

North Europe Schools' Symposium 2023

International Relations

June 5 - 11, 2023

The Symposium Challenge

Rarely has the topic of international relations been so relevant, and so freighted, as in the autumn of 2022; and this rings particularly true for the members of the inaugural North Europe Schools' Symposium. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has thrown into sharp relief the ongoing importance of international relations – most obviously for peace, but also for economic growth, educational opportunities, and mutual understanding. At NESS 2023 we will examine the evolution of international relations over time, their various facets, and we shall look to the future and consider how they might further evolve.

The challenge of the North Europe Schools' Symposium 2023 is for students, after examining the evolution of international relations, their current and possible future state, to suggest the practical steps they and their societies can take to improve the functioning and outcomes of international relations, with particular relevance to the countries of NESS schools.

This inaugural NESS has the central purpose of bringing together intellectually curious students from different schools to consider the topic of international relations, with particular insight from their own perspectives. As with the Winchester International Symposium, the core elements of NESS will be the intellectual talent and commitment of the students, and the distinct cultural backgrounds that will illuminate their contributions. In other words, a shared scholarship together with a unique cultural perspective will create an extremely fertile forum for discussing ideas. At NESS we aim to look specifically at the role and importance of international relations in our different societies, to identify the unique as well as common experiences that have contributed to our different countries' outcomes and approaches, and to look at the particular challenges our systems and societies face with regard to international relations, and to propose practical solutions to those challenges.

Students from the group of Symposium schools will come together in Stockholm in June 2023, after having worked online for six months on the topic areas overleaf. Each school will draft a monthly 750-word response to a particular question set within each topic area; the response will follow a month of discussion of the issues arising from an introductory essay. The response will be posted online in the shared *Google* group, and submitted to TJP. Students will thus have a further week in which they are expected to comment on others' submitted responses.

TJP will send participating students the introductory essay on each topic area, together with required and suggested reading, on the dates overleaf. Intermediate tasks – such as reading relevant articles, watching *YouTube* or TED talks, listening to podcasts – will also be assigned as appropriate. Students will again be encouraged to form their own social media group to become acquainted before the Symposium.

Student pairs will pursue a personal project which will examine one aspect of international relations for their own society. The specific project must gain prior approval. Students must submit their completed project presentations to TJP, by means of *YouTube* upload (or other common video format) one month before the beginning of the Symposium; this will allow for greater consistency, as well as for accurate time management at the Symposium. Completed and approved projects will be presented at NESS.

At NESS 2023, students will discuss ideas during daily debates, listen to expert speakers, and respond to prompts that will allow them to use their online work. These responses will take the form of short presentations. At the end of the week, students will come together to draft The Symposium Accord, which will be a common response to The Symposium Challenge.

Symposium Online Topic Schedule (and deadlines)

October 10, 2022 (Nov 10, 2022)	The Inevitability of International Relations; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment
Nov 17, 2022 (Dec 17, 2022)	International Relations in the Context of Politics and Economics; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment
Jan 15, 2023 (Feb 15, 2023)	International Relations in the Modern World, 1945 - 2001; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment
Feb 22, 2023 (Mar 22, 2023)	International Relations after 2001 and into the Future; essay posted by TJP Students submit essays to TJP and post online for general comment
March 31, 2023	Deadline for Personal Project approval
April - June, 2023 (June 1, 2023)	Personal Project work Students submit completed personal projects to TJP

Block 1 (Oct 10 – Nov 10): The Inevitability of International Relations

The role of geography in the history and evolution of international relations. The balance of power and international relations. Trade between countries and the role of competition, cooperation, and comparative advantage. Militarization, conflict, and the need for mutual security. International relations in the eras of great empires. Religion and international relations.

Block 2 (Nov 17 – Dec 17): International Relations in the Context of Politics and Economics

Great Power politics after 1789; how local wars between rulers became wars between nation states. Napoleonic France and its effects on international relations. The industrial revolution, the growth of the British empire and its effects on international relations. Marxism and capitalism. The approach of the First World War and attempts by Jean Jaurès, among others, to work for peace along class lines. The Russian Revolution and the end of the First World War. Collective security and its failure 1919 – 1939. The Second World War.

Block 3 (Jan 15 – Feb 15): International Relations in the Modern World: 1945 – 2001

The end of the Second World War and its aftermath. International relations in the era of nuclear weapons. The role of the United Nations and NATO. The Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union. The particular relevance for NESS countries. EU expansion and role. The rise of China and international relations in Asia. September 11 and its effect on international relations.

Block 4 (Feb 22 – Mar 22): International Relations after 2001, and into the Future

Populism and its effect on international relations; Trump, Brexit, and the growing distrust of globalization. Climate change and international relations. Putin's Russia and the invasion of Ukraine. How will (has) the conflict in Ukraine end (ended). What are the lessons for the world in general and NESS countries in particular? China and Taiwan. The changing role of the US: a look at the Afghan withdrawal and how politics in the US inevitably impacts international relations. The role of youth, social media, identity politics and ideology.

Personal projects (April - June, 2023. Deadline June 1, 2023):

Students must complete an independent and original investigation into an aspect of international relations of their choice, but from their home country, concentrating on one of the four themes above. The project must be approved by TJP by **March 31, 2023**. The completed investigation must be uploaded as a video presentation by **June 1, 2023** and take no more than ten minutes in total; this will be the same presentation that the students will give at NESS and will enable TJP to be assured of the content and timing. Students will present their projects during NESS 2023.

Linus Fröidstedt, Principal, Ebba Brahe Gymnasium, Stockholm
Tim Parkinson (TJP), NESS Academic Director

September, 2022