

The course 'STV4227 – International Politics: Key Debates' ran in the Fall semester of 2023 at the University of Oslo. Jonathan W. Kuyper acted as course convenor and gave five lectures. The course also had lectures from Dr. Hallvard Sandven, Dr. Vegard Tørstad, Dr. Melanie Sauter, Dr. Do-Young Lee, and Dr. Yves Steinebach (one lecture each). The course covered topics from Anarchy and hierarchy, Sovereignty and states, Preferences and Pressure, Democracy and Peace, Bargaining and conflict, Alliances and contests, Institutions and information, Secretariats and public-policy, Norms and Persuasion, Non-state actors and networks. It is an advanced course that tracks several major conceptual issues in historical and contemporary international relations. It is designed with learning outcomes to focus on 'big ideas' and then draw applications from different theories, issue-areas, and geographical cases. Students were required to present a paper from the syllabus in one lecture – this was pass/fail and evaluated by Kuyper. The papers were selected to be in dialogue with one-another, shining different light on similar issues. The term paper was designed so students would select and write on their own research question.

The course was new in 2023. Drawing insights from STV4105, Kuyper set the term paper word limit at 3500-5000 words. Kuyper attended all lectures and ran the oral presentations. On Canvas, the students were instructed to present for 8-10 minutes on their paper to leave room for class discussion and to highlight the strength and weaknesses of their paper vis-à-vis the other assigned paper for that week (three papers were presented in each lecture). Kuyper and Steinebach were the sensors for the course.

From the subject coordinators, we received the following positive feedback. The students enjoyed the breadth of topics offered in the course. They – for the most part – enjoyed their term paper activity though several students noted that coming up with their own question was difficult. Kuyper met with or received emails from almost all students to help them workshop their papers. Several students said they wanted the opportunity to hand in a draft of the term paper. It was allowed by Kuyper that a one-page plan could be submitted for comments, and many students took up that opportunity. Given that most students were able to construct interesting questions and complete the course, the pedagogical benefits of being able to construct a question and answer it seems worthwhile. The students appreciated that Kuyper attended all other lectures and asked questions of the lecturer – creating a more dynamic atmosphere. However, it was noted that the lectures could have contained more time for discussion.

We also received the following constructive comments. First, some students felt that that the course was too Western-centric and that more diversity of critical perspectives were required. Second, while the presentations were helpful, many students said that they were too long and required more time for discussion. Finally, some students were concerned that term paper instructions were too broad.

In response, the following steps will be taken. First, several attempts were made to have a broad course with a variety of perspectives with different issue (climate, trade, security, etc.) and geographical focus (Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, etc.). The initial lecture started by going through both orthodox and heterodox positions in the field of IR, and several students used these in the final term paper. However, more effort will be made to weave these throughout the course as

well. Second, next year, Dr. Vikki Finn will take a lecture on Immigration and integration, which will explicitly have a critical orientation and focus on South America. Finally, the students were instructed to present for 8-10 minutes, but many spoke for closer to 15 minutes. Next year, Kuyper will work to keep time of presentation shorter and thus free up space for more discussion.

Overall, the course ran very well with strong good sign-up and completion rates.