POL.2: CONFLICT, ORDER AND JUSTICE 2023-24
Department of Politics and International Studies
University of Cambridge

Lecturers:

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Brendan Simms, bps11@cam.ac.uk

Lecture Times and Venue:

Mondays and Wednesdays 10am-11am, TBC

Paper Guide Contents:

Aside from providing the ‘who, when, where and why’ of Pol.2, this paper guide contains an overview of the lecture timetable (pp.3-4), a detailed list of lecture topics and the associated readings (pp.4-28), a list of sample supervision essay questions (pp.29-31), and finally the questions from last year’s Pol.2 exam (p.32).

Students should also check the Moodle site for Pol.2 regularly to access other documents and information.

Paper Rationale:

This paper will introduce students to both the international politics of the modern era and the sub-discipline of International Relations. After completing the paper, students should have a foundation of knowledge about both the substance of historical and current international politics, and the scholarship and theories that have been developed to explain it.

The broad approach in this paper is global and historical. Global because the paper tries to take a somewhat wider view than the traditional exclusive focus on Europe and the West. Historical because although the paper is concerned with contemporary topics in international politics, relative to most introductory International Relations papers, the coverage of this one begins earlier, around 1500. The rationale for this wider geographic and historical scope is that International Relations scholarship should be able to explain past as well as present conflict, order and conceptions of justice within but also beyond the West. The historical orientation of the paper also fits with the general teaching orientation in POLIS, which often takes a historical perspective.

Given this wider scope, however, the paper is inevitably selective rather than exhaustive in its coverage. Being an introduction, the paper is meant to whet students’ appetites and help them decide, as they advance to Part II of the Tripos, what they wish to focus on – such as, for instance, international organizations, international law, gender, race, development, political
theory, international sociology, international political economy, or a specific geographical region.

Paper Format, Supervisions and Exam:

The paper is comprised of 26 50-minute lectures in Michaelmas and Lent Terms and a revision lecture in Easter Term. It is not permitted to record lectures.

There are six supervisions across Michaelmas and Lent terms and one additional revision supervision in Easter. The assignment of supervisors is the responsibility of college Directors of Studies. Details on question selection, length of essay, and style should be discussed with each student’s supervisor. Sample supervision essay questions are provided below towards the end of this paper guide.

Students will be assessed in a three-hour in person invigilated end of year exam. The exam requires that two questions be answered from eight questions on offer. Each answer will provide half of the final mark. The exam will be discussed in the Easter revision lecture(s), but by far the best way to prepare for the exam is to stay current in completing the core readings associated with each lecture. All exam questions can be answered using the core readings.

Much like most of the supervision essay questions, rather than asking about individual lecture topics in isolation, exam questions require drawing links across and between different topics. For example, this might involve comparing and contrasting different theories, regions, historical episodes or current problems. To see specific examples, last year’s exam questions are listed at the end of this paper guide.

Readings:

The readings are the heart of the paper. The core readings are essential for each of the three main elements of the paper: the lectures, the supervisions, and especially the end of year exam. The readings are organised in conjunction with lectures, with the two complementing each other: the readings provide necessary background for the lectures, and the lectures make it easier to understand and contextualise the readings. The core readings are compulsory, the further readings are optional and at students’ discretion. Building on and extending the core readings, further readings may help with writing supervision essays.

The readings for this paper represent a wide range of different views on major topics in international politics. Many of these topics are subject to intense controversy and debate, and it is common to encounter contrasting and contentious arguments. Just because a reading is on the reading list, this is not an endorsement of its content. Students at Cambridge are expected to engage with readings critically, carefully examining and where appropriate challenging evidence and arguments.
## Lecture Timetable Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 9 October</td>
<td>1. First Encounters and the Origins of Global Relations</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 11 October</td>
<td>2. Europe and the Sovereign State</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 16 October</td>
<td>3. Westphalia</td>
<td>Simms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 18 October</td>
<td>4. China and the International Politics of East Asia</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 23 October</td>
<td>5. Realist Theory</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 30 October</td>
<td>7. Nations and States in the Americas</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 1 November</td>
<td>8. Liberal Institutionalist Theory</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 6 November</td>
<td>9. Constructivist Theory</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 8 November</td>
<td>10. Gender in the International System</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 13 November</td>
<td>11. Historical Origins of Global Governance</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 15 November</td>
<td>no lecture</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 20 November</td>
<td>12. The German Challenge to Pax Anglo-America</td>
<td>Simms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 22 November</td>
<td>13. The Soviet Challenge to Pax Anglo-America</td>
<td>Simms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 27 November</td>
<td>14. The Japanese Challenge to Pax Anglo-America</td>
<td>Simms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 24 January</td>
<td>15. The Cold War and Nuclear Weapons</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 29 January</td>
<td>16. De-colonization and the End of Empires</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 31 January</td>
<td>17. The End of the Cold War</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 5 February</td>
<td>18. International Human Rights</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 7 February</td>
<td>19. Regulating the Use of Force</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 12 February</td>
<td>20. Post-Colonial States and Intervention</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 19 February</td>
<td>22. Governing the Global Commons</td>
<td>Schulz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 21 February</td>
<td>23. The Crisis of the Liberal International Order? The West</td>
<td>Zarakol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 26 February</td>
<td>24. The Crisis of the Liberal International Order? Russia and other Discontents</td>
<td>Zarakol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Presenter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 4 March</td>
<td>26. Progress in International Politics?</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 1st May</td>
<td>Revision Lecture</td>
<td>Sharman</td>
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**Lecture and Reading Guide:**

