



### EXPLANATORY MODELS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Enrollment year	2015/2016
Academic year	2015/2016
Regulations	DM270
Academic discipline	SPS/09 (SOCIOLOGY OF ECONOMICS AND LABOUR)
Department	DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Course	WORLD POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Curriculum	PERCORSO COMUNE
Year of study	1°
Period	2nd semester (29/02/2016 - 28/05/2016)
ECTS	6
Lesson hours	40 lesson hours
Language	ENGLISH
Activity type	ORAL TEST
Teacher	PARRI LEONARDO (titolare) - 6 ECTS
Prerequisites	=
Learning outcomes	=
Course contents	<p>The subject that we today call “International Relations” (IR) is heterogeneous: while the discipline originated from a marriage between political science and history, today’s IR theories have strong links with sociology and economics, too. IR is therefore a member of the family of social sciences, with which it shares many characteristics. The analysis of the scientific status of social research is thus relevant for the proper understanding of IR. Like natural sciences, social sciences aim in fact at explaining the “what?”, “why?” and “how?” aspects of phenomena.</p> <p>The first part of the course provides students with the basic conceptual tools of the philosophy of science: induction, deduction and abduction; theory and observation; realism and idealism; laws and causality;</p>

explanatory mechanisms and models.

The second part of the course concentrates on social explanation. In this domain, the causal element typical of the natural sciences has to be compatible with the intentional element typical of human actions and interactions. With the constant help of empirical examples from both the various social sciences and IR, this course part considers: the role of abstraction and statistics in coping with social complexity; the importance of laws and models in social explanation; the place of the beliefs and goals underpinning actions and interactions; the instrumental and value rationality of human actions; the relations between micro and macro aspects of social phenomena. Eventually, a synthetic conceptual framework concerning the structures and dynamics of social explanation is proposed.

The third part of the course, organized as a series of seminars, concerns two classic IR articles. These essays propose two theoretical models of strategic interaction, which explain some dilemmatic aspects of international security and the outbreak of war.

**Teaching methods**

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**Reccomended or required readings**

Walt, S. M: (1998), "International Relations: One World, Many Theories", Foreign Policy, n. 110, Spring 1998, pp. 29-46.

Lamy, S. L. (2011). "Contemporary Mainstream Approaches: Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism", in Baylis, J., Smith, S., Owens, P. (eds.), The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations, Fifth Ed., Oxford, Oxford UP, pp. 114-29.

**Assessment methods**

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**Further information**

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**Sustainable development goals - Agenda 2030**

[\\$ibl legenda sviluppo sostenibile](#)