

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE
ODESA I. I. MECHNIKOV NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Department of International Relations



" APPROVE "
First Vice-Rector

(Maiia NIKOLAIEVA)

1__"__September__2025

WORKING PROGRAM OF EDUCATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Theory of International Conflict

Level of higher education: Second (master's// master level)

Field of study: C Social Sciences, Journalism, Information and International Relations

Specialty: C 3 International Relations

(code and name of specialty)

Educational and professional program: International relations, public communications and regional studies

Program of the academic discipline "Theory of International Conflict". Odesa: ONU, 2025. 15 p.

The course programme is designed by **Volodymyr Dubovyk**, associate professor, PhD in Political Studies.

The work programme was approved at the meeting of the Department of International Relations
Protocol No. 1 from "25" August 2025 year
Head of the Department [Signature] (Olga BRUSYLOVSKA)

Agreed with the guarantor of the Study Program International Relations, Public Communications and Regional Studies

[Signature] (Olga Brusylovska)

Approved by the Educational and Methodological Commission of the Faculty of International Relations, Political Science and Sociology

Protocol No. 1 from "29" September 2025 year
Head of the EMC [Signature] (Oleg Khoroshilov)

Reviewed and approved at the meeting of the Department of International Relations

Protocol No. from " " 20 year
Head of the Department (Olga BRUSYLOVSKA)

Reviewed and approved at the meeting of the Department of International Relations

Protocol No. from " " 20 year
Head of the Department (Olga Brusylovska)

1. Description of the academic discipline
"Theory of International Conflict"

Name of indicators	Field of study, specialty, specialization, level of higher education	Characteristics of the academic discipline	
		<i>full-time education</i>	<i>correspondence form of education</i>
Total number: credits – 3 hours - 90 content modules - 2	Field of study: <u>C Social Sciences, Journalism, Information and International Relations</u> Specialty: <u>C 3 International Relations</u> Level of higher education: <i>Second (master's level)</i>	<i>Mandatory /Selective course</i>	
		Mandatory	
		<i>Year of studies:</i>	
		1st	
		<i>Semester</i>	
		2nd	
		<i>Lectures</i>	
		14 hours	
		<i>Practical, seminars</i>	
		26 hours	
		<i>Laboratory</i>	
		<i>Independent work</i>	
		80 hours	
		End-of-course assessment: <i>Credit</i>	

1. The goal and tasks of the academic discipline

The goal is to study the main theoretical and conceptual views on international conflict.

The tasks of the course are for the students to study: the main stages of the evolution of approaches to international conflict; the main concepts of international conflict that appeared at different stages of historical development; directions of methodological discussions regarding the causes and essence of international conflicts; typologies and classifications of international conflicts; main categories in international conflict studies; basic methods of prevention and settlement of international conflicts.

The process of studying the discipline is aimed at forming elements of the following **competencies** :

SK01. The ability to identify and analyze the nature, dynamics, principles of organization of international relations, types and classes of international actors, contemporary trends in the development of world politics.

SK03. The ability to argue the choice of ways to solve problems of a professional nature in the field of international relations, public communications and regional studies, critically evaluate the obtained results and justify the decisions made.

SC05. Ability to analyze and forecast international relations in various contexts, including political, security, legal, economic, social, cultural and informational.

Expected learning outcomes. As a result of studying the academic discipline, the student should be able to:

PH7. Assess and analyze international and foreign policy problems and situations, propose approaches to solving such problems.

PH12. Formulate modeling tasks, create and research models of objects and processes of international relations, foreign policy, public communications and regional studies.

2. Content of the academic discipline.

Module I.

Module I. Evolution of the theory of international conflict from ancient times to the First World War

Topic 1. Concept of international conflict. The oldest approaches to understanding the conflict .

The concept of international conflict. How the categories of conflict and crisis differ. Categories of contradictions, interests, goals and intentions.

