Beyond IR:
The Politics of the International, the Global and the Planetary

2018 - 2019

Module Code: 7PIRS001W
Spring semester
Time: 1.00 – 4.00pm Tuesdays
Room: Regent Street 152

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Full Module Title: Beyond International Relations: The Politics of the International, the Global and the Planetary

Short Module Title: Beyond International Relations

Module Code: 7PIRS001W

Module Level: 7

Academic credit weighting: 20

Length: 1 semester

Faculty: Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department: Politics and International Relations

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Host course: MA International Relations

Status: Core

Subject Board: MA International Relations

Pre-requisites: None

Co-requisites: None

Assessment: 1 essay 5,000 words (100%)
Module Summary

This module reconsiders the ‘beyond’ of international relations. After the end of the cold war it seemed that international relations, as traditionally understood by the discipline in terms of power politics, Realpolitik, had come to an end. The assumptions of state-based politics, which had informed classical IR, in turn came into question. IR was understood as a discipline founded upon ‘seeing like a state’ (from the perspective of a very white, western elite) whereas there were many other, more pluralised, ways of seeing and thinking about politics. Thirty years into the opening up of the discipline of IR (to a global era), this module provides a chance to reflect upon the ‘beyond’ of the International. In the 1990s it seemed that this beyond offered a positive opportunity to think from non-state-based positions, from the universal view of global interests and concerns: to construct a liberal/globalised community, adding many more issues and concerns beyond traditional state security. In the 2000s it appeared that the beyond of the International, and the power, governance and knowledge assumptions that it relied upon, was not necessarily the globalising of liberal forms of rule or, if it was, this was no longer to be understood positively. In the deconstruction of the Global, universal, imaginary in the 2000s, the call within the discipline has not been for a return to the understandings of the past, but rather for a further problematisation of its assumptions: the rise of the Planetary.

In this module we analyse the new forms of thinking that have sought to grasp the world beyond the politics of the ‘International’: alternative ways of seeing and theorising the problems and assumptions of the political sphere. Of most importance, for this module, is that the beyond of IR is a set of discussions that do not see the world in terms of state-based theories of strategy and interests, therefore there is less attention to inter-national theory. The starting assumption is not the state acting in the context of anarchy. Of course, we still have states and states are central to policy-making discourses and international practices, but dominant discussions and debates in IR focus more upon how we understand and see the world beyond the narrow assumptions which informed the discipline of International Relations.

The module is in three sections. Firstly, it considers how the Global or liberal turn was constructed in the 1990s (the deconstruction of the ‘methodological nationalism’ that necessarily informed classical IR). This first paradigm is a constructive or positive one - the development of constructivist, critical and cosmopolitan approaches, posed in direct opposition to state-based understandings. The second paradigm is a deconstructive or negative one; we analyse how the limits to global and liberal aspirations enabled these framings to be deconstructed and critiqued - especially in the historical, sociological, economic frameworks of new institutionalist, critical and decolonial understandings. Third, the module considers whether the present moment marks the closure of ‘the rise and fall of the Global’, perhaps a shift away from the deconstruction and critique of the Global and towards a new positive and constructive paradigm, sometimes associated with the planetary politics of the Anthropocene.
Module Aims

1. To introduce students to the theoretical frameworks and practices of the world beyond international relations, to the debates which it has triggered, and the way that approaches to the discipline of IR have developed in the post-cold war era.
2. The module considers the implications of the shift from an elite world of inter-state relations to a more socially complex world and how this shift has been theorised and understood in different ways (both positively and negatively).
3. The module analyses how the centrality of the state (both analytically and as a key institutional actor) has changed for international theorising. In this context, it particularly focuses on what might be termed ‘neoliberal’ or new institutionalist, critical and decolonial approaches, which place difference at the centre of international frameworks.
4. The module also introduces students to frameworks of complexity and posthumanism which suggest that international problems can neither be grasped in global nor international terms.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module students will be able to:
1. Analyse a range of specialised theories that can be applied to the study of international relations; both in terms of understanding the shift to the global and the limits of this shift.
2. Critically evaluate how state-based approaches to IR have been displaced and the impacts that this has had upon ways of thinking about the discipline.
3. Analyse the relevance of critical, institutionalist and decolonial understandings of the limits of the global imaginary.
4. Critically analyse the limits to traditional understandings of structure and agency in the international sphere and how these apply to Realpolitik and power relations.
5. Select and apply specialised international theories and approaches to specific research problems and recognise the basic costs and benefits of those selections.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

