This course provides MA candidates in the Diplomacy & Conflict Studies specialization with a critical survey of the main conceptual and institutional building-blocks of the modern international system, as well as identification of emerging issues and trends shaping that system. Offered in the first semester of the program, it is meant to create a more cohesive learning experience among the diverse group of students who enroll in the program, and to expose students to key issues and debates in the field of International Relations which they will go on to develop in other lecture courses and research seminars during the program. The course begins by seeking to answer the questions: “How is the contemporary international system organized, and why is it organized in this way and not in the myriad of alternative possibilities?” It therefore examines the origins and evolution of international order—its main ideas, historical contingencies, and institutions—starting in the 17th century and extending to our own times. The course then turns to critically examine in greater detail the post Cold War
international system - a system that emerged from the ashes of the first and second world wars - and which has defined world order in unique ways since 1989. As part and parcel of this section we will examine the principles and institutions or regional and global governance in the post-WWII era. In the final third of the semester we will ask whether the Western led international order is dying (or is in fact dead) and what forces are shaping the current global (dis) order. We will explore several emerging issues and trends in this context, including the impact of existential risk (climate, pandemic, AI related) on international relations, resurgent authoritarianism and the resurfacing of old-empires (China, Russia, Persia, Ottoman), disruptive technologies, the proliferation of fragile states and new forms of order contestation in an increasingly tumultuous international environment.

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**Course Goals**

The course is meant to achieve several different goals. First, it is meant to serves a platform in which the instructor (the head of the specialization) and the class interact regularly in the first semester of the program. Second, as a survey course it seeks to create a shared academic agenda, where some of the most important themes and questions in contemporary IR studies are identified and explored. Lastly, by exposing students to classic, as well as cutting-edge, scholarship in the field and by promoting open discussion of key debates, the course is meant to stimulate student interest in topics which they will go on to develop in future lecture courses and research seminars in the specialization.

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**Grading**

Final Examination (100% of the grade)

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**Learning Outcomes**

Advanced graduate level survey of the modern international system, familiarity with key concepts, institutions, and debates. Engagement with high-level texts and discussion of texts develop enhanced analytical and research skills. Opportunities for identifying cutting-edge issues and dilemmas for future study and research.

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**Lecturer Office Hours**

By appointment.
Tutor Office Hours

By appointment.

Teaching Assistant

Adv. Ms. Almog Dayan (dayan.almog@gmail.com)

Additional Notes

While regular attendance and active participation in class are not made formal components for grading purposes, there is little doubt that they greatly contribute to success in the final examination. Students who prepare and regularly attend class sessions tend to perform well, whereas those who do not should expect their performance to suffer.

Second, due to the continuing uncertainties caused by the pandemic some degree of flexibility in the contents, format, and evaluation method of the course may occur. The instructor will communicate any relevant changes to the students.

Reading List

All required readings posted on the course Moodle site. The course utilizes other learning resources, such as podcasts and videos.