation based on the texts indicated in the syllabus. For the purposes of the final assessment, participation in seminar and laboratory activities will also be taken into consideration. Evaluation criteria will be explained during the lessons.

Bibliography (some of the texts will be provided directly by the instructor)

First module:

Elias J., Sutch P., *International Relations: the Basics*, Routledge, 2007, pp. 22-88.

Ikenberry B., *The End of Liberal International Order?*, in «International Affairs», 94(1), pp. 7-23.

Mearsheimer J., *Realism, The Real World, and the Academy*, in M. Brecher, F. Harvey (eds.), *Realism and Institutionalism in International Studies*, University of Michigan Press, 2022, pp. 23-33.

Second module:

Cynthia E., *Bananas, Beaches and Bases. Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, University of California Press 2014 (selected readings provided during the course).

Shepherd L., *Sex or gender? Bodies in Global Politics and Why Gender Matters*, in *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*, Routledge 2015, pp. 23-35.

Tickner A., *Troubled Encounters: Feminism Meets IR*, in *Gendering World Politics*, Columbia University Press 2001, pp. 9-35.

Third module:

Butler J., *Chi ha paura del gender?*, Laterza 2024.