Course Description

During the Cold War years, the two superpowers dominated the international system to the near-total exclusion of other power centres. The term ‘great power’ almost totally disappeared from the scholarly analysis of international politics during this period, despite the autonomous role of states such as China and France. If anything, the notion of ‘great powers’ was seen as archaic, dating back to the years of European dominance before the Second World War.

With the end of East-West bipolarity, in the decade of the 1990s the great powers seemed to be re-emerging from under the shadow of the superpowers to reclaim a central place in the discipline of International Relations (IR). However, in the decade of the 2000s, it became apparent that the international system was experiencing not multipolarity but hegemony (the so-called “unipolarity”). While the hegemony of the United States (US) continues, the rise of China is posing a number of interesting questions, the most important of which is whether the system is evolving in the direction of bipolarity or multipolarity.

It has therefore become important for students of IR to gain a theoretical and historical understanding of the position, role and attributes of great powers in the international system. The purpose of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to study great powers in some depth and detail. We will focus on the Great Power concept, the attributes of Great Powers, the rise and fall of the Great Powers through history, the principal theoretical analyses and debates about Great Powers, the various ways (war, alliances and trade) in which Great Powers interact with one another, and two specific Great Powers, France and China, one of which is in relative decline and the other on the rise. Along the way, we will also seek to understand how Great Powers differ from cognate concepts like middle powers, world powers, regional powers, emerging powers, rising and declining powers, and empires.

Assignments and Grading

Students will write a Term Paper and present it in class. They will also appear for a written examination at the end of the semester. The final grade will be computed on the following basis:

- Term Paper (5,000-8,000 words, to be submitted electronically by 15 March 2016) 30%
- Class Presentation (using PowerPoint) 20%
- Final Examination (3 hours duration) 50%

Spot tests, worth 5% each, will be held if attendance in the classroom falls below a particular threshold. In case spot tests are conducted, the weight assigned to the term paper and class presentation will correspondingly reduced.
Course Outline, Class Schedule and Reading List

All books on this reading list are available in the JNU Central Library; books marked with an asterisk (*) can be found in the Textbook section of the JNU Central Library. All journal articles are available in electronic repositories such as JSTOR. Students are expected to read regularly and extensively.

Week One

12 January: **Introduction to the Course**

**Concepts: Cognates and Attributes**

13 January: **IA 1. Defining Great Powers as a conceptual category**


14 January: **IA 2. How Great Powers differ from superpowers/middle powers/regional powers/world powers**


Week Two

19 January: **IB 1. Defining Great Powers by their attributes: military capability**


Rodney W. Jones and Steven A. Hildreth (eds.), *Emerging Powers: Defence and Security in the Third World*
20 January: **I B 2. Defining Great Powers by their attributes: economic competitiveness**


* Raymond Vernon, *Two Hungry Giants: The United States and Japan in the Quest for Oil and Ores* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

21 January: **I B 3. Defining Great Powers by their attributes: social cohesion**


**Week Three**

26 January: *Holiday (Republic Day)*

27 January: **I B 4. Defining Great Powers by their attributes: cultural attractiveness**


28 January: **I B 5. Defining Great Powers by their attributes: geographical reach**


**Week Four**

2 February: **I B 6. Defining Great Powers by their attributes: policy coherence**


**Histories: Rise and Fall**

3 February: **II A. Great Powers in World History**


4 February: **II B. Rise and Fall of the Great Powers**


**Week Five**

9 February: **II C 1. The Early European Maritime Powers: Spain, Portugal, Holland**


10 February: **II C 2. Classical European Balance of Power: Britain, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia**


11 February: **II C 3. Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria, USA**


**Week Six**

16 February: **II C 4. Britain, France, USA, USSR, Germany, Japan**


17 February: **II C 5. Superpower bipolarity and the Cold War: USA and USSR**


18 February: **II C 6. After the thaw: American Hegemony**


**Week Seven**

23 February: **II C 7a. After Hegemony: Power Transition or System Transformation?**

24 February: **II C 7b. After Hegemony: Bipolarity or Multipolarity?**

**Theories: Polarity, Hegemony and Stability**

25 February: **III A. Hegemonic Stability Theory**

**Week Eight**

1 March: **III A. Hegemonic Stability Theory**

291-308.


2 March: **III B. The Polarity-Stability Debate**

3 March: **III B. The Polarity-Stability Debate**


Randall L. Schweller, ‘Tripolarity and the Second World War’, *International Studies Quarterly* 37 (1): 73-
Week Nine

8 March: III C. Power Transition Theory


9 March: III D. Long Cycles


Relations: War, Alliance and Trade

10 March: IV A. War between Great Powers

Week Ten

15 March: IV A. War between Great Powers


16 March: IV B. Alliances between Great Powers

17 March: IV B. Alliances between Great Powers


**Week Eleven**

22 March: **IV C. Trade between Great Powers**

23 March: **IV C. Trade between Great Powers**


24 March: *Holiday (Holi)*
Week Twelve

Geographies: Locations and Settings of Power

29 March: V A. Geography and Information


30 March: V B. Continental and Maritime Power


31 March: V C. Regional Power

Week Thirteen

5 April: V C. Regional Power

6 April: VI A. France: A Great Power in Decline

7 April: VI A. France: A Great Power in Decline

Week Fourteen

12 April: IV A. France: A Great Power in Decline


Stanley Hoffmann, *Decline or Renewal? France since the 1930s* (New York: Viking Press, 1974).


13 April: **VI B. China: A Great Power on the Rise**

14 April: **VI B. China: A Great Power on the Rise**

**Week Fifteen**

19 April: **VI B. China: A Great Power on the Rise**


20 April: *Holiday (Mahavir Jayanti)*

**Futures: Aspirations and Possibilities**

21 April: **VII A. Future Great Powers in the Asia-Pacific**


**Week Sixteen**

26 April: **VII B. Future Great Powers in the Southern Hemisphere**


Philip Kelly, *Checkerboards and Shatterbelts: The Geopolitics of South America* (Austin: University of Texas...
Michael Morris (ed.), *Great Power Relations in Argentina, Chile and Antarctica* (London: St Martin’s, 1990).


Nelson Mandela, ‘South Africa’s Future Foreign Policy’, *Foreign Affairs* 72 (5), November/December 1993:


Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu Mustapha (eds.), *Gulliver’s Troubles: Nigeria’s Foreign Policy after the Cold War* (Scottsville: University Of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).


Timothy Shaw and Olajide Aluko (eds.), *Nigerian Foreign Policy: Alternative Perceptions and Projections* (New York: St Martin’s, 1983).

27 April: Revision

28 April: Revision