School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Department of Politics and International Studies

Power in World Politics
(Course Code: 15PPOH017)

Spring 2012

Seminars: Thursdays, 15:00-17:00, Room V329 (Vernon Square)

Seminar Leader: Dr Felix Berenskoetter
Room: 205 / ph: 0207 898 4682 / email: fb12@soas.ac.uk
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00-13:00

AIMS

This half-unit course explores different understandings of ‘power’ in the study of international politics to unravel the notion, still predominant in the International Relations (IR) literature, that power is a straightforward concept. It draws on Stephen Lukes’ typology of the three faces of power to introduce readings of power understood as winning conflicts, setting agendas and shaping normality and traces their presence in different theories of international politics. The course discusses forms of material (‘hard’) and ideational (‘soft’) power, as well as the distinction between ‘power over’ and ‘power to’. It also looks at the evolution of the conceptualization of power in IR scholarship. While much of the discussions will take place on the theoretical level, students are asked to apply the insights to issues such as American hegemony, globalisation, war, North-South relations, or revolutions.

At the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the academic literature and debates on ‘power’ in international politics. They will understand different kinds of power relations discussed in Social Theory and IR theories such as Realism, International Political Economy, Institutionalism, and Constructivism. Students will be able to present and critically engage this literature and apply insights empirically in an independent research project focusing on one or multiple facets of power. Students will also be aware of the ethical questions surrounding the analysis and exercise of power in international politics.
FORMAT AND ASSESSMENT

The course will proceed in form of two hour seminars on Thursday afternoon where we will discuss ideas and arguments drawn from assigned literature. We will begin each class with a presentation by one student on the topic at hand, followed by questions from a designated discussant, leading over to class discussions. Student work will be assessed as follows:

- Participation 10%
- Presentation 20%
- Research paper 70%

Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in discussions. We will work closely with the assigned texts and therefore you must know that you can only meaningfully contribute to the discussion if you have done the readings.

Presentation: Each student will present once and will also be designated discussant once. The presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes and should summarise and evaluate the main points made in the required readings. For this it may be useful (but not necessary) to also consult some of further readings listed in the syllabus. Presenters must provide all class members with a hardcopy of a one page outline containing (i) your name, date, and the presentation topic, (ii) bullet points conveying the structure of your talk and the key points you want to get across, and (iii) a listing of the literature consulted. The information on this handout should be limited and only provide the skeleton of your presentation, that is, it should be easy to follow and not distract your audience. Presenters should also use this as an opportunity to develop their ability to speak freely from notes and, hence, should not read word-by-word from a prepared text.

The task of the discussant is to start-off the class discussion by posing three questions arising from the core readings and the presentation. These questions can be critical (expressing disagreement with the presenter), supplementary (adding an aspect you think should be highlighted more), or simply ask for clarification of an aspect in the readings/presentation you did not understand (there is always something). The discussant must justify these questions, that is, say where they come from and why they matter, but (s)he should not be tempted to give another presentation.

If you know in advance that unavoidable circumstances prevent you from giving a presentation or being discussant on the assigned day, please try and switch with a class-member and let me know.

Research Paper: Students are expected to write one 6,000 word assessed paper on a topic exploring a phenomenon of power in international politics. Students may choose a topic from within the themes covered by the course and must formulate and engage a particular question subject to approval by the seminar leader. In preparation, a one page-proposal must be submitted by Thursday, 15 March 2012. The proposal should state the question you intend to answer, a basic structure and at least four pieces of relevant literature, and we will discuss the proposal during office hours.

The paper is due on Friday, 30 March 2012. This deadline will only be extended under exceptional circumstances and applications will need to be made in writing with supporting material through the Faculty Office. Late essays for which no extension has been given will be penalised at two percentage points per day as required by SOAS regulations. Students will receive written feedback on their paper and may receive additional oral feedback if they wish during office hours. The paper should be carefully researched and follow academic standard in terms of structure, citation and references. Students are reminded that plagiarism, the unacknowledged and non-attributed copying of the work and/or ideas of another author, is an examination offence.
COURSE OUTLINE

1. Measuring Power as a Problem
2. Three Faces of Power
3. Power in Classical Realism
4. Military Capabilities and Winning Wars
5. Interdependence and Agenda Setting
   Reading Week
6. Hegemony and Structural Power
7. Authority and Legitimacy
8. Knowledge/Power and Governmentality
9. Persuasion and its Limits
10. Resistance, Empowerment and Change

READINGS

All ‘Required Readings’ are available electronically through the course’s BLE or the SOAS library. The ‘Further Readings’ lists allows you to broaden your reading into areas which you find particularly interesting. To access those supplementary readings you may also need to consult other University of London libraries, such as those affiliated with the LSE, King’s College, or Senate House. The following books are recommended for purchase:

- Felix Berenskoetter and M. J. Williams (Eds.) Power in World Politics (London: Routledge, 2007)


CLASS SCHEDULE

1. Measuring Power as a Problem – 12 Jan

Required Readings

Further Readings

Bull, H. *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Palgrave), Ch. 5

Enloe, C., ‘Margins, Silences, and Bottom Rungs: How to overcome the underestimation of power in the study of International Relations’ in Smith et al. (eds.) *International Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996): 186-203


Nye, J. S. *Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs) Ch. 1


2. Three Faces of Power – 19 Jan

**Required Readings**

Lukes, S. *Power: A Radical View*, pp. 1-59


**Further Readings**


3. **Power in Classical Realism – 26 Jan**

**Required Readings**
Carr, E. H. *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2001 [1945]), chapter eight (pp. 97-130)

**Further Readings**
Claude, I. *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House)
Griffiths, M. *Realism, Idealism & International Politics: a reinterpretation* (London: Routledge, 1992), chapters 1-4
Guzzini, S. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: the continuing story of a death foretold* (London: Routledge, 1998); chs. 2 and 3
Little, R. *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)
Mann, M. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume I and II* (Cambridge University Press)
Smith, M. J. *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986): chapters 1, 2, and 6

4. **Military Capabilities and Winning Wars – 2 Feb**

**Required Readings**

**Further Readings**
Consider the development of headlines:
- ‘Iraq: Who won the War?’ *The Independent*, 16 March 2008
- ‘Can the Right War be Won?’ *Foreign Affairs* (July/Aug 2009): 120-127

Allawi, A. A. *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007)
Gallarotti, G. M. *The Power Curse: Influence and Illusion in World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2010)
Lebow, R. N. and J. G. Stein *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 1994)
Mearsheimer, J. J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), Chapters 3 and 4
Wallerstein, I. ‘The Eagle has crash landed’, *Foreign Policy* (July/August, 2002): 60-68.

5. Economic Interdependence and Agenda Setting – 9 Feb

**Required Readings**


**Further Readings**


**On Agenda-Setting:**


Joachim, J. M. *Agenda setting, the UN, and NGOs: gender violence and reproductive rights* (Georgetown University Press, 2007)


On Economic Sanctions:

*** Reading Week – 16 Feb ***

6. Hegemony and Structural Power – 23 Feb

Required Readings

Further Readings
Gilpin, R. War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge University Press, 1981)


Strange, S. *States and Markets* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), prologue and chapter two


See also literature on the ‘American empire’ debate posted on BLE.

7. Authority and Legitimacy – 1 March

Required Readings


Further Readings


Clark, I. ‘Legitimacy in a global order’, *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003): 75-95

Clark, I. *Legitimacy in International Society* (Oxford University Press, 2005)


Finnemore, M. ‘Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity: Why being a Unipole Isn’t All It’s Cracked Up to Be’ *World Politics* 61/1 (2009): 58-87


Hassdorf, W. ‘Contested Credibility: the use of symbolic power in British exchange-rate politics’ in Berenskoetter and Williams, *Power in World Politics*, pp. 141-161

Nye, J. S. *Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs) Ch. 1


8. Knowledge/Power and Governmentality – 8 March

Required Readings


Further Readings


Edkins, J. *Poststructuralism and International Relations: Bringing the Political Back in* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999)


Jessop, B 'From micro-powers to governmentality: Foucault’s work on statehood, state formation, statecraft and state power', *Political Geography* 26/1 (2007): 34-40


See also the Forum on 'Assessing the Impact of Foucault on International Relations' in *International Political Sociology* 4/2 (2010): 196-215

**Required Readings**


**Further Readings**


D’Hooge, I. 'The Limits of China’s Soft Power in Europe', *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers* No. 25, The Hague, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2010


Gill, B. and Y. Huang 'Sources and Limits of Chinese soft power', *Survival* 48/2 (Summer 2006): 7-36


Hassdorf, W. 'Contested Credibility: the use of symbolic power in British exchange-rate politics' in Berenskoetter and Williams, *Power in World Politics*, pp. 141-161


Nye, J. S. *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), Ch. 4


Rachman, G. 'Obama and the limits of soft power', *Financial Times*, 1 June 2009


Sárváry, K. ‘From the art of seeing to the diplomatic art: persuasion through paradigm change in international relations’, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11 (2008): 29-54
10. Resistance, Empowerment and Change – 22 March

Required Readings

Further Readings
Eschle, C. and B. Maiguashca (Eds.) *Critical theories, international relations and 'the anti-globalisation movement': the politics of global resistance* (London: Routledge, 2005)
Fanon, F. *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by R. Philcox (Grove Press, 2004)