Peculiarities of the analysis of the international conflict in Ancient China. Legist militarism. Moderate approach, Confucius. Pacifism. Mo Tzu and the Moists. Peculiarities of interpretation of conflicts in Ancient India. Plato and Aristotle. Thucydides' contribution to the development of the understanding of the phenomenon of international conflict. Formation of a vision of international conflict within the framework of world religions.

Topic 2. Development of attitudes towards international conflict during the Renaissance .

Anti-war, anti-clerical views of Erasmus of Rotterdam. N. Machiavelli and the problems of war and peace. Hugo Grotius and the formation of an international legal approach to international conflicts.

Topic 3. Emergence of the liberal approach and its assessment of the international conflict.

W. Penn, D. Hume, J. S. Mill, A. de Tocqueville. T. Paine, T. Jefferson, J.-J. Rousseau: causes of international conflict. The idea of the influence of the state system on the propensity for international conflict. Contribution of T. Hobbes to the study of problems of war and peace.

Topic 4. The influence of the formation of nations and national states on the nature of international conflict.

Classical nationalism and international conflicts. Y.G. Fichte, F. Hegel, O. von Bismarck. G. Mazzini. Class doctrine and international conflicts. K. Marx. Class struggle and conflicts in the international arena. K. Kautsky. J. Hobson. V. Lenin.

Topic 5. Geopolitical approach to international conflict.

Classics of geopolitics (C. Montesquieu, A. Mahan, H. Mackinder, N. Spykman, K. Haushofer) and problems of war and peace. Similarities and differences in approaches to the problems of war and peace.

Topic 6. Biological, physiological interpretations of international conflict.

Behaviorism. The influence of Charles Darwin's theory on the understanding of the nature of conflicts. Social Darwinism. Contribution of S. Freud. Categories of aggression and frustration. Development of this approach in the works of E. Glover, H. Lasswell, K. Lorenz.

Module II.

Content module II. The theory of International Conflict in Modern Times

Topic 7. "Political idealism" and its interpretation of the international conflict.

Moralism, optimism and universalism. The principle of collective security. The postulate of the role of international law and emphasis on the importance of international organizations for the prevention and resolution of international conflicts. International community and conflict.

Topic 8. "Political realism" and its interpretation of the international conflict. The statist nature of classical realism and the nature of international conflicts. Power and security categories are key in conflict analysis. The imperative of national-state interests as a reason for the inevitability of conflicts. Balance of power. The security dilemma. The development of realist views on the international conflict at the modern stage.

Topic 9. International conflicts through the prism of the systemic approach and functionalism .

Specifics of the systemic approach to the study of international conflict. The system and structure of the conflict. Elements, centers of power and center-power relations in the conflict. Escalation and de-escalation of conflicts. Stages and phases of conflicts.

The concept of functionalism and the study of international conflicts. Emphasis on finding ways to cooperate. Depoliticization of international relations as a way to minimize conflicts. The departure of international relations from purely interstate relations as a guarantee of conflict settlement. The concept of "joint project".

Topic 10. International conflict settlement.

Applied aspect of the course: prevention, localization and settlement of international conflicts. The main mechanisms (preventive diplomacy, mediation, collective security, sanctions, military intervention and others). Talks. Arbitration. The third party. The role of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

3. The structure of the academic discipline

Names of topics	Number of hours									
	Full-time					Correspondence form				
	Total	including				Total	including			
		Lec ture s	Prac tical	labs	Inde pen dent wor k		l	p/s	lab	Inde pen dent wo rk
Content module I. Evolution of the theory of international conflict from ancient times to the First World War										
Topic 1. Concept of international conflict.	9	1	-	-	8					
Topic 2. Development of attitudes towards international conflict during the Renaissance.	9	1	-	-	8					
Topic 3. Emergence of the liberal approach and its assessment of the international conflict.	9	1	-	-	8					
Topic 4. The influence of the formation of nations and national states on the nature of international conflict.	9	1	-	-	8					
Topic 5. Geopolitical approach to international conflict.	10	2		-	8					
Topic 6. Biological, physiological interpretations of international conflict.	10	2	-	-	8					
Total in module 1	56	8	-	-	48					
Content module II. The theory of international conflict in modern times .										
Topic 7. "Political idealism" and its interpretation of the international conflict	16	2	6	-	8					