1. (Sharman) **First Encounters and the Beginnings of Global Relations**
   Monday 9 October

   **Core Reading:**


   **Further Reading:**


   Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (Eds), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford:


2. (Sharman) **Europe and the Sovereign State**

Wednesday 11 October

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

3. (Simms) **Westphalia**  
Monday 16 October

**Core Reading:**  


**Further Reading:**  


Andrew C. Thompson, *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant Interest, 1688-1756.* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006).


4. (Sharman) **China and the International Politics of East Asia**  
Monday 23 October

**Core Reading:**  

Yuan-kang Wang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics.* (New
Further Reading:


5. (Sharman) **Realist Theory in International Relations**

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


6. (Sharman) **African International Politics and Slavery**

   Wednesday 25 October

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


7. (Schulz) **Nations and States in the Americas**

   Monday 30 October

   **Core Reading:**


   **Further Reading:**


8. (Sharman) **Liberal Institutional Theory**

**Wednesday 1 November**

**Core Reading:**

**Further Reading:**


9. (Sharman) **Constructivist Theory**

Monday 6 November

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


10. (Sharman) **Gender in the International System**
Wednesday 8 November

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


11. (Schulz) **The Historical Origins of Global Governance**
Monday 13 November

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


(No Lecture Wednesday 15 November)

12-14. (Simms) **Anglo-American Hegemony and its Enemies, 1914-1945.**

General Readings for lectures 12-14:


12. (Simms) **The German Challenge to Pax Anglo-America**
Monday 20 November

**Core Reading:**
Brendan Simms, *Hitler. Only the World was Enough* (London: Allen Lane, 2019), 115-139


**Further Reading:**


13. (Simms) **The Soviet Challenge to Pax Anglo-America**
Wednesday 22 November

**Core Reading:**


Further Reading:


14. (Simms) The Japanese Challenge to Pax Anglo-America
Monday 27 November

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


**Lent Term**

15. (Sharman) **The Cold War and Nuclear Weapons**

Wednesday 24 January

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


16. (Schulz) **De-colonisation and the End of Empires**
Monday 29 January

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), chap 3 ['The Pitfalls of National Consciousness’].


17. (Schulz) The End of the Cold War

Wednesday 31 January

Core Reading:


Further Reading:
Michael Brenes, and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, “Legacies of Cold War Liberalism.” *Dissent*


18. (Schulz) **International Human Rights**

Monday 5 February

**Core Reading:**

Kathryn Sikkink, *Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21st Century*

**Further Reading:**

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1958), chap. 9 [‘The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man’].


19. (Schulz) **Regulating the Use of Force**

Wednesday 7 February

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


20. (Sharman) Post-Colonial States and Intervention
Monday 12 February

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


21. (Sharman) **Power in the Global Economy**

Wednesday 14 February

**Core Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


22. (Schulz) Governing the Global Commons
Monday 19 February

Core Reading:


Further Reading:


Ronald B. Mitchell and Charli Carpenter, “Norms for the Earth: Changing the Climate on


23. (Zarakol) The Crisis of the Liberal Institutional Order? The West
Wednesday 21 February

Core Reading:


24. (Zarakol) **The Crisis of the Liberal Institutional Order? Russia and Other Discontents**  
Monday 26 February

**Core Reading:**  


25. (Zarakol) **The Crisis of the Liberal Institutional Order? China and Alternative Orders**  
Wednesday 28 February

**Core Reading:**  


26. (Sharman) **Progress in International Politics?**
Monday 4 March

**Core Reading:**

**Further Reading:**


Supervision Essays

The conduct and arrangement of supervisions are the responsibility of the colleges, specifically the Director of Studies and college-appointed supervisor.

In consultation with their supervisor, students may select questions from the list below in completing the six supervision essays or equivalent supervision assignments.

