The Project of Modernity and Practices of World Politics

Summer Term 2012

Lecturer:
Oliver Kessler
Overview

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**Part I: The Project of Modernity**

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**Part II: New Concepts**

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Course Description

There is a common consensus that contemporary practices of world politics escape the logic of the nation state system. Increasingly, International Relations (IR) puts the Westphalian nation-state system into brackets and challenges its vocabulary of sovereignty, anarchy and balance of power. Similarly, concepts like postmodernity, second modernity or modernity as an unfinished project move to the centre of deliberations in IR. While there is an agreement that the old classics may not provide the right answers anymore, there is less agreement on what modernity or postmodernity actually are. This course pursues this question and is divided in three parts. The course first reconstructs the modern projects with Kant and Hegel and describes the abandonment of the modern projects by Heidegger and Wittgenstein. The second part introduces and compares concepts like performativity, genealogy/archaeology, speech act and communicative action. In the third part these concepts are used to reconstruct current debates around sovereignty, power/violence, security, international law and in particular risk. The result is an innovative view on IR and its roots in modern history.

Readings

There is no textbook. All texts can be found in a special dropbox. In case you are unfamiliar with dropbox, please get in contact with me. As general background, I recommend David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1998), Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory: An Introduction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

Assessment

1. Oral presentation
2. Paper

Office hour

Wednesday, 14-15 h
Room 240, LG 1
Email: oliver.kessler@uni-erfurt.de
Reading List

Week 2: The Project of Modernity:

Required readings:


Additional Readings:


Week 3: Sovereignty and the Third Debate

Required Readings:


Week 4: Constructivism

Required readings:


Week 5: Critical Realism

**Required Readings:**


Week 6: Speech Act Theory and Securitization

**Required Readings:**


**Additional readings:**


**Week 7: Communicative Action and Norms**

*Required readings:*


*Additional readings:*


Week 8: Performativity and Finance

Required readings:


Additional readings:


**Week 9: Governmentality, Genealogy, Archeology**

*Required readings:*


*Additional readings:*