Topic 8. "Political realism" and its interpretation of the international conflict .	14	2	4	-	8					
Topic 9. International conflicts through the prism of the systemic approach and functionalism .	17	1	8	-	8					
Topic 10. International conflict settlement.	17	1	8	-	8					
Total in module 2	64	6	26	-	32					
Total hours	120	14	26		80					

5. Topics of seminar classes

Seminar classes are not provided .

6. Topics of practical classes

No s/p	Topic name	Number hours
1	"Political idealism" and international conflict Questions for discussion: 1. Evolution of political idealism. 2. Morality and law in international conflict. 3. Basic principles of political idealism and conflicts.	6
2	"Political realism" and international conflict Questions for discussion: 1. Basic postulates of political realism. 2. Key categories of political realism and conflict analysis. 3. The development of realist views on the international conflict at the modern stage.	4
3	International conflicts through the prism of the systemic approach and functionalism Questions for discussion: 1. The system and structure of the conflict. Elements, centers of power and center-power relations in the conflict. 2. The concept of functionalism and the study of international conflicts. 3. Departure of international relations from purely interstate relations as a guarantee of conflict resolution.	8
4	International conflict settlement Questions for discussion: 1. Traditional methods of settling international conflicts. 2. Mechanisms of settlement of international conflicts.	8

	3. The role of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.	
	TOTAL	26

7. Topics of laboratory classes

Laboratory classes are not provided .

8. Independent work

No s/p	Title of the topic	Number hours
1	Topic 1. Concept of international conflict. The oldest approaches to understanding the conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. Kautilya "Arthashastra". 2. Comparison of approaches to international conflict in Ancient China (Sun Tzu, Wu Tzu, Confucius, Mo Tzu). 3. Thucydides "Peloponnesian War": about the causes of the war.	8
2	Topic 2. Development of attitudes towards international conflict during the Renaissance. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. The concept of just war. 2. N. Machiavelli and the problems of war and peace. 3. International legal approach: a comparison of the views of H. Grotius, W. Penn.	8
3	Topic 3. Emergence of the liberal approach and its assessment of the international conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. Comparison of the ideas of representatives of the liberal approach in the period of the New Age. 2. I. Kant and his treatise "To Eternal Peace" 3. Contribution of T. Hobbes to the study of problems of war and peace.	8
4	Topic 4. The influence of the formation of nations and national states on the nature of international conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. The origin of nationalism and international conflict in the approaches of O. von Bismarck. G. Mazzini. 2. Basic postulates of Marxist theory. 3. Evolution of Marxism at the modern stage.	8
5	Topic 5. Geopolitical approach to international conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. C. Montesquieu "On the Spirit of Laws". 2. F. Ratzel and R. Kjellen as founders of the geopolitical approach. 3. Comparison of approaches to international conflict by A. Mahan, H. Mackinder, N. Spykman, K. Haushofer	8

