

Course description of the elective special course within Political Science III

Note! Not all Special Courses are given each semester, more information regarding the elective courses are given at the introduction.

A NEW WORLD ORDER?

DESCRIPTION

The course module deals with major perspectives on and descriptions of the contemporary world order as well as discussions of prospects for change. Central themes include relations of globalization and transnationalism, conceptions of empire and the capitalist world-system and the role of conflict, militarism, war and other forms of violence. Fundamental to these themes are understandings of the political and the economic. A broad range of issues are problematized, in particular antagonisms entailed in universalism–particularism, global–state, core–periphery, democracy–liberalism and aspects of we–they as well as notions of class, ethnicity and gender. Counterforces in the form of democratic processes and political action as they apply to various views on future world orders are also discussed.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge and Understanding

Upon completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- * identify and provide accounts of major perspectives on the contemporary world order and how it can and should be changed;
- * discuss the implications of major perspectives on the contemporary world order for practical politics.

Skill and Ability

Upon completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- * apply basic concepts and approaches reflected in major perspectives on the contemporary world order to current political phenomena and events;
- * compare and contrast major perspectives on the contemporary world order and how it can and should be changed.

Evaluation and Approach

Upon completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- * examine and evaluate critically arguments for and against different perspectives on the contemporary world order in a manner that is well supported and justified;
- * examine and evaluate critically arguments for and against the prospects for and desirability of changes foreseen and/or advocated by different perspectives on the contemporary world order.

SECURITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DESCRIPTION

This course aims to provide students with different conceptual and theoretical tools in order to study and analyze contemporary security problems and security strategies in international politics. Students will be introduced to a wide range of security issues and asked to consider how different theoretical perspectives – including Realism, Constructivism, Securitization, International Political Sociology and Poststructuralism – can be used for analyzing these issues.

The first part of the course focuses on the impact of ideology on foreign and security policy, with special emphasis on relations between the United States and some Middle Eastern states. Moreover, issues of “continuity” and “change” in foreign and security policy will be explored by drawing upon a series of empirical cases. The foreign and security policy of “small states”, including Sweden, will receive particular attention in this regard.

The second part of the course examines the relationship between security and different forms of insecurity, and looks at how the production of threats, fears and dangers plays a vital role in the development of new security strategies. We will also discuss the challenges of moving beyond the “state” as the dominant category for thinking about “who” or “what” should be made secure, for example by trying to introduce the “human” or the “environment” as the primary “subject of security”.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- Discuss different conceptual and theoretical approaches to “security”;
- Discuss alternative explanations of security problems, historical as well contemporary ones;
- Critically engage with different readings of current trends and forces in international security;
- Discuss, in written and oral form, issues pertaining to security problems and different strategies to cope with them.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND DEMOCRACY IN THE THIRD WORLD

DESCRIPTION

In the wake of the third wave of democratization politics in the Third World we have seen both a further development of constitutional democracy as well as authoritarian backlashes. Central in both of these processes are the various social movements, working as both pressure and support for existing governments. The course aims at problematizing the role of these movements, both theoretically and empirically, in the context of democratization and political contestation in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Different perspectives are juxtaposed and discussed against a backdrop of contexts in the Third World, analysing both the general patterns of democratization and the role of social movements in this process. The course also discusses the recent developments of social movements related to the issue of “NGOisation” and its effects on both democracy and development.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- * identify different perspectives and theories on social movements and their links to democracy and democratization;
- * identify similarities and differences between empirical cases, as represented in the course literature, of the role of social movements in processes of democratization in the third world;
- * present, both orally and in writing, independent analyses of the relationships addressed in the course.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

The course aims at exploring, problematising and analysing arguments, controversies, policies and outcomes in international political economy. The course focuses on the interaction of economics and politics, of the market and the state, with special emphasis on how economical and political motives and incentives interact with each other to produce policy outcomes in terms of conflict or co-operation. Specific phenomena studied include the politics of international trade and finance, the role of currencies, the functioning of international economic institutions, the importance of the international economic system for economic development, and the role played by multinational corporations and foreign direct investments (FDI).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- identify and understand different models that are important for analysing the mechanisms behind international economic policy outcomes;

- identify and understand the interaction between political and economical motives and incentives in the international economic system;
- analyse economic co-operation and conflict at different levels of analysis (actor/state/system);
- present independent analysis of international political-economic phenomena in oral as well as written form, based on analytical perspectives in the course;
- compare and evaluate the merits and weaknesses of various scientific theories and arguments about the international political economy discussed in the course.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

This course will examine the contributions of theories of international relations and global environmental politics to our understanding of global environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and forest degradation. These issues will be explored through readings on the political economy of the environment, environmental security, international environmental diplomacy and transnational sustainability governance. The actors, structures and processes of international environmental politics will be investigated and the interplay of states, market and civil society actors in global efforts to mitigate and adapt to global environmental change will be examined. Course sessions will typically consist of lectures, interactive discussions of course readings, reflection activities, student presentations, etc. designed to help students critically engage course material, enhance students' comprehension of core concepts as well as oral and written communication and critical thinking skills. Upon completion of this course, students will have a sophisticated understanding of the central issues and debates in the scholarship on global environmental politics in order to advance their own research agendas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge and Understanding

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- Identify and provide accounts of the major perspective of and topic in global environmental politics and sustainable development governance;
- Discuss the key concepts and debates inform the field of global environmental politics

Skills and abilities

Upon completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- apply key concepts, methods and approaches in International Relations and environmental studies to analyze global environmental issues;
- compare and contrast major perspectives and worldviews on global environmental governance and how it can be reformed and/or transformed.

Evaluation and Approach

Upon completion of the course part, students are expected to:

- Critically examine and evaluate argument for and against different perspectives on the causes of global environmental problems in a manner that is well supported and justified;
- Critically examine and evaluate arguments on how to manage and/or solve global environmental threats advocated by different perspectives in the global environmental politics scholarship

INEQUALITIES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

DESCRIPTION

Political equality is a cornerstone of modern democracy. Yet political participation and representation is unequally distributed across individuals and groups. In this course, we explore examples of this type of political inequality, as well as its causes and consequences.

We begin by examining arguments from democratic theory about why we should care about unequal participation and representation. Next, we turn to research that explores variations in participation and representation across groups and explanations for differences. Finally, we examine research that studies the impact of variations in participation and representation.

A recurring theme when reading empirical work assigned in this class is the difficulty of credibly evaluating the causes and consequences of political inequality. Therefore, the course also strives to present some examples of innovative research designs that have been used to study political inequality. A considerable share of the course readings use quantitative methods; therefore, we will also review how to interpret and criticize results from this type of research.

The course will not provide a comprehensive survey of the state of political inequality across the world, nor in any specific region of the world. Rather, it focuses on singling out empirical work carried out in different regions of the world that has studied issues that are interesting from the perspective of democratic theory. Put differently, we focus on how one can research political inequalities empirically, with the aim of providing inspiration for the upcoming thesis-work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completion of the course part, students are expected to be able to:

- Discuss and compare, in written and oral form, different perspectives on unequal participation and representation
- Describe and critically evaluate different strategies that have been used to study political inequality empirically
- Describe and critically evaluate proposed solutions to the problem of studying political inequality empirically
- Come to independent conclusions about the importance of studying political equality, as well as strategies for empirically studying variations in participation and representation, based on the readings addressed on the course.