One 3 hour seminar per week involving small group work and student led-discussions. Students are expected to prepare in advance as this involves discussion/interpretation of key readings. The assessment for this module is one essay of 5,000 words. The essay questions are available on page 21 of this module guide. The deadline for the essay is 1.00pm Thursday 11 April 2019.
Key Readings


Cameron Harrington, 2016, ‘The Ends of the World: International Relations and the Anthropocene’, *Millennium*, 44(3)


Seminar Programme Dates

Introduction

W1 22 January - Seminar 1 - Introduction: The International, the Global and the Planetary and seminar allocation

W2 29 January – Seminar 2 – 30 Years after the End of History: The International vs the Global vs the Planetary

Part One: The Global vs The International

W3 5 February – Seminar 3 – Globalisation vs Methodological Nationalism
W4 12 February – Seminar 4 – Social Constructivism vs Rationalism
W5 19 February - Seminar 5 - Human Security vs State Security

W6 26 February – Student Engagement Week - No seminar – class activity tba

Part Two: Critiques of the Global Imaginary

W7 5 March - Seminar 6 – The Biopolitical Critique
W8 12 March - Seminar 7 – New Institutionalism and Neoliberalism
W9 19 March – Seminar 8 – Decoloniality and Pluriversal Politics

Part Three: The Rise of the Planetary

W10 26 March Seminar 9 – Cosmopolitics after the ‘One World World’ and essay preparation
W11 2 April – Seminar 10 - The Anthropocene

W12 9 April – Seminar 11 - Conclusion: Rethinking the Rise and Fall of the Global

Essay Submission – 1.00pm Thursday 11 April
Seminar Programme/ Readings

Please use this module guide only for this semester’s module information and readings (the reading list link on Blackboard is a little out of date so please use instead the ‘Reading and Lectures’ link).

You are required to read at the very least the first ‘Essential reading’ before the seminar, but preferably all three of the short pieces, the additional readings are intended more for use in essay writing.

* Readings which are asterisked are available directly on the ‘Readings and Lectures’ section of Blackboard

-----Introduction-----

Seminar 1 (22 January)
Introduction: Beyond IR: The International, the Global and the Planetary and allocation of seminar presentations

The discipline of International Relations was shaped by discourses of Realism – based on a model of international anarchy in which states pursed the interests of realpolitik in the international sphere. This seminar introduces students to what happened after the weakening of this paradigm with the end of the cold war (please note that a grounding in IR theory is not essential for this module). We will introduce two major paradigms of thought, the global and the planetary, which have both challenged the dominance of the international. The global could be seen to be the opposite of the international, enabling a liberal or universal imaginary of progress. The planetary challenges the liberal or universal imaginary and provides a very different perspective, potentially displacing both the international and the global.

We will also allocate seminar topics, so please consider which you would like to introduce.

Questions:
What is the difference between International Relations and Global Politics?
How was the Global constructed against the classical paradigm?
What is the difference between Planetary and Global politics?

Background reading
I realise that you might not have time to do much prior reading; below are a couple of articles by Dipesh Chakrabarty to give some broader context to the debates and discussions in this module (so please read even if this is after the first seminar) and an example of recent, more narrow, IR debate on the distinctions and implications of the planetary, the global and the international:

Seminar 2 (29 January)
30 Years after the End of History: The International vs the Global vs the Planetary

The session provides an introductory overview of what is at stake for the discipline of international relations 30 years after the end of the Cold War. Two of the essential readings were published in 1989/1990 and both consider there to be break from the the traditional framing of the ‘international’. Perhaps the best known is Fukuyama’s classic article ‘The End of History’ seen as the harbringer of ‘the global’: arguing that IR need not be seen as a timeless word of conflict and that this world is exhausted without a clash of ideologies giving conflict in the international sphere meaning. The second, and perhaps more prescient, is Serres’ ‘The Natural Contract’ seen as an early treatise on the distinctiveness of ‘the planetary’: the view that political and international theory, in their focus on conflict, consigned the reality of the world to the background. The third, more contemporary reading is Latour’s ‘triangulation’ of the international, the global and the planetary, summarising his recent book, Down to Earth.

Questions
Was Fukuyama right to argue that conflict between states needed the meaning provided by ideologies? How, according to Serres, does the Planetary challenge the International? How, according to Latour, does the Planetary challenge the Global?

Essential reading


Background reading
**ятся Part One: The Global vs The International**

**Seminar 3 (5 February)**

**Globalisation vs Methodological Nationalism**

Globalisation and its meaning are important for this module, not so much in empirical terms as in what globalisation says about the methodological tools needed to grasp the ‘international’ sphere. It is very important to read the Rosenberg critique of globalisation theory (the *International Politics* article is provided on Blackboard, but the book would be better). This is because the key point we wish to discuss is how state-based understandings of the international collapsed so rapidly after the end of the cold war. Please also ensure that you read the Ulrich Beck article in *Constellations* and the Chernilo, to consider what the critique of ‘methodological nationalism’ means. It could be understood that globalization achieved what critical IR approaches did not (during the cold war), that is to successfully challenge the dominant state-based paradigm both in empirical terms but also (more importantly) in methodological and analytical terms. How did globalization achieve this sea change – for empirical reasons, for analytical reasons?

**Questions:**

What is globalisation?

What is the problem with ‘methodological nationalism’?

Why is the global the ‘second (age of) modernity’?

**Essential reading**


  
**Additional reading**

  
Beyond International Relations 2018-2019


Robert Cooper, The post-modern state and the world order (Demos, 2002).

http://www.demos.co.uk/files/postmodernstate.pdf


http://www.economist.com/node/455907


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Seminar 4 (12 February)
Social Constructivism vs Rationalism

The shift towards a global world without a shift to a global form of sovereignty, and the maintenance of the inter-state system, necessitated a different understanding of the mechanisms of the international arena. Constructivism provided a sociological understanding of interaction, which challenged the rationalist approach of previous IR thinking. This was based upon an endogenous understanding of the intersubjective construction of identities and interests as opposed to rationalist IR approaches, which argued that states came to the international sphere already equipped with identities and interests, derived exogenously from international interaction. A new, post-foundational, agency of international dynamics emerged through interaction, states were no longer the central constitutive subjects of the international realm but were the products of this realm. The inversion of the relations between the international and the sovereign state are reflected well in the works of Jackson and Krasner (in additional readings below) as well as in the rise of global civil society, especially international NGO ‘norm-entrepreneurs’.

Questions

Why were rationalist approaches central to the discipline of IR?

What is an endogenous understanding and how does this inverse traditional approaches to IR?

What happens to politics and power in constructivist approaches?

Why is the end of the international associated with the rise of constructivism?
**Essential reading**


**Additional reading**

[http://www.theguardian.com/world/1997/may/12/indonesia.ethicalforeignpolicy](http://www.theguardian.com/world/1997/may/12/indonesia.ethicalforeignpolicy)


[https://bc.sas.upenn.edu/system/files/Sikkink_04.08.10.pdf](https://bc.sas.upenn.edu/system/files/Sikkink_04.08.10.pdf)


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**Seminar 5 (19 February)**

**Human Security vs State Security**

Critical theorists welcomed the shift to the global in the 1990s, seeing this an opportunity for a radical decentring of state-based approaches to security. Of particular interest, in terms of this module, is how the agency of human security and the barriers to human security are constructed. These frameworks, which argue that the particular interests of states are a barrier to a universalist liberal approach to global rights and justice, will be contrasted (in seminar 6) with the Foucauldian critics who argue that the problems lie
precisely in the pursuit of global liberal ends. This week we will also consider the work of Johan Galtung – especially his views of ‘structural violence’ and ‘positive peace’ as precursors of critical security approaches. For a background, to those unfamiliar with the discipline of International Relations, the Cox and Linklater readings (in the additional reading section) are classic statements.

Questions
What is the problem with state-based approaches to security?
What is the barrier to global emancipation?
What is the agent of global emancipation?
What are the politics of human rights and human security?

Essential reading

Additional reading
Final Report of the Commission on Human Security
especially Chapter 1: Human Security Now
especially Chapter 2, ‘New Dimensions of Human Security’

-----Part Two: Critique of the Global Imaginary-------

Seminar 6 (5 March)
The Biopolitical Critique

The (broadly) Foucauldian critique takes on board the globalising of the international liberal order and opens up new approaches to critique in the international sphere: those of liberal ‘governmentality’ and of liberal ‘biopolitics’. The biopolitical critique is pursued particularly in terms of security regimes, with good examples being the work of Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Mick Dillon, Julian Reid and Mark Duffield. The governmentality approach, focuses more on global liberal approaches to statebuilding and intervention, less determined by economic interests but by epistemic and ideational frameworks legitimising the internationalisation of the liberal order, Jahn’s work is particularly useful in this respect, in describing the telos of intervention as a ‘liberal ideology’.