6	Topic 6. Biological, physiological interpretations of international conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. The influence of Charles Darwin's theory on the understanding of the nature of conflicts. 2. Social Darwinism. 3. Development of S. Freud's approach in the works of E. Glover, H. Lasswell, K. Lorenz.	8
7	Topic 7. "Political idealism" and its interpretation of the international conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. The origin of the idealist paradigm and its evolution. 2. Moralism, optimism and universalism in international conflicts. 3. International community and conflict.	8
8	Topic 8. "Political realism" and its interpretation of the international conflict. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. The main postulates of political realism and the problem of the causes of international conflict. 2. Power, national interests and security dilemma in understanding the causes of international conflicts. 3. Interpretation of the international conflict with a neorealist approach.	8
9	Topic 9. International conflicts through the prism of the systemic approach and functionalism. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. Escalation and de-escalation of conflicts. 2. Stages and phases of conflicts. 3. Depoliticization of international relations as a way to minimize conflicts. 4. The concept of "joint project": theoretical foundations and practical implementation.	8
10	Topic 10. International conflict settlement. <i>Questions for independent preparation</i> 1. Approaches to international conflict settlement. The role of international organizations. 2. The concept of perception and international conflict. 3. Mediation in international conflicts.	8
	<i>One essay from the above list is chosen by the student at the beginning of the semester and sent to the instructor one month before the end of the course.</i> <i>The length of the essay: 10 pages.</i> <i>Characteristics of the content:</i> according to the content of the educational discipline. <i>Requirements for performance and evaluation:</i> the main purpose of the work is an in-depth study of important theoretical or applied questions of the discipline by preparing an essay (research). The development of such skills is important: independently formulate problem, determine the goal, main tasks, object and subject of research; search and select various information; process and analyze information; logically and successively present analysis results, do	

	argumentative conclusions; Properly represent scholarly and reference material; publicly present performed work. The paper must be written by the student at the appropriate level corresponding to the modern state in development of the complex sciences, which study international relations. The topic of the work should be introduced in the context of modern scientific concepts, the main scientific terms should be used reasonably and appropriately. It is very important to highlight scientifically objective positions, to use real examples and reliable statistical information to illustrate and confirm theoretical positions. The opinions of domestic and foreign authors, their general theoretical and methodological approaches must be analyzed and systematized. The minimum amount of sources used is 15; at the same time materials from the internet sources can not make more than a third of the numbers in the list of sources; most sources should consist of published documents, articles and monographs. For design of footnotes in texts and final "List of references" APA style is used.	
	Total	80
As an independent work, the applicant can take professional courses/trainings, professional internships, online courses, civic education, receive a corresponding certificate on educational platforms, which can be counted as periodic, current and a fragment of the final control. The following courses are offered for consideration, which can be recognized as periodic, current control and/or bonus points (at the applicant's request):		
Name of the educational platform, name of the online course, short description, link¹	Competencies and learning outcomes that are being formed	Number of hours
Erasmus + Virtual Exchange <u>The art of negotiation and conflict resolution.</u> Provide students and young people who are not studying, with access to a new level of international and cross-cultural and inclusive education through the implementation of virtual exchanges on the art of negotiation and mediation in EU countries, Georgia and Ukraine to enhance democracy, cultural diversity and objective problem resolution by acquiring best European practices. https://artnoconflict.com/	IK; PH7; PH12.	90

¹ The applicant can independently choose resources that will correspond to the academic discipline. To be enrolled as a periodic, current or fragment of the final control, the applicant must submit a document confirming non-formal education, a program, and a description of the competencies and learning outcomes formed during non-formal education. The teacher reserves the right to verify the formation of the listed competencies and learning outcomes.

9. Teaching methods

Verbal: lectures (problems-focused, lectures with analysis of specific situations, etc.), explanation, discussion, discussion of problem situations.

Face-to-face: including multimedia presentations, demonstration, method of direct observation, presentation of the results of own research.

Practical: role-playing games; performance of individual tasks (preparation and public presenting of essays).

10. Control methods// Forms and types of assessment

Methods of continuous assessment: oral survey, evaluation of the performance of individual tasks (essays), presentation of the results of individual tasks.

