Module number
24 - 26

Module title
Specialised Elective Module: Theoretical and methodological issues of International Relations research

Code
TMIIRR

Semester
Depends on course programme

Number of WSH
4

Module offered
Changing Catalogue. Details can be found online.

Module coordinator
Prof. Dr. Bresinsky

Tuition type
Seminar-style tuition

Module duration
1 Semester

Lecturers
Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Meyers
Prof. Dr. Bresinsky

Compulsory/Elective
Elective

Module language
English

Access requirements
Course segment 2

Learning outcomes
The qualification goals mentioned below are subdivided into three dimensions. Each dimension corresponds to a target competence level. The following competence levels have been defined:

- Competence level 1 (awareness): cursory awareness of simple structures, only previously learned knowledge is tested
- Competence level 2 (comprehension): basic understanding of multiple structures up to deeper understanding of the relations between structures, learned knowledge is analysed, combined and applied
- Competence level 3 (deep understanding and application): deeper understanding of the relations between structures up to independent transfer and extension of knowledge to new structures, learned knowledge is critically questioned and/or evaluated, interrelations between structures and their consequences are reflected and explained

The competence level of the respective qualification goal is represented by the corresponding number (1, 2 or 3) in the competence descriptions below.

On completing the module the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes on the basis of scientific methods:

Competencies:
- Understand the research field of International Relations (2)
- Define an ontological/epistemological framework for International Relations theories (2)
- Know how to apply different theories and models of International Relations (3)
- Identify scope and limits of different theories and models (3)
- Know how to analyze the actor, structures and processes of international political issues with International Relation theories (2)
• Know how to develop a project in a team and present its results to an auditorium (1)
• Improve English conversation, reading and writing (1)

The course focuses on the roles of theories and research methods in International Relations. Students are introduced to basic ontological and methodological concepts and major contending epistemological perspectives on theories and approaches in the field of International Relation. Furthermore, students will be acquainted with the background debates in the philosophy of the social sciences that undergird different methodological approaches.

Main intention is to provide a sophisticated overview of the current scientific debates in the domain of International Relations theory and methodology against the background of a number of paradigmatic examples.

Another aim is to assist students in the choice of the appropriate theoretical and methodological approach for their research project, not to train them in a multitude of research techniques as such. The seminar will finish, however, with a session on how to construct a research proposal for a Bachelor / Master thesis.

The theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired during the seminar week will form the basis for a praxis-orientated conflict management/resolution role game on the last two days of the course.

Content

A. Basic ontological concepts
   I: How can we know what we know? The sociolinguistic construction of worldviews. A simple start.
   II: Concepts, roles, and functions of “theory” in the social sciences
   III: Levels of Analysis and their consequences. Agency vs. structure: exclusivities or dialectical oppositions?
   IV: The growth of theory - ordering the universe. Ontological and methodological perspectives on I.R.

B. Basic Ontologies of I.R.: From Hobbes via Grotius to Kant?
   I: Realism – the shadows of international anarchy: national actors in a zero-sum game system of deterrence and security dilemmas
   II: Idealism/Liberalism – from cooperation to interdependence: societal actors in a positive sum-game of progress and modernization
   III: International Society – consensually ordered pluralist anarchical society with rules, norms, and institutions

C. Basic Epistemologies of I.R.: Understanding or explaining international phenomena. The methodological controversy between Traditionalism and Scientism
   II: The scientist or behavioral perspective: Quantitative Methods, Empiricism, Social Science without Values.
   III: To bridge the gap: methodological pragmatism. The inter-paradigm debate and the Neo-Neo-discussion. Anything goes or Feyerabend for Epistemology?
   IV: Superstructurally superficial: some methodological consequences of traditional Marxian premises for the analysis of I.R.; can scientific statements be interest-free?

D. From radical to post-modern critique of methodological traditionalism: the anti-foundationalist deconstruction of internationalist meta-narratives
   I: The epistemology and methodology of post-modernism: how to describe the indescribable...
II: The meaning, condition, and means of (international) order creation: Global governance without global government? Or: What is underneath the Emperor’s new clothing?

E. Excursio
   I: Unequal exchange, dependency, and core-periphery relationships: an alternative world view
   II: Feminist perspectives in I.R. analysis – men make the war...[??]

F. Role play game / exercise
   Peace Making in Slivonia. The prospects and disappointments of ethnic conflict resolution

Literature
Required reading

Recommended reading
Introductory literature:


Perspectives on and Theories of International Relations:


Conflict Management/Conflict Resolution:


Teaching and learning methods
Seminar-style tuition
Symposium
Group works

Type of examination/Requirements for the award of credit points
Participation in class – 20%
Written essay (English) 1500 words:
Seminar paper on the premises, assumptions, characteristics, performance, achievements, and consequences of
a particular theory/approach/method for I.R. analysis – 80%  OR
Outline/disposition/research proposal for a Bachelor or a Master thesis on a subject of your choice based on an assessment of the relevant secondary literature and a discussion of the research methods to be used – 80%  OR
Critical analysis of your and your groups behaviour in the role game (with reference to premises & assumptions, definition of aims, agenda setting, negotiation, competition, game outcome, implementation of game results, achievements of game, feedback for a possible round II)

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<tr>
<th>Other information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Max. number of participants: 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>The course will be conducted together with students of the study program “International Relations and Management”.</td>
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<td>Registration necessary. Details can be found in moodle.</td>
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<td>Reading of literature, scientific working style, and self commitment to this course is mandatory!</td>
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<td>Bloc course after summer exams period</td>
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<td>Lecture Times:</td>
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<td>2020-08-03 until 2020-08-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar sessions 10.30 – 12.45; 14.00 – 16.15; 16.30 – 18.00</td>
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<td>Room: tbd</td>
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<tr>
<th>ECTS-Credits</th>
<th>Workload</th>
<th>Weighting of the grade in the overall grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>150 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact/attendance time: 60 h</td>
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<td>Additional work: 90 h</td>
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