

History of International Politics (K001368)

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

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Lesage, Dries

PS03

lecturer-in-charge

Haesebrouck, Tim

PS03

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

[Bachelor of Science in Business Administration](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Communication Science](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Political Science](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Sociology](#)

6

A

[Linking Course Master of Science in Political Science\(main subject International Politics\)](#)

6

A

[Linking Course Master of Science in EU-Studies](#)

6

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Science in Political Science\(main subject International Politics\)](#)

6

A

[Preparatory Course Master of Science in EU-Studies](#)

6

A

[Elective Set Political Sciences](#)

6

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

International relations – political history

Position of the course

This educational component offers a historical framework and political science explanations for international politics from 1815 until present.

Contents

The course offers a thorough overview of the international political history from 1815 until present. It is structured according the rise and fall of world orders in which great powers alternately compete and cooperate. The course offers a robust factual historical framework, in order to enable the social scientist to situate essential historical facts and processes such as the German reunification; the colonization of Congo; state formation in the Middle East and the Palestinian Question; the Vietnam War; the Gorbachev revolution; or the 2003 US invasion into Iraq. In addition, the course offers explanations for major events and developments, such as the causes of conflicts, including the two world wars and the Cold War; imperialism and decolonization; the search for the ideal security architecture from the Concert of Europe to the UN Security Council. Throughout the classes, we tie in with topical developments: we address the historical roots of current power relations and conflicts; the functioning of international organizations such as NATO and the UN; important themes such as nationalism, the unequal North-South relationship, nuclear arms, humanitarian interventions, consultation mechanisms among great powers, the rise of China and Russia's invasion into Ukraine. Students get acquainted with theoretical concepts such as levels of analysis (incl. the importance of the international system, the state level and the level of individual leaders); the balance of power, multipolarity,

bipolarity and alliances; the security dilemma and arms races; military strategy; proxy wars; red lines; liberal internationalism; the role of institutions, ideology, ethics and perceptions in international politics; globalization.

This course does not constitute a modern and contemporary history.

Initial competences

None

Final competences

To obtain a robust historical framework concerning the studied period, specifically informed by the political science disciplines of international relations and international political economy. This implies not only knowledge about facts, but also political science-based insight in events, developments and long-term trends.

Conditions for credit contract

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

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Guest and exchange students who do not follow the lessons in Dutch, can opt for a written exam that is integrally based on the two volumes by Rich
If on campus lectures cannot take place due to corona, an online alternative will be provided.

Students are invited to enter in debate, ask questions and take up discussion. They will also be presented with topics for discussion.

Students can also be supposed to follow just a few academic activities outside the regular time schedule (e.g. lectures, debates) and also be interrogated on these contents.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: De Keersmaecker, Goedele, Lesage, Dries (2024). Conflict en samenwerking. Internationale politiek van 1815 tot heden. Tweede druk. Gent: Academia Press Lannoo

Indicative price: € 43

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Author : De Keersmaecker, Goedele; Lesage, Dries

ISBN : 978-9-40148-790-0

Number of Pages : 560

Oldest Usable Edition : 2024

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : Yes

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : regularly

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

Additional information: Detailed and educational overview of international politics after 1815. Throughout the continuation of the program and beyond, it will often be useful to revisit the book for the necessary facts and insights regarding international conflicts and other developments.

References

None

Course content-related study coaching

The teachers are always available 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

Guest and exchange students who do not follow the lessons in Dutch, can opt for a written exam that is integrally based on the two volumes by Rich mentioned earlier.

The focus will be on the international-political aspects (evolution of world order; causes and consequences of wars; international cooperation; Cold War; arms race; imperialism; the structure and institutions of the international political economy and its underlying ideas). The focus is NOT on domestic politics and the local history of developing countries, as these subjects are addressed in other courses at Ghent University. Of course, we recommend reading on these topics as well, as they provide context to the core themes of this course.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodic assessment (100 %)

Facilities for Working Students

The same learning material and exam format applies.