Final control/ end-of-course-assessment: Credit.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Evaluation on a national scale	Theoretical training	Practical training
Excellent	fully absorbs the educational material, freely, independently and presents it during oral presentations and written answers; deeply and comprehensively reveals the content of theoretical issues, while using normative, mandatory and additional literature; draws independent conclusions, reveals cause-and-effect relationships; independently finds additional information and uses it to implement the tasks set before him. The acquirer of education is able to distinguish the essential features of the studied subject by means of synthesis and analysis, identify cause-and-effect relationships, form conclusions and generalizations, freely operate with facts and information.	deeply and comprehensively assesses the essence of practical/calculation tasks, while using normative, mandatory and additional literature; can reasonably choose a rational way of performing the task and evaluate the results of his own practical activity; performs creative tasks and initiates, new ways of their implementation; freely uses acquired theoretical knowledge when analyzing practical material; shows a creative approach to the performance of individual and collective tasks while working independently.
Good	has a sufficiently complete command of the educational material, presents it reasonably during oral presentations and written answers, while using normative and mandatory literature; when presenting some issues displays not	correctly solved most of the calculation / test tasks according to the sample; has stable task performance skills.

	enough of depth and argumentation, applies knowledge to solve standard situations; independently analyzes, summarizes and systematizes educational information, but certain insignificant inaccuracies and minor errors are detected.	
Satisfactorily	Has command of the educational material at the basic level or reproduces a certain part of the educational material with elements of logical connections, knows the basic concepts of the educational material; has difficulties in dealing with the essential features of the studied material, during the identification of cause-and-effect relationships and the formulation of conclusions.	can use knowledge in standard situations, has elementary, spotty skills in performing tasks. Solved half of the calculation/test tasks correctly. The acquirer of knowledge has complications in dealing with the essential features of the learned material; struggles when identifying causal relationships and formulating conclusions.
Unsatisfactory with the possibility of retaking exam	possesses educational material superficially and fragmentarily (without ability of argumentation and justification); unsystematically singles out random features of the subject; does not know how to perform the simplest operations of analysis and synthesis; makes generalizations, conclusions; significant mistakes are made during the answer.	does not sufficiently solves practical tasks, while allowing significant inaccuracies, correctly solves individual calculation/test tasks with the help of a instructor, lacks formed skills and abilities.
Unsatisfactory with mandatory repeated study of the discipline	does not display knowledge of the educational material.	performs only elements of the task, needs constant help from the instructor.

11 . Questions for the end-of-course-assessment.

1. The concept of international conflict.
2. System and structure of international conflict.
3. Functions of international conflict.
4. Typology of international conflicts: criteria and approaches.
5. Stages and phases of international conflict.
6. Basic concepts of international conflict in ancient China.
7. Concepts of international conflict in ancient Greece.

8. Thucydides' "Peloponnesian War" and problems of international conflict.
9. Formation of a vision of international conflict within the framework of world religions.
10. The evolution of the theory of international conflicts in the modern era.
11. The liberal doctrine of international conflict in the modern era.
12. The concept of perception in the theory of international conflict.
13. A systematic approach to international conflict.
14. Interpretation of the international conflict within the framework of the "political idealism" school.
15. Interpretation of the international conflict within the framework of the "political realism" school.
16. Peculiarities of the theory of international conflicts at the modern stage.
17. The origin and evolution of the theory of international conflicts in the ancient world.
18. Peculiarities of international conflict in the missile and nuclear age.
19. Biological interpretation of international conflict.
20. A class approach to international conflict.
21. Geopolitical concepts of international conflict.
22. The views of H. Mackinder and A.T. Mahan on the nature of international conflict.
23. Classical nationalism and international conflict.
24. Liberal-pacifist doctrine of international conflict.
25. Modern theoretical concepts of international conflict.
26. Approaches to international conflict settlement. The role of international organizations.
27. Strategies for settlement of international conflicts.
28. Preventive diplomacy as a means of conflict management.
29. Humanitarian intervention as a means of conflict resolution.
30. Mediation in international conflicts.

10. Distribution of points received by students

Continuous assessment										Individual independent assignment/ Professional course, training, professional internship, online course, civic education (3 ECTS, 90 hours) ²	Total points
Content module 1						Content module 2					
T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	T 9	T 10		
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	30	100

² The applicant chooses to complete an individual independent task **or** take a professional course/training, professional internship, online course, or civic education.