Questions
Why did Foucauldian approaches increasingly become popular in IR in the 2000s?
What is the Foucauldian critique of the emancipatory aspirations of critical theory?
What is the difference between a governmentality critique and a biopolitical critique?
Essential reading


Additional reading

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Seminar 7 (12 March)
New Institutionalism and Neoliberalism

Neoliberal frameworks of understanding, informed by new institutionalist approaches, conceptualise the problems of democracy and markets as endogenous social and historical products. In this ‘bottom-up’ understanding, international policy interventions shifted from exporting ‘one-size-fits-all’ liberal universalist approaches of the global, to a much richer and more sociologically informed view of the contextual, cultural, social and historical preconditions for progress and to the social processes through which ‘path-dependencies’ and problematic forms of governance were reproduced. Particularly those of New Institutionalist Economics, of which World Bank adviser and Nobel Prize winner, Douglass North provides the key example. These new institutionalist approaches sought to explain how differences between states could increase despite a globalised context, which allegedly removed barriers between states and created an equal and universal playing field. New institutionalist approaches bring the state back into international theorising but not as the rational actor of traditional IR theory but vital institutional frame works, shaped by sociological and historical interactions. It is these frameworks, which are analysed as the socially constructed explanations for global differentiation. The emergence and the consequences of this approach will be examined in this seminar. For new institutionalist approaches, the world becomes increasingly differentiated and policy interventions, intended to universalise in a global world can unintentionally increase differentiations.

Questions
How do new institutionalist approaches explain the relationship between universalising or globalising forces and increased differentials in the world?
What is the solution to the barriers to development in these approaches?
Can international aid or external assistance enable progressive change?
How does new institutionalism challenge rationalist assumptions?

Essential reading


Additional reading


* Douglass North, ‘Institutions, Organizations and Market Competition’ paper.
Decolonial scholars and advocates of alternative epistemologies argue that the discipline of IR does violence through its assumption that there is one world ‘reality’ and merely different cultures or ways of seeing this one world. It is argued that this approach to the ‘Global’ supports Western hegemonic assumptions of superiority, through the demeaning and exclusion of other ways of knowing and of doing politics internationally. This position questions the ontological assumption of one world-ism and therefore aligns itself with what is often called ‘the ontological turn’ in IR. The universal construction of the global is thereby understood as a colonizing move, the critical response being that of ‘provincializing’ or ‘pluriversalizing’ – reducing this perspective to one among many possible ways of engaging with the world.

Questions

What is the link between universality and colonialism?
What’s the difference between pluralist and pluriversal?
Why do Blaney and Tickner argue for a shift from epistemology to ontology?
Essential reading


[http://www.aibr.org/antropologia/netesp/numeros/1101/110102e.pdf](http://www.aibr.org/antropologia/netesp/numeros/1101/110102e.pdf)


Additional reading


[https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0295-6_601.pdf](https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0295-6_601.pdf)

[https://www.unc.edu/~aescobar/wan/wanquijano.pdf](https://www.unc.edu/~aescobar/wan/wanquijano.pdf)

Sankaran Krishna ‘Decolonizing International Relations’ E-IR, 8 October 2012  
[http://www.e-ir.info/2012/10/08/decolonizing-international-relations/](http://www.e-ir.info/2012/10/08/decolonizing-international-relations/)


[http://www2.hhh.umn.edu/uthinkcache/gpa/globalnotes/Blaney%20and%20Tickner,%20Introductions%20to%20Worldingvolumes.pdf](http://www2.hhh.umn.edu/uthinkcache/gpa/globalnotes/Blaney%20and%20Tickner,%20Introductions%20to%20Worldingvolumes.pdf)


Part Three: The Rise of the Planetary

Seminar 9 (27 March)
Cosmopolitics after the ‘One World World’ and essay preparation

This session continues and develops some of the themes raised last week in Seminar 8 (Decoloniality and Pluriversal Politics). The aim of this session is to draw out further the links between a shift towards ‘ontological politics’ and the rise of conceptions of the Planetary vis-à-vis the Global. Isabelle Stengers and Bruno Latour are often seen as leading theorists of cosmopolitics and contrast their approach with the assumptions of Kantian or ‘Global’ cosmopolitanism. As Blaser states, the Planetary can be seen as distinct from the Global as it implies an openness rather than a closure; where radical difference is positive and enabling rather than problematic. What is seen to be problematic about consensus politics or shared views of community?

