Course Number: IS597N
Course Title: Aesthetics and International Politics
Course Teachers & Contact Details: Prof. Jayati Srivastava
Room no. 316, SIS-II
Tel. (O): 26704349
Email: jayatis@jnu.ac.in
Contact Hours: One hour after the class & by appointment
Credit Allotted: 4
Instruction Method: Lectures
Evaluation Method: 50 % weightage for sessional examination & 50 % weightage for end semester examination
Class Schedule: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 12 noon -1 pm
Classroom: Room no. 211

Important Guidelines:
- Students must critically engage with all the assigned readings and take active part in class discussions.
- Penal grades would be imposed for late submission/presentation, plagiarism and use of unethical academic practices. For details on research ethics and citation/bibliography issues, please consult the SIS Research Manual (https://www.jnu.ac.in/sites/default/files/SIS_Research_Manual_0.pdf).
- All students must complete the mid-semester evaluation/s, without which they are not eligible to sit for the end semester examination.

Course Description:
The course looks at IR discipline’s dialogue with other disciplines and focuses on the world of aesthetics as an important aspect of knowing and understanding international relations. The course underlines that international politics, in addition to state level interactions, is also enacted and performed through various mediums such as popular culture, films, literature, music, art, paintings, museums, sports, etc. The course will enable the students to look at the two-way relationship between aesthetics and international politics – both shaping and structuring the other. It will also underline that aesthetics and its deployments are deeply political acts and not value-neutral. The course will simultaneously familiarise students with conceptual and methodological tools drawn from different fields to understand the art and craft of international politics by other means.

The course by its very nature requires diverse pedagogical tools, which would include lectures but also use of documentaries, films, videos, and various forms of visual and graphic materials, which would be announced in the class.

I: Politics and Performance of Aesthetics

This section will discuss the politics of performance through different aesthetic mediums as an important lens to study international politics. It would also introduce trans-disciplinary methods to study the role of aesthetics in international politics.

II: Popular Culture

This section would discuss the relationship between popular culture and international politics. While touching upon the debate over what constitutes popular culture, it will discuss the problematic dichotomy between popular culture and high culture. It would also delineate the ways in which popular culture and international politics exist in an intertwined relationship, simultaneously impacting and impacted upon by the other.
III: Films
This section will discuss the role and importance of films in enacting, influencing and representing international politics. The imagery and message in films may contest or coalesce with the dominant narrative, thus marking a dynamic and open-ended relationship between the two. By drawing on select films, this section will also discuss some of the core issues in international politics such as self-other, power, diplomacy, eco-politics, partition, etc.; and, the manner in which they simultaneously represent and sway international politics.

IV: Literature
The section will discuss the power of literature – both fiction and non-fiction – in capturing various aspects of international politics. It will explain the narrative approaches, and look into the world of Harry Potter, contemporary travel writings and cold war anthology as a mirror to study international politics.

V: Music
The world of music is considered to be borderless and yet music travels through extant nation-state borders, thus creating the possibilities of either convergence or schism between states. This section will discuss how the world of music is mediated by international politics. In doing so, it will also examine the use of music as a medium by the states to augment their interests and the potential transformative role that music may play in altering the domain of the international.

VI: Art / Visuality
In an increasingly mediatised world, the role of visual imagery cannot be over-stated in international politics. This section will therefore focus on the embedded politics of representation in art, museums, photographs, and, paintings; particularly around questions of war, security and conflict. Alongside, it will also discuss how art and visuality is informed and impacted by the changing landscape of international politics.

VII: Sport
This section will deal with the evolving relationship between international politics and various forms of sport (including video games & Barbie dolls). International sport politics plays out in various ways including selection of cities for sporting events; and, sporting events such as Olympics becoming an important site for politics of protest and boycotts. At the same time, delineation of sport politics would examine complex issues of ethics, nationality, migration and sport-war analogies.

Themes & Readings:

I: Politics and Performance of Aesthetics

Essential Readings

Supplementary Readings
II: Popular Culture

Essential Readings


Supplementary Readings


III: Films

Essential Readings


Supplementary Readings

Bharkar, Ira (2013), ‘Trauma, Melodrama and the Production of Historical Affect: The Partition, Memory and the Contemporary Communal Riot in Indian Cinema’, Nasta, Dominique, Andrin, Muriel & Gailly, Anne (eds.), Film Melodrama Revisited, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang.


IV: Literature

Essential Readings


Supplementary Readings


V: Music

Essential Readings


Supplementary Readings


VI: Art / Visuality

Essential Readings


**Supplementary Readings**


**VII: Sport**

**Essential Readings**


**Supplementary Readings**


Further Readings:


Dittmer, Jason (2010), Popular Culture, Geopolitics and Identity, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield.


Shapiro, Michael J. (2009), Cinematic Geopolitics, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Sylvester, Christine (2009), Art/ Museums: International Relations Where We Least Expect It, Boulder: Paradigm.