

Stand: 04.01.2010

Blockseminar

Great Powers in International Relations

Dr. Miriam Prys
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Angeboten für: Studierende des Bachelor-Studiengangs "Internationale Beziehungen" ab 3. Fachsemester (anrechenbar für die Module IP1/IP2/EF) und im Master-Studiengang "Internationale Beziehungen" im 3. Fachsemester (anrechenbar für das Modul S-IP) sowie Studierende der Politik-, Geschichts- bzw. Kommunikationswissenschaften und ggfs. anderer Fakultäten

Das Seminar findet in englischer Sprache statt.

Uhrzeit/Ort: Blockseminar vom 15. bis 17. Januar 2010
Freitag, 15.01.2010, 2. DS, WIL/C103; 5. bis 7. DS, HSZ/403
Samstag, 16.01.2010, 2. bis 5. DS, HSZ/301
Sonntag, 17.01.2010, 2. bis 4. DS, HSZ/301

Einschreibung: **5. bis 11. Oktober 2009 online** unter:
<https://www.zis.tu-dresden.de/einschreibung/>

Course description

The rise and fall of great powers is one of the central themes in International Relations research. With the emergence of China and other states such as India and Brazil on the world stage, this topic has found renewed interest in our discipline, yet the jury is still out about (1) whether or not this is a threat to global order, (2) whether it will lead to more conflicts or more stability and (3) what it means for tackling new challenges such as global climate change.

Indeed, looking at the state of the art of International Relations theory, we can find that these great powers, their strategies and their impact on international order are approached in very different ways. This course will use these different contemporary theories of International Relations to discuss, abstractly as well as with specific empirical examples, the concept of great powers and specific aspects of great powerhood that have attracted attention throughout the discipline, such as the balance of power and questions of international order. In the second part of the course, students will apply different theoretical frameworks to empirical case studies, about the rise and fall of great powers and their involvement both in specific issue areas of world politics and certain geographic regions of the world, and debate about the usefulness, the contradictions and complementarities of different theoretical understandings.

The aim of the course therefore is to help students in becoming aware of different ways of viewing and understanding international relations. By using this specific theme of great powers, student will also learn how the different theoretical and conceptual assumptions of the schools of IR research determine or ‘construct’ the very events, or in the case of great powers, the actors, that we are analysing. The ability to detect these different theoretical assumptions will be, in the second part of the course, used in our reading of empirical academic, popular media and official texts. Students will get the chance to formulate their own ideas about both international relations theory as well as the role of great powers in world politics and to share and discuss them with their peers. The seminar will be held in English.

Course Requirements

- Readings: As this is a block seminar, please consult the – soon to be available – reading list as soon as possible and start reading and preparing the seminar **well in advance**. The literature in the reading list will be divided into required and additional reading. It is generally expected that **all students are familiar with all the required reading** in January ahead of the actual seminar. Students giving a presentation or short commentary additionally should consult the relevant pieces of the additional readings list. In some sessions, students, however, might be able to specialise on specific case studies.
- Written outline ('Thesenpapier') and presentation of this paper on one session's themes. Topics will be allocated in the "Vorbesprechung". The outline paper ('Thesenpapier') will have to be submitted to Miriam Prys by 6 December 2009. Students are expected to include any relevant feedback by the lecturer into their presentation.
- One of the following: **commented** session minutes or short commentary

Tentative Course Outline

PART 1: Great Powers: Theoretical and conceptual specifications

As students are expected to be familiar with the central elements of each of the theoretical schools, the first two sessions will focus on the role of power(s) and great powers in the different approaches.

Session 1: IR theories and their approaches to defining and measuring power

Session 2: Great powers in IR theories: Behaviour and impact on the international system

PART 2: Case Studies I: Power shifts in the post-Cold War international system

The aim of the case studies is to integrate the lessons of the previous sessions into the study of concrete empirical cases. We will have discussions about contemporary world events and look through the different lenses that the various theoretical accounts of great powers and their strategies offer.

Session 3: The end of the Cold War and the Unipolar Moment

Session 4: 'Europe' as a great power

Session 5: The rise of China (and India) as a challenge to the "West"?

PART 3: Case Studies II: Issues

Please note: Most of the following sections are analyses of contemporary events. It is hence highly recommended to also follow news coverage on each of the issues!

Session 6: Global Powers and traditional security threat: Non-proliferation

Sessions 7: Great powers and trade

Session 8: Great powers and global governance: Climate change

PART 4: Case studies III: Powers and regions

The last section of this course includes a move from the global to the regional level of analysis. Great powers can play important roles in region as external, but also as internal actors, i.e. as regional great powers. The interaction between the global and the regional creates certain tensions. Three arising issues will be discussed with the help of two cases: first, the potentially overbearing influence of external actors onto a region, the withdrawal of external actors from a region, and the possible institutional developments in a region in which both regional and external actors are pursuing their interests.

Session 9: Great Powers and Middle East

Session 10: Great powers and Africa

Session 11: The future of international order / Conclusion