

**Department: International Relations**

**Faculty: Social Sciences**

**Course Title: Culture and World Politics (MA, Optional)**

**Number of Credits: Four**

**Course Objectives:**

The objective of the course is to acquaint students with the complex ways in which the cultural and political realms interact. It undertakes a critical enquiry into the academic and political endeavours that offer cultural interpretations of world politics in both historical and contemporary contexts. It is based on the implicit assumption that politics is negotiated and interpreted through the lens of culture, as are cultural interpretations often imbued with power and political intent. Intended to equip students with the analytical skills to problematise the immediate contexts in which some of the major issues of international politics are embedded, the course covers a broad sweep of issues ranging from strategic culture and diaspora studies to multiculturalism and popular culture. Although it frames culture largely within the IR discourse, it will draw on research and debates from farther afield and hence will be overtly inter-disciplinary in its orientation.

**Course Structure:**

**Unit I: Debating Culture in IR**

Unit one serves as an introduction to the field of culture studies in IR. It offers insights into competing approaches to culture by exploring the motivations and political contexts that informed such theorisations.

Week 1: Understanding culture

Week 2: Culture and International Relations

Week 3: Strategic culture

Week 4: Culture as ‘soft power’

**Unit II: Cultural Interpretations of World Politics- I**

Unit two is an enquiry into the cultural expressions of significant ‘political’ projects and trends of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It invites students to explore the cultural hegemony of imperialism, the significance of intercultural communication and the role of the diaspora that mediates between two worlds.

Week 5: Imperialism

Week 6: The politics of pluralism

Week 7: Role of the diaspora

**Unit III: Cultural Interpretations of World Politics- II**

Unit three is a critical assessment of some of the more recent political developments. It examines the debate over the homogenising force that globalisation is seen as

representing and the role of media in a globalising world. It further explores the return of cultural knowledge to the centre stage of international politics.

Week 8: Assessing globalization

Week 9: The return of cultural knowledge

Week 10: Role of popular culture

Week 11: The Politics of Display

Week 12: Cultural Pasts and Present in South Asia

**Reading Suggestions:**

During, Simon (2005), *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction*, Abingdon: Routledge

Reeves, Julie (2004), *Culture and International Relations: Narratives, Natives and Tourists*, London: Routledge.

Darby, Phillip (1998), 'The Exclusions of Politics', *The Fiction of Imperialism: Reading between International Relations and Postcolonialism*, London: Cassell.

Lebow, Richard Ned (2008), *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jahn, Beate (2000), *The Cultural Construction of International Relations: The Invention of the State of Nature*, Hampshire: Palgrave.

Johnston, Alastair Iain (1995), *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nye, Joseph (2004), 'The Changing Nature of Power', *Soft Power*, Cambridge: Perseus Books.

Said, Edward (1994), 'Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories', *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage.

Kymlicka, Will (2007), 'The Forms of Liberal Multiculturalism', *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Mair, Christian (ed.) (2003), *The Politics of English as a World Language: New Horizons in Postcolonial Cultural Studies*, New York: Rodopi.