

Department: International Relations

Faculty: Social Sciences

Course Title: The International Politics of Culture (MPhil/PhD, Optional)

Number of Credits: Four

Course Objectives:

The course permits a close inspection of world politics by revealing its many entanglements with culture. In doing so, it problematises the easy categorisations of internal and external domains that organise to a significant degree, contemporary analyses in IR. The course is an interdisciplinary one, drawing as it does upon debates located in disciplines such as sociology and history. Admittedly, many of the issues addressed in the course have developed into distinct nodes of enquiry within IR; indeed, it stands to benefit from insights thus developed. Nonetheless, it offers an exploration into key practices that have influenced the way states and societies organise themselves, especially in ways that imbue notions like power and territoriality with meaning. It approaches the structure-agent debate from multiple vantage points- popular mobilisation, media interventions and cultural flows, among others- to examine culture as providing both, the cause and context to world politics. The course aims at familiarising students with some of these major processes that not only impact the theory and practice of international politics, but also serve as useful signposts for further interdisciplinary enquiries.

Course Structure:

Unit I: Conceptualising Culture in IR

The introductory unit sets the context for the course by familiarising students with select conceptualisations of culture in IR. In particular, the focus shall be on the role culture plays in (re)constructing the past and in regulating violence in the international system.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Constructing Intellectual Traditions

Week 3: Culture and Postcolonial Histories

Unit II: Accommodating Diversity

The unit examines the manner in which nationalist projects mediate the multiple, often conflicting, manifestations of similarity and difference. Situating such mobilisation in the changing sites of collective action, the unit analyses the dimensions emergent loyalties add to the nationalism discourse.

Week 4: The Discourse of Nation Building

Week 5: Mapping Cultural Spaces

Week 6: Multiculturalism

Unit III: The Politics of Resource Governance

The unit takes as its focus the cultural dimensions of resource conflicts that are in many ways as much an assertion of cultural identities as about access. It also problematises the relative positioning of knowledge systems that privileges certain modes of knowing that are abstracted from cultural contexts.

Week 7: Popular Mobilisation

Week 8: Role of Indigenous Knowledge

Unit IV: Global Dynamics

The focus of this unit will be on the impact globalisation has on cultures that traverse multiple domains and are yet assumed to be self-contained worlds within. Negotiating the interface then becomes one about adaptability and the capacity to resist change. The unit will examine how global flows have altered the means and ends of inter-cultural interaction.

Week 9: Cultural Flows

Week 10: Media and the Politics of Information

Unit V: Culture in South Asia

South Asia becomes the site of engagement and contestation in this unit. How has the region imagined itself through the medium of narratives and literary cultures? What are the forces that are redrawing the remits of public engagement in the South Asia? These questions constitute the primary focus of this unit.

Week 11: Narrative Traditions

Week 12: Redefining the Public Sphere

Reading Suggestions:

Lawson, Stephanie (2007), *Culture and Context in World Politics*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Calhoun, Craig (2007), *Nations Matter: Culture, History and the Cosmopolitan Dream*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Gottlieb, Roger (2006), *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen (2009), *Globalisation and Culture: Global Melange*, Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield.

Bozeman, Adda (1960), *Politics and Culture in International History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Skinner, Quentin (2002), *Visions of Politics, vol. 1: Regarding Method*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krishna, Sankaran (2009), *Globalisation and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-first Century*, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Appadurai, Arjun (2006), *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Mahajan, Gurpreet (2002), *The Multicultural Path: Issues of Diversity and Discrimination in Democracy*, Sage.

Gottlieb, Roger (2006), *Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, New York: Oxford University Press.