

**Political Science 8330:
Advanced Research Seminar in International Relations**

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

This seminar is designed for advanced Ph.D. students in international relations, with the specific aim of helping students prepare for one of the most challenging, and rewarding, activities of one's graduate career: the dissertation prospectus. Over the course of this semester, you will select a research topic, formulate a research question, engage with the scholarly literature on this question, generate hypotheses for empirical testing, and set out a research design that will allow you to test and present compelling findings about your chosen research question. (For those students who have already completed and defended a dissertation prospectus, the primary aim will be to undertake a significant piece of empirical research, and present preliminary findings; see below).

The course is divided into three parts.

- In Part I, we read several classic and more recent texts on research design: how to identify a topic, question, or puzzle, relate that topic to the existing theoretical and empirical literature, and design a quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method research program. Our reading in this section will proceed from the general to the specific, beginning with broad philosophy of science readings, then moving on to more specific research design and methodological issues in political science, and finally focusing on methodological issues distinctive to international relations, including qualitative, quantitative and formal approaches.

At the same time, you will begin some preliminary research into your proposed topic, and write a series of short memos focusing on: your research topic broadly defined (week 2); a more specific research question and relevant literature review (week 4); a preliminary research design (week 6); and a preliminary bibliographic search (week 7). Each of these memos will be at the start of class of the specified week. By the end of this first part of the course, you should have a tentative sense of your research topic, research question, research design, and the relevant sources from which you will conduct your research.

- In Part II, students will work individually on their research, meeting at least once, for a period of at least half an hour, with the instructor, and with other advisors as necessary. The lion's share of the actual research and writing of the prospectus should be done during this period.

- Finally, in Part III, we will reconvene as a group, and each student will have a chance to present a polished draft dissertation, laying out the basic question and argument of the thesis, reviewing the relevant literatures, and specifying the research design and the essential findings of the study (insofar as those findings are clear by the end of the semester). In addition, each student will act as primary discussant for another student's draft introduction, providing *constructive* criticism on the project. This part of the course will be an excellent chance to see how your classmates have defined research questions and research designs within their areas of interest, and to get feedback on your own research design before plunging into the more rewarding, but also more solitary, phase of independent research.

Course requirements. The primary aim of this seminar is to familiarize students with research design and methodological issues in IR, reinforcing but also going beyond the material covered in other graduate seminars such as PS 401, 402, and 405. For most students, this process will culminate in the research, writing and presentation of a draft dissertation prospectus. Hence, the requirements of the course fall into three categories:

- (a) class participation, including the discussions of research design in Part I and presentation and discussion of draft prospectuses in Part III (25% of the grade);
- (b) a series of four short memos, to be written during Part I of the course, which will push the development of your project in small steps. These include the presentation of a general research question (week 2, 5% of the grade), a more specific research question and relevant literature review (week 4, 5%); a preliminary research design (week 6, 10%); and a preliminary annotated bibliography (week 7, 5%) (total, 25%); and
- (c) the final draft of the dissertation prospectus, to be handed in no later than December 11, 2007 (50%).

For those with a completed and approved dissertation prospectus, the requirements will be altered as follows:

- (a) class participation, as above (25% of the grade);
- (b) in place of the four above memos, a draft dissertation prospectus, which may be revised as necessary in light of the lessons of Part I of the course (due Week 4, 15% of the grade);
- (c) further developing the dissertation prospectus, a specification of some specific piece of *empirical* research (a case study, preliminary analysis of quantitative data, etc.) to be carried out and presented during the remainder of the semester (due Week 6, 10% of the grade); and
- (d) the presentation of a draft chapter or paper presenting at least preliminary findings of the research proposed in part c (due December 11th, 50%).

Note: With a few exceptions in Weeks 2 and 7, the overall epistemological stance of this course is what one might call “pragmatic positivism,” i.e. the belief that social science is science, and that the aim of social-scientific study is the testing of generalizable causal

claims though a logic of inference. *This is not the only logically valid approach to social science*, but it is the dominant approach in the American political science profession, and (with a few exceptions) is virtually a ticket to entry to academic publication and employment. It is therefore vital that all students, including those who consider themselves post-positivists, made every possible effort to master the “mainstream” literature on research design and methodology. If you do ultimately decide to undertake post-positivist research that is purely interpretive or critical, you should do so after mastering and exhausting positivist avenues of research, so that no one can accuse of you of abandoning positivist inquiry because it was just too difficult (this is, indeed, what positivist thinkers generally do believe about post-positivists in their hearts).

