

## Theories of International Relations (K000890)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 6.0**

**Study time 180 h**

**Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026**

**Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026**

Lesage, Dries

PS03

lecturer-in-charge

De Keersmaecker, Goedele

PS03

co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026**

**crdts**

**offering**

**Teaching languages**

Dutch

**Keywords**

international relations – theory building – war and peace – international cooperation  
– structural dependency – postcolonialism

**Position of the course**

This educational component belongs to the 3BA study program. It enables students to fit the previously acquired knowledge about international politics into a theoretical framework. In addition, it is of crucial importance to the drafting of the Bachelor's paper and of the Master's test (thesis, dissertation). The course has two objectives: 1) to familiarize students with the main theoretical perspectives relevant to the study of international politics, 2) to apply these theories.

**Contents**

First, the course provides an introduction to theory building with regard to international relations. After an introduction on actors, levels of analysis and power, it thoroughly addresses realism, liberalism, English School, Marxism, Neo-Gramscianism, social constructivism, feminism, postcolonialism and foreign policy analysis.

**Initial competences**

- Students are required to possess a general historical perspective and factual knowledge of contemporary international politics.
- Students are supposed to keep a keen eye on international current events throughout the entire academic year, in order to be able to subsequently apply the theoretical insights in an adequate way.
- Students need to keep a sufficiently open mind for theoretical approaches that go beyond the anecdotal and journalistic.

**Final competences**

- 1 To have profound knowledge of the main theoretical paradigms regarding international relations, with attention to the historical dimension.
- 2 To be able to interpret the current world order and important historical and topical events and developments.
- 3 To be able to analyse the various components of an international problem (among other things, actors, interests, ideas, power resources, power relations, ...).
- 4 To be able to manage in a critical and -- if relevant -- eclectic manner the main theoretical paradigms regarding international relations in the assessment of

international trends and events.

5 To be able to efficiently locate and process/assimilate literature about theory creation.

6 To be able to apply in an independent and creative manner the main theoretical paradigms regarding international relations in the drafting of the Bachelor's paper and Master's Test.

7 To be able to critically assess studies about international politics from a theoretical and methodological viewpoint.

8 To be able to go beyond a journalistic and anecdotal approach while observing international trends and events by systematically displaying a theoretical, scientific reflex.

#### **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

#### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

#### **Teaching methods**

Lecture, Independent work

#### **Extra information on the teaching methods**

- Non-Dutch speaking students are advised to follow the course International Relations Theory instead.

#### **Study material**

None

#### **References**

#### **Course content-related study coaching**

Following an appointment by email, the lecturers are at the students' service to answer questions.

#### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term assessment

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment with open-ended questions

#### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment with open-ended questions

#### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

#### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

#### **Extra information on the examination methods**

The exam is in keeping with the targeted learning outcomes and will take place in Dutch. (100% of the marks)

#### **Calculation of the examination mark**

Periodic assessment (100%)

#### **Facilities for Working Students**

Working students are evaluated in the same way as regular students.