Online Academic Summer School 2020
SOAS University of London

International Relations in the 21st Century
Course Handbook

Mode of Attendance: Full-time, Online
Duration: 2 weeks
SOAS Accredited: This course is worth 15 UK credits

Programme Description
The course will provide a critical understanding of key developments and issues in contemporary world politics for students with no prior background in international relations. Focusing on the period since the end of the Cold War, an era defined by rapid institutional innovation and development, as well as a number of emergent global issues, problems and policy dilemmas, the course locates these in the context of north-south relations. Treating the international system as a dynamic whole, it examines how issues that have become central in international politics including ‘failed states’, nuclear proliferation, armed conflict and terrorism, democratisation, pandemics and the Arab Spring are intimately linked to expanding efforts since the mid-20th century to generate a liberal world order. In doing so it provides analysis of the roles played in contemporary world politics by leading members of the ‘international community’ such as the United States, the European Union, ‘rising’ nonwestern states China, India and Brazil, non-state actors such as NGOs, transnational corporations and armed groups, and international financial and other institutions. Specific topics investigated include the centrality of the United States to the post-Cold War international order; the diverse north-south interventions associated with civil wars, terrorism, securitized development and peacebuilding; the rise of global resistance movements (from Seattle to Occupy and the Arab Spring); the politics of migration (refugees, diasporas and workers); the role of transnational corporations in the global political economy; and emergent patterns in the management of global health and the environment. By the end of the course students should expect to have developed a layered and nuanced account of contemporary world politics by which to analyse concrete issues and policies as they impact the global north and south, and the hierarchical relations between them.

Programme Schedule and Topics:
- Introduction: Globalisation, Neoliberalism and the State
- Interventions I: Democracy, Peace and Markets
- Interventions II: New Wars, terrorism and Securitised Development
- The Rise of China and the Future of the International System
- Safer World? Nuclear proliferation and other dangers
- Corporations in World Politics
- Global Health: pandemics, food and drugs
- Migration: refugees, workers and diasporas
- Environmental Politics
- Populism and resistance
Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

- Apply international relations theory to explain key developments and events in contemporary world politics
- Demonstrate critical knowledge of contemporary global policy frameworks, such as globalization, neoliberalism and the Global War on Terror
- Demonstrate critical knowledge of key institutional and organizational developments in world politics since the end of the Cold War.

Assessment
Each course is assessed by two online assessments ('e-tivities*) comprising of 30%, the remaining 70% is formed of a 2,500 word essay. The e-tivities provide formative and summative feedback to students as a means of monitoring their progress and encouraging areas in which they can improve. On successful completion of the assessments, students will receive a transcript confirming the credit awarded. Students that do not require credit are strongly encouraged to take part in the e-tivities, but are not required to complete the assessments.

* An 'e-tivity' is a framework for online, active and interactive learning following a format that states clearly to the students its 'Purpose'; the 'Task' at hand; the contribution or 'Response' type; and the 'Outcome' (Salmon, G. (2002) E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning, New York and London: Routledge Falmer.)

Course Convenor
Dr Vino Kanapathipillai

Introductory Readings and Sources

- Laffey, Mark (2016) A short guide to Realism