International History
International Relations/Political Science

Academic year 2019-2020

International Organisations and Global Narratives

RI-SP104 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

Tuesday 14h15 - 16h00

Course Description

This course investigates the historical origins, political roles and normative power of International Organizations in global governance from an interdisciplinary perspective. Combining historical, sociological and political science approaches, the course focuses on international organizations as spaces where narratives on challenges of global governance are developed, institutionalized and diffused. In a first part, we will discuss how international issues are created and framed. In a second part, we examine which historically and culturally embedded ideas shape our international system. In a third part we reflect on the nature of IOs and their power as well as the mechanisms, processes and forms of expertise through which they establish norms, policies and practices of international governance. Last but not least the course will look at why and how IO narratives can become contested by a variety of actors in the international public sphere. These themes will be explored both through theory and a wide range of case studies, including the governance of science and technology, food security issues, human rights and labor issues.

Syllabus

Method of Assessment

1. Seminar participation (20%)
You are expected to attend each seminar and regularly participate in discussions. Having read the suggested material is essential to your good participation in class discussions.

2. Reading reports and presentation (30%)
Based on your readings, you will submit a fortnightly report (ca. 500 words including 3 questions for discussion) one day before our meeting. You will also prepare one presentation on a seminar topic.

3. Term Paper (50%)
The final term paper should be related to one of the themes raised during the class. Papers should be approximately 3000-3500- words in length. You are expected to think independently about your possible research question for the term paper, but you should consult with one of us once you have proposals in mind. You should have a proposal by week 9, which you should submit to us in written form by email. The paper should demonstrate an understanding of the class content and the readings and an ability to analyze them critically and to make connections between them. Attention will be paid to clarity of expression and appropriate use of terminology. You are welcome to carry out some primary research (interviews / use of archival sources) but this is not compulsory.

WEEK 1 / September 17: Introduction: Course Outline

No readings

CREATING GLOBAL GOVERNANCE PROBLEMS

WEEK 2 / September 24: What is Global Governance: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Readings:


INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HISTORICAL LEGACIES

WEEK 3 /October 1: War and imperial Legacies – The League of Nations and the Emergence of Geneva as an International Space
Readings:


For further reading:


BBC Series Things We Forgot to Remember: The League of Nations: https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b00fz8fb

WEEK 4 / October 8: IOs and American Dominance after World War II: The Rise of Development Thinking

Readings:


For further reading:


- Amalia Ribi Forclaz, From Reconstruction to Development: The Early Years of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Conceptualization of Rural Welfare, 1945-1955, International History Review (2018).


THE MAKING OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE PROBLEMS

WEEK 5 / October 15: The Emergence of the Refugee Problem in the Interwar Period Guest Lecture by Dr Francesca Piana

Readings:


For further reading:


WEEK 6 / October 22: Creating Global Governance Problems - the Case of Climate

Readings:


For further reading:


THE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

WEEK 7 / October 29: IOs as (Political) Bureaucracies
Readings:


For further reading:


WEEK 8 / November 5: IO Field Trip

WEEK 9/ November 12: IOs, Private Actors and the Politics of Expertise

Readings:


For further Reading:


WEEK 10/ November 18: The Politics of Quantification

Readings:


_for further reading:_


**WEEK 11/ November 26. Discussion of Essay Topics**

**WEEK 12 / December 3: IOs and Global Professionals : A Sociological Perspective**

Guest lecture with Dr. Monique Beerli, Visiting Fellow, Graduate Institute


**CONTESTATION OF GLOBAL NARRATIVES**

Week 13/December 10: NGOs and Transnational Advocacy – the Cases of the International Code on Breastmilk Substitutes and of EU Nanotechnology Policy

_Readings:_


**WEEK 14 / December 17: Social Movements, Transnational Advocacy and IOs (the case of La Via Campesina and FAO and the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants)**

_Readings:_


For further reading:
