Exeter College Oxford Summer Programme

International Relations between the two World Wars 1914-1945

Course Description
This course tracks the progress of international relations between the two world wars: two major conflicts in international history, not only for the major European powers but for the entire world. It covers the origins and development of the First and Second World Wars, the Versailles Settlement and the evolution of the modern Middle East. It looks at patterns of inter-war international relations in Europe, the Far East, the United States, the Soviet Union and the wider world. It also looks at the development of international organization and the nature of the international economic order. It reflects upon the wider implications of the events of this period for the development of international relations after 1945.

The course is designed to be multidisciplinary and is suitable for students of all disciplines who have a strong interest in international relations, political theory and history of the twentieth century. There are no prerequisites and no previous knowledge of international relations of political history is required, but would be an advantage.

Topics
1. The origins of the First World War
2. The Paris Peace Conference
3. The Middle East between the wars
4. The USSR and international relations: a new kind of state
5. The US and international order
6. The League of Nations
7. East Asia in International Relations
8. The Wall Street Crash and its consequences for international economic order
9. The Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler
10. The politics of appeasement
11. World War II and the origins of the Cold War
12. The International System 1914-1945

Course Objectives
To offer a strong historical grounding in interwar events, informed by International Relations theories and approaches. To reflect upon the wider implications of these events for the study of International Relations. To develop students’ skills of analysis and argumentation, of developing historically based evidence in the context of political debate and discussion.
Teaching Methods and Assessment
• 12 x 1.25hr Lectures (15hrs)
• 6 x 1.25hr Seminars (7.5hrs)
• 2 x 1.25hrs Tutorials (2.5hrs)

Final Assessment: An essay of no more than 3,000 words (40%), a final three-hour written examination (40%), oral presentation (10%) and participation in seminar discussion (10%).

BACKROUND READING
Carr, E. International Relations between the Two World Wars (1990)
Marks, S., The Ebbing of European Ascendancy (2002)

Lecture Schedule

1. Origins of WW1 and the shifting international balance of power
Considers the different explanations for the First World War emphasizing the impact of the changing balance of power among major states.
Reading:

2. The Paris Peace Conference (Treaty of Versailles)
Examines the different treaties and settlements that followed the First World War and their long-term implications.
Reading:
Macmillan, M., Peacemakers. The Paris Conference of 1919 and its attempt to end War (2003), Introduction and Ch. 1: ‘Woodrow Wilson Comes to Europe’

3. The Middle East state system after WW1
Considers the evolution and characteristics of the states system that emerged after
the war and the legacy of peacemaking in the modern Middle East.

Reading:
- Rogan, E., ‘The entry of the Middle East into the modern states system’, in
- Best, et al., International History of the Twentieth Century, Ch 5: ‘The Origins of
  the Arab-Israel Conflict’.
- Shlaim, A., War and Peace in the Middle East (1999), Ch. 1 ‘The Post Ottoman
  Syndrome’

4. **The Soviet Union in the Inter-War period: A new kind of state?**

Looks at the impact of the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the USSR
on the patterns of International Relations between the wars.

Reading:
- Armstrong, D. The Revolutionary State in International Society (1993),
  Introduction and Ch 4 [Oxford Scholarship online]
- Gorodetsky, G. Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1991: A Retrospective (1994), Ch 3,
  pp. 30-44, and Ch. 65-74.

5. **The United States and international order**

Examines the influence of the United States on the design of the post-war system
and different arguments about its international roles from isolationism to
internationalism.

Reading:
- Ambrosius, L., Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal
  Internationalism during WW1 (1992), Ch. 5 ‘American Ideals and
  European Realities’
- Burk, K., ‘The Lineaments of Foreign Policy: The United States and a ‘New
  resource available through OLIS]
- Kissinger, H., Diplomacy, Ch. 15, ‘American re-enters the arena: Franklin Delano
  Roosevelt’.

6. **League of Nations**

Traces the establishment of the League of Nations and considers its achievements
and limitations as an international organization.

Reading:
- Dunbabin, J., The League of Nations Place in the International System,’ History
- Wight, M., Power Politics, Ch. 19: ‘The League of Nations’
7. **International Relations of East Asia**
Explores developments in China and Japan after WW1, in particular Japanese imperialism and the Chinese civil war leading to the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.
Reading:

8. **The Great Depression and the International Economy between the Wars**
Reviews the nature of the international economy after WW1 and the impact of the Great Depression of 1929 on international order.
Reading:
Feinstein, C. and Temin, P., *The European Economy Between the Wars* (1999), Ch. 2: ‘The Legacy of the First World War’
9. Hitler and the Road to World War II
Examines the transition from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich and the foundations and development of Nazi foreign policy leading to the Second World War.
Reading:
Wright, J. *Germany and the Origins of the Second World War* (2007), Ch 1
‘Debates and themes’ and Ch 2: ‘Hitler’s World’

10. The Politics of Appeasement
Asks: How did other states respond to the foreign policies of Germany, Italy and Japan? Why were fascism and militarism too little resisted and with what implications?
Reading:

11. The Second World War and the Origins of the Cold War
Considers the development of the war and how the Second Cold War gave rise to a ‘Cold War’ between the two new superpowers: the US and the USSR
Reading:
Gaddis, J., *We now know: Rethinking Cold War History* (1998), Ch. 1: ‘Dividing the World’

12. The International System 1914-1945: An Overview
Provides an overview of the international system that emerges in the period covered by the course and analyzes it from an International Relations perspective.
Reading: