

New Research on the History of International Thought in the 20th Century

Thursday 4 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)

This panel brings together new research in the burgeoning subfield of the history of international thought (HIT) to challenge foundational assumptions within international studies. Rather than treating the discipline's core concepts, thinkers, and scholarly subcultures as timeless or self-evident, the papers historicize their emergence, contestation, and transformation.

Showcasing a range of methodologies and approaches - including conceptual history, archival research, oral history, and personae studies - the panel highlights the diversity of approaches within HIT. One paper reconstructs the history of the World Order Models Project (WOMP) as an effort to forge a new transdisciplinary scholarly persona, ultimately laying the groundwork for the emergence of critical international theory. Another excavates the neglected concept of attraction in the realism of Kennan and Morgenthau. A third recovers the intellectual and personal dispute between Schwarzenberger and Lauterpacht to illuminate competing realist visions of international law. The final paper traces the etymology of the 'domestic analogy' in international relations, challenging its presumed conceptual stability.

Together, these papers demonstrate how historical inquiry can serve as a generative mode of theorising in international studies - unsettling taken-for-granted categories and narratives, and opening space for critical reflection on the field's future theoretical and normative commitments.

Track Classification: Contemporary Research on International Political Theory Working Group