Proseminar on World Politics

Jim Morrow
4203 ISR
615-3172
jdmorrow@umich.edu

Office Hours: T 2:00-4:00 held in 6749 Haven and by Appointment at my ISR office

This course introduces the graduate student to research in world politics. Often such a course is taught by reading and reviewing the most prominent books in the recent history of the field. I have chosen to conduct this seminar instead by reading recent research grouped into important areas of interest throughout the field. For each week’s readings, our object is to discuss where the field is in that area, and identify what novel research could and should be done in the area. The central question to ask is not “what is wrong with this research?,” it is “how could we do this better?” or “what should we look at next?”

One consequence of my approach to this course is that many important topics cannot be covered within a semester course. Some examples of omitted topics are ethnic conflict, crossnational nonstate actors, international environmental affairs, and effects of international outcomes on domestic politics. I hope that the topics we do cover will help you think about these other topics should you be interested in them.

The primary requirements of the course are four short papers (1-2 pages) and one long paper (5-15 pages). The four short papers should draw on a week’s readings to present a proposed research design, brief statistical tests of hypotheses, or extensions of arguments and models drawn from the readings. These papers are for you to try out ideas for research projects. They are due enough in advance of class that I may grade them and return them to you for you to present as part of our discussion in class; the deadline for a paper is 9:00 am the day of class. The long paper should present a research design for a larger project and is due at the end of the term. This paper needs to explain how the proposed research relates to some theory in the field, lays out the relevant hypotheses, discusses the availability of data or ease of collection of data, and predicts how the results would falsify or support the hypotheses. In both types of papers, I am looking for creativity of ideas matched with practicality of design and theoretical fruitfulness.

The following books are required for the course:

I have not ordered these books; I recommend you use Amazon or another web seller for them. The other readings are drawn from political science journals and edited volumes. Electronic versions of most of the journals can be found at the University Library website in the Electronic Journals and Newspapers section. Those readings which cannot be purchased and are not available will be made available through the course CTools site; they are marked on the reading list with an asterisk.

The syllabus is broken into required readings and other readings. Everyone is expected to read all of the required readings for each week. The other readings will be assigned to students to present in class. These presentations should be brief, no more than 5 minutes, and explain the argument and results of the paper to the class.

Many of the readings use statistical methods or game theoretic models. I do not expect you to have taken courses in either area. Consequently, most of the first class will be devoted to an introduction to the basic ideas underlying these techniques and some guidance in how to read such pieces critically.

Week 1 (September 9): Introductory Meeting: Introduction to Models and Statistics
Background Reading: Powell, *In the Shadow of Power*, Ch. 1, Appendix 1*

Week 2 (September 16): Systemic Theories of International Politics


Week 3 (September 23): Bargaining and Conflict

Required Readings: Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization*


**Recommended Readings:**


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**Week 4 (September 30): Democratic Peace**


Mansfield and Snyder, “Incomplete Democratization and the Outbreak of International


**Week 5 (October 7): Alliances and Arming**


**Week 6 (October 14): International Dimensions of Internal Conflict**


Week 6 (October 21): International Political Economy: Systemic Approaches


Week 7 (October 28): International Institutions: Design and Purpose


Simmons and Martin, “International Organizations and Institutions,” pp. 192-211 in Carlsnaes et al., *Handbook of International Relations*. *


Raustiala., “Compliance and Effectiveness in International Regulatory Cooperation,”


Week 8 (November 4): International Institutions: Norms and Sovereignty

Finnemore, The Purpose of Intervention

Bueno de Mesquita et al, The Logic of Political Survival, Ch. 9*
Week 9 (November 11): International Law

Byers, Custom, Power and the Power of Rules, Ch. 1-3.*


Week 10 (November 18): International Political Economy: Policy Preferences of Domestic Groups

Frieden, “Invested Interests: The Politics of National Economic Policies in a World of


**Recommended Readings:**


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**Week 11 (November 25): International Political Economy: Domestic Institutions and Policy Formation**

**Required Readings:**

Milner, *Interests, Institutions, and Information*, Ch. 1-4


**Recommended Readings:**


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**Week 12 (December 2): International Political Economy: International Interactions of Policies**

**Required Readings:**

Simmons, *Who Adjusts?*, Ch. 1-4, 6, 7


Elkins et al., “Competing for Capital: The Diffusion of Bilateral Investment Treaties,


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 13 (December 9): Wrap Up**


Wight, “Philosophy of Social Science and International Relations,” pp. 23-52 in Carlsnaes et al., *Handbook of International Relations.*