Questions
What’s the difference between Cosmopolitianism and Cosmopolitics?
What’s wrong with a ‘one world’ world?
What’s the difference between Latour’s and Blaser’s views of Cosmopolitics?

Essential reading


http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/92-BECK_GB.pdf

https://culanth.org/articles/852-is-another-cosmopolitics-possible

Additional reading

Seminar 10 (2 April)
The Anthropocene

The shift to ‘after the Global’ was already perhaps pre-empted in the last two seminars on the rise of pluriversal thinking and the discussion around ‘the ontological turn’. Here, thinking that remains stuck in the universal knowledge assumptions of both the construction and deconstruction of ‘the Global’ is inevitably problematic. However, while the challenge posed to the Global is clear, discussion about the Anthropocene remains very open at present. As Delf Rothe examines, two popular approaches in IR discourses are OOO (object-oriented) approaches which question the importance of the level of appearances and draw out future-oriented potentials and that of ANT (actor networks) which stress the contingency of the present or actual through the importance of networks of relations. Madeleine Fagan and Audra Mitchell in their European Journal of International Relations pieces from 2016 and 2017 pose fundamental questions to the discipline in terms of its securitising and knowledge assumptions.

Questions
How does the Anthropocene go beyond the deconstruction/critique of the global? How does the Anthropocene challenge the disciplinary assumptions of IR? How can concerns about security be understood in the Anthropocene?

Essential reading


Additional reading
Beyond International Relations 2018-2019
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0305829817715247
http://www.e-ir.info/2015/02/23/international-security-in-the-anthropocene/
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0305829816638745

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Seminar 11 (9 April)
Conclusion: The Rise and Fall of the Global

In the concluding session we will address any final concerns with regard to the essay assignment and also revisit the (slightly adapted) questions that we asked in the introductory seminar.

Questions
What are the differences and similarities between the International and the Planetary? Is the beyond of IR that different?
Is the world more full or emptier today for IR scholars?
What is the difference between Planetary and Global politics?

Reading
Have another look over the readings for the first two seminars.
**Essay Assessment** (please pay attention to the assessment criteria below – especially the first point)

5,000 word Essay **Deadline 1.00pm Thursday 11 April 2019**

Choose one of the following six essay titles:

1. What are the key differences between the ‘International’, the ‘Global’ and the ‘Planetary’? Why are these important?

2. Has IR theory succeeded in overcoming ‘methodological nationalism’? If so, how?

3. How is the world understood differently in new institutionalist approaches compared to International or Global ones?

4. What do approaches critical of the Global have in common?

5. How do decolonial or pluriversal approaches problematise the ‘One World World’?

6. How does the Anthropocene transform IR as a discipline?
Assessment Rationale

The assessment regime is designed to encourage research expertise in the area of politics and complexity. It aims to develop advanced understanding of the concepts, frameworks and approaches of complexity thinking as applied to the rethinking of governance, agency and power. The assessment by essay and book review enables students to develop a critical understanding and to apply key theoretical accounts to current debates and problems with regard to the impact of complexity.

In particular, the book review is designed to develop analytical skills and to ensure that basic concepts and frames of debate are understood at an early stage of the module. The review encourages students to focus on their capacity to digest, comprehend and contextualise concepts, theories and policies key to governance and complexity.

The research essay allows students to develop an extended analysis of key concepts, theories and/or policies, to engage in an in-depth evaluation of competing interpretations and theoretical approaches, and to explore the application of governance practices both domestically and internationally. The essay challenges students to critically engage with their chosen topic and demonstrate their critical and analytical ability.

Further Information Regarding Coursework

In addition to the information contained in this Handbook, which is specific to the assessment for this module, you need to be aware of PIR’s general guidance and policies for coursework submission. The most up-to-date information is contained in the current version of the PIR Course Handbook, and includes guidance on:

- Submitting your work
- Late submission
- Plagiarism and referencing
- Mitigating circumstances
- Word limits

The current version of the PIR Course Handbook can be found on the Politics and International Relations Blackboard site.

Other important sources of information. For information about academic progression, condoned credits, referral opportunities and the calculation of degree awards, see the Handbook of Academic Regulations (section 17). As these are the overarching regulations at Westminster, they are very detailed and quite technical. If you need help interpreting the regulations, please email your Course Leader.