The lectures (in brackets after each question) but especially the readings for those lectures, may be helpful in completing the essays. However, these are only suggestions, and students may choose to range more widely in their readings for supervision essays. There is no need to wait for all of the relevant lectures before writing the essays. Some essay questions are related to a larger or smaller number of lectures, but all supervision essays should be about the same amount of work. Those essay questions relating to a smaller number of lectures (possibly just one) may require deeper engagement with the further reading, while those topics linked with many lectures may require a more selective approach to reading.

The essays questions are roughly ordered in line with when these topics are covered in the paper. Although it is for supervisors and students to decide, it may be most sensible to address the earlier questions for the Michaelmas supervisions, while tackling the later ones for supervisions in Lent. Though it is again up to supervisors, in order to manage the workload, it may be advisable to complete essays around weeks 3, 5 and 7 of Michaelmas and Lent terms.

Sample Supervision Essay Questions

1. To what extent can European relations with the rest of the world before 1800 be accurately described as ‘colonial’? (Lectures 1, 4, 6 and 7)

2. What explains the rise of the state, and does this have anything to do with the Treaty of Westphalia? (Lectures 2 and 3)

3. Does the state have a different history in Europe and the non-European world? Pick two regions from East Asia, Africa, the Americas to compare with Europe (Lectures 2-4, 6-7)

4. Is it more convincing to argue that international politics has historically been the same in different regions of the world (e.g. Europe, East Asia, Africa, the Americas), or that international politics has been fundamentally different in different regions? (Lectures 1-4, 6, 7)

5. Without violence there would be no nations in the Americas. Discuss. (Lectures 1, 7)

6. Which era has seen the greatest change in international politics and why? (Lectures 1, 10, 11, 16, 17, 26)

7. Can empires and imperialism ever be legitimate? (Lectures 4, 7, 16)
8. Were the international rivalries of the 1930s and 1940s a clash between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’? (Lectures 12-14)

9. Was the twentieth century a long international race war? (Lectures 12, 13, 14, 16)

10. What caused de-colonization? (Lecture 16)

11. To what extent did the end of the Cold War change the fundamentals of global politics? (Lecture 17, 20)

12. Which was more consequential for international politics: the Cold War or de-colonization? (Lectures 15, 16, 17, 20)

13. Are post-colonial states really sovereign? (Lectures 16, 20, 21)

14. Russia is never as strong or as weak as it seems. Discuss (Lectures 13, 24)

15. What are the most important differences between the main International Relations theories (Realism, Liberal Institutionalism and Constructivism)? Compare two (Lectures 5, 8, 9)

16. Which of the three main theories of International Relations (Realism, Liberal Institutionalism and Constructivism) best explains those states challenging the dominant international order of the twentieth OR twenty-first century? (Lectures 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25)

17. Are international institutions imperialism by another name? (Lectures 8, 11, 16, 20, 22)

18. Does international law enable or constrain powerful states? (Lectures 11, 18, 19, 23)

19. What is the point of human rights if the international community cannot enforce them? (Lectures 10, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25)

20. Will violence always dominate justice in international politics? (Lectures 4, 5, 18, 19, 20, 23, 26)

21. Do developments like the rise of gender equality and human rights prove that progress towards a more just order is possible in international politics? (Lectures 10, 16, 17, 18, 19)

22. Does International Relations theory suggest that international attempts to govern climate change are doomed to fail? (Lectures 5, 8, 9, 22)

23. To what degree does the Soviet challenge to Anglo-American international order in the mid-twentieth century resemble that of the current Russian challenge to the international order, if at all? (Lectures 13, 24)

24. To what degree does the Japanese challenge to Anglo-American international order in the
mid-twentieth century resemble that of the current Chinese challenge to the international order, if at all? (Lectures 14, 25)

25. To what degree is the US position in international politics in the early twenty-first century similar to that of Britain’s international position in the inter-War period? (Lectures 12, 13, 14, 23)

26. Will China replace the United States in the twenty-first century as the world’s dominant power? Discuss with reference to one of the three main International Relations theories (Lectures 5, 8, 9, 25)

27. It is the decline not the rise of China that most threatens world peace. Discuss. (Lecture 25)

28. The Russian invasion of Ukraine marked the end of the territorial integrity norm. Discuss (Lectures 19, 24)
**Pol.2 Exam Questions 2022-23**

1. Should International Relations theories be able to explain international politics at all times and all places?

2. Who or what drives fundamental change in international politics?

3. Do the Chinese and Russian challenges of the 21st century mean the end of the international human rights regime?

4. Have the international institutions of the 20th or 21st centuries undermined or upheld the principles of Westphalia?

5. How might realism and constructivism explain the international political turmoil of the interwar period differently?

6. Is the sovereign state a European export to the rest of the world?

7. How might the histories of international politics in Africa, Asia and the Americas make us see international politics in Europe in a new light?

8. Are norms or rational self-interest more important for fostering international rules and co-operation?