Evaluation scale : national and ECTS

Evaluation scale : national and ECTS			
The sum of points for all types of educational activities	Rating ECTS	Evaluation on a national scale	
		for an exam, course project (work), practice	Credit is given on a pass-fail system
90 - 100	A	excellent	Passed
85-89	B	good	
75-84	C		
70-74	D	satisfactorily	
60-69	E		
35-59	FX	unsatisfactory with the possibility of retaking exam	Failed with the possibility of retaking
0-34	F	unsatisfactory with mandatory repeated study of the discipline	not enrolled with mandatory repeated study of the discipline

11. Methodological support

1. Dubovyk V. A. Syllabus of the course "Theory of International Conflict". Odesa: ONU. 2024. 5 p.

12. Recommended literature

Main

1. Denysenko I. D. Modern theory of conflict: problems of explanation, demarcation, classification. *Ukrainian society* . 2013. No. 3 (46). P. 16-26.
2. Conflictology: teaching. manual / M. P. Hetmanchuk and others; Lviv. state University of Internal Affairs Lviv: Lviv. state University of Internal Affairs cases, 2016. 343 p.
3. Lutsyshyn G. I. Conflictology and negotiation theory: teaching. manual for students, postgraduates and teachers higher closing of education of Ukraine. Lviv: View of Lviv. polytechnics, 2015. 200 p.
4. Streltsov E. L. On the question of the essence and types of international conflicts. *Legal Bulletin* . 2014. No. 4(33). P. 133-137.
5. Nye J. Understanding international conflict. New York: Longman , 2007. 320 p.
6. Peoples C., Vaughan-Williams N. Critical Security Studies: An Introduction. 3d Ed. Routledge. 2021. 200 p.
7. Stoessinger JG Why nations go to war. New York: Cengage Learning , 2010. 480 p.

Additional

1. Hobbes T. Leviathan, or the essence, structure and powers of the ecclesiastical and civil state. Kyiv: Duh i Litera, 2000. 447 p.
2. Zinchyna O. B. Conflictology: teaching. manual. Kharkiv: KhNAMG, 2007. 164 p.
3. Kapitonenko M. G. International conflicts. K.: Lybid, 2009. 352 p.
4. Kapitonenko M. G. According to the power potential. Forms of international conflicts: comparative analysis. *Politics and time* . 2003. No. 5. P. 31-38.
5. Local wars and armed conflicts of the second half of the 20th century (Historical-philosophical aspect): Monograph / Gurzhii O. I., Mosov S. P., Makarov V. D. and others. K.: Knowledge of Ukraine, 2006. 356 p.

6. Quapelitsa H.M. The genesis of conflicts in the post-communist space of Europe. K.: Stylos , 2003. 256 p.
7. Siriy S. Conflict factors in international socio-economic and political processes. *Political management* . 2010. No. 2. P. 128-138.
8. Buzan B., Wæver O. Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 596 p.
9. Churchman D. Why we fight. The origins, nature and management of human conflict. 2d ed. Lanham: UPA, 2013. 336 p.
10. Jackson R. Terrorism . Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 332 p.
11. Holsti KJ Peace and War. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 379 p.
12. Huntington S. The Clash of Civilizations and the Restructuring of World Order. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1996. 367 p.
13. Kazanský R. The Theory of Conflicts: Textbook. Banská Bystrica: Matej Bel University, 2015. 186 p.
14. Booth K., Dunne T. Worlds In Collision: Terror and the Future of the Global Order. Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 386 p.
15. Schelling T. The strategy of conflict. Cambridge, Mass., 1980. 328 p.
16. Wallensteen P. Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace & the Global System. London: Sage Publication, 2003. 360 p.

15. Information resources

1. Official website of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. URL: <https://www.osce.org/>
2. The official website of the United Nations. URL: www.un.org
3. Cooperation and conflict URL: www.cac.sagepub.com
4. Journal of conflict resolution URL: www.sagepub.com/journals/journal200764
5. Journal of peace research URL: www.jpr.sagepub.com