*Metropolitan University Prague – MUP*

*Department of International Relations and European Studies*

**Theory and Methodology of Regional Studies**

Winter 2023  
Master’s Degree – first year

Lecturer: Associate Professor Mats Braun, PhD (mats.[braun@mup.cz](mailto:braun@mup.cz))

Assistant Professor: Ricardo Reboredo, PhD (ricardo.reboredo@mup.cz)

*The syllabus is subject to change*  
  
**Course description**

The course provides for an introduction to the study of regions. The course introduces the topic of what constitutes international regions, how to understand regionalism, regionalization, and how regional integration in different geographical places can be understood and compared. Participants of the course are introduced to a heterogenous group of theories coming from the field of international political economy, international relations and comparative politics. The theories have in common that they have been developed to explain or to help us understand various aspects of regionalism and regionalization processes. Moreover, the course provides the students with a brief introduction to processes of regional integration in different parts of the world, and with a more detailed introduction to the European integration process and to the EU’s institutional framework. The course also reflects upon the heterogenous group of methods used in the interdisciplinary study of international regions.

**Structure of the course**

All sessions of the course will include both lecture and seminar elements.

**Course requirements**

Seminar assignments and discussions – 15%

Group presentation – 40%

Final paper – 45%

**Seminar discussions and assignments:** Participants should be prepared and have read required readings before each seminar session, and carry out all assignments in line with instructions.

**Group presentations:** Presentations will take place between weeks 6 and 11. Students will be divided into teams and present on a topic relating to that week’s theme for 15 minutes (+ 5 minutes for questions). Topics will be student-selected and can range from concepts applied to a particular situation to case studies of different actors and phenomena.

**Final Research Paper** – The final research paper will be 3,000 words excluding bibliography and can be on any topic relating to the course materials. Please email me a tentative essay title and five sentence description of what the essay will be about by week 7 for approval.

**Required readings**

Required readings will be posted on MS Teams.

**Office Hours Policy:**

Students are welcome to meet with us to discuss any concerns or questions they may have. Those who cannot meet at that time are free to email me so that we can find alternatives.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity throughout the course. We will be covering a number of contentious topics in this course and expect students to engage in discussion in a way that is respectful of both the class environment and their peers.

**Syllabus Policy:**

This syllabus will serve as the guiding document for the class. We reserve the right to edit the syllabus throughout the semester but will alert students of any changes.

**Course schedule**

Week 1 *(Oct. 17)* Different understandings of space and regions. (MB)

Readings:

* No readings assigned for this class, please bring a copy of the syllabus.

Week 2 *(Oct. 24)* Theoretical approaches to international cooperation and integration – theories from the field of international relations and comparative politics. (MB)

Readings:

* Börzel, T. and T. Risse (2016) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*, Oxford University Press. Chps: 1 and 2.
* Wiener and Diez (2019), Introducing the Mosaic of Integration Theory, in Wiener, Börzel and Risse (eds), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford University Press. Ch. 1

Week 3 *(Oct. 31)* Comparative regionalism as an interdisciplinary study field – methodology – qualitative approaches. (MB)

Readings:

* Creswell, John W. (2002) “Introduction”, in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 1-12.
* Halperin, Sandra and Oliver Heath (2017) Comparative Research, in *Political Research Methods and Practical Skills*, Ch. 9.

Week 4 *(Nov 7)* The international trading system and regional trade governance. (RR)

Readings:

* Pomfret, R. (2021) Regionalism and the global trade system, *The World Economy*, 44(9), 2496-2514.
* Ravenhill, J. (2011). Regional trade agreements, in Ravenhill (ed), *Global political economy*, Oxford University Press. Chapter 6.

Week 5 *(Nov. 14)* Regionalization processes – the role of none-state actors. (RR)

Readings:

* Karns, M., Mingst, K, and K.W. Stiles. (2015) Nonstate Actors: NGOs, Networks, and Social Movements, *International Organizations: the political processes of global governance*, Ch. 6
* Sever, A. (2019). Regionalism revisited in the post Arab Spring Middle East, *LSE IDEAS.*

Week 6 *(Nov. 21)* Regional Integration in Europe (RR)

Readings:

* Söderbaum, F., and Sbragia, A. (2010). EU studies and the ‘new regionalism’: what can be gained from dialogue? *European Integration*, *32*(6), 563-582.
* Schimmelfennig, F. (2016) Europe, in Börzel, T. and T. Risse (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*, Oxford University Press.

Week 7 *(Nov. 28)* Regional Integration in North America (RR)

Readings:

* Brown, D. M. (2013). The North American Free Trade Agreement: The Limits of Integration, in Loughlin, J., Kincaid, J. And W. Swenden (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Regionalism & Federalism* (pp. 575-588, Routledge.
* Bair, J., & Werner, M. (2011) Commodity chains and the uneven geographies of global capitalism: a disarticulations perspective, *Environment and planning* A, 43(5), 988-997.

Week 8 *(Dec. 5)*  Regional Integration in East Asia (RR)

Readings:

* Jetschke, A. and Katada, S. (2016) Asia, in Börzel, T. and T. Risse (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*, Oxford University Press.
* Murray, P. (2020) Managing security: Reimagining ASEAN’s regional role, *Asian Studies Review*, 44(1), 44-60.

Week 9 *(Dec. 12)*  Regional Integration in Africa (RR)

Readings:

* Leshoele, M. (2020) AfCFTA and Regional Integration in Africa: Is African Union Government a Dream Deferred or Denied? *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 1-15.
* Kwasi Tieku, T. (2016) African Union: From Practical Federalism to Fantasy Union, in Börzel, T. and T. Risse (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*, Oxford University Press.

Week 10 *(Dec. 19)*  Case Study: Regions and Climate Change in the Global North (MB)

Readings:

**TBD**

Week 11 *(Jan. 9)* Case Study: Regions and Climate Change in the Global South (RR)

Readings:

**TBD**

Week 12 *(Jan. 16)*  Class Conclusions and Exam Prep (RR)