Required Reading. The following books, marked with an asterisk in the weekly reading assignments, are on order at the Temple University Bookstore:

- Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
- Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, eds. (2004). *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, eds., *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

All three books can also be found on reserve at Paley Library. Other *required* readings will be made available electronically through the Blackboard site for the course. I have listed a tiny, selected set of *recommended* readings for each week. Some of these are key background readings, while others are examples of “best practice” for a given type of research (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, or formal). For additional recommendations, see the required readings, especially the chapters in the Sprinz and Wolinsky-Nahmias book, all of which have terrific references. More generally, after taking this course, you may find it interesting to revisit the syllabi for your other graduate seminars in international relations, approaching the various readings not for their theoretical arguments (which is what we typically do in such seminars) but this time for their research designs and methods. You will see the literature, and each individual work, in a whole new light.

The rest of this syllabus outlines the readings and the main themes of Part I of the course, as well as specifying the nature and the due dates of the four short memos. An appointment schedule for Part II of the course, and a detailed schedule of Part III including specific dates for individual student presentations, will be worked out collectively in class.

Note on Academic Misconduct

All students in this class are expected to adhere to Temple University standards on academic conduct. In recent years, I have had increasing experience with students plagiarizing work from either printed sources or internet web sites, and I therefore consider it important to clarify the course policy regarding plagiarism and other types of academic misconduct. All students should, in all assignments, fully and unambiguously cite sources from which they are drawing important ideas and/or sizable quotations (for example, more than eight consecutive words or more than 50% of a given sentence or paragraph). Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious act of academic misconduct and *will result in a failing grade for the course*, as well as the possibility of notification of the infraction to the Dean of Students and academic dismissal. Similarly, cheating during exams, copying written assignments from other students, or providing answers to others during exams are considered acts of academic misconduct. Given the seriousness of these infractions, there will be no second chances and no leniency. Please avoid them at any cost. If you are unfamiliar with policies about plagiarism or other types of academic misconduct, you may wish to consult the on-line guide to “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Acknowledging Sources,” available at <http://www.wisc.edu/students/plagiarism.pdf>; or if you still have remaining doubts or specific questions, raise them directly with me.

Disability Policy

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Temple University official policy on the freedom to teach and learn:

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.

While this course is oriented primarily toward the scholarly literature and toward methodological rather than political questions, we will of necessity be discussing and debating vital issues that might be construed as “controversial.” Our aim will not be to avoid these intellectual controversies – many of which are indeed at the heart of the course – but to address them as lucidly and carefully as possible. Throughout the course, students’ class participation and written work will be assessed and graded, not on the basis of the political or intellectual opinions expressed, but on the demonstrated mastery of the course material and the care with which arguments are formulated and presented.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASSES, PART I

Week 1: Introduction (August 28; Organizational Meeting, No Required Reading)

Week 2: Philosophy of Science and IR: Positivism vs. Post-Positivism, and the Fascination with Lakatos (Sept 4)

Required Reading

Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), chapters 1, 3 and 4 (pp. 1-15, 45-91).

Colin Wight, "Philosophy of Social Science in International Relations," in Walter Carlsnaes, Beth Simmons, and Thomas Risse, eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (New York: Sage, 2001), pp. 23-51.

Yosef Lapid, "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-positivist Era," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (September 1989), pp. 235-254; plus the responses by K. J. Holsti, Thomas Biersteker, and Jim George, pp. 255-279.

Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Research Programs," in Imre Lakatos and A. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), read 8-12, skim 12-47, read 47-52.

Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, "How Not to Be Lakatos Intolerant: Appraising Progress in IR Research," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (June 2002), pp. 231-62.

David Dessler and John Owen, "Constructivism and the Problem of Explanation: A Review Article," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 3 (2005), pp. 597-610.

(201 pages for the week)

Recommended Readings

Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (New York: Free Press, 1949), pp. 49-112.

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

J. Donald Moon, "The Logic of Political Inquiry: A Synthesis of Opposed Perspectives," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science, Volume*

I: Political Science: Scope and Theory (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 130-228.

Colin Elman and Miriam Elman, eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

Assignment 1: Potential Dissertation Topics: Write a short memo (2-5 pages) indicating one or two possible topics or questions (e.g. the international women's movement, global financial regulation, the effectiveness of "soft law" commitments, etc.) about which you might like to write a dissertation. The memo need not be detailed or well researched *at this stage*, but is simply an exploratory step towards identifying an area that you would like to examine in greater detail.

Week 3: Research Questions, Theories and Hypotheses: One Logic of Inference or Several? (Sept 11)

Required Readings

Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), Introduction and Chapters 1, 3-6, (pp. 1-48, 89-121).

John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), chapter 1 (pp. 1-19).

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, eds., *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), read chapters 1 and 3 (pp. 3-33, 75-114; also skim chapter 2, pp. 34-74).

Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Rowman & Littlefield), chapter 2 (pp. 20-50).

Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, eds. (2004). *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), chapter 1 (pp. 1-16).

(213 pages)

Recommended

Jon Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

Charles Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Week 4: Qualitative Methods, Case Studies, and the KKV Debate Continued (Sept 18)

Required Readings

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, eds., *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), chapters 4-6 (pp. 115-230).

Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), Chapter 2 (pp. 49-88).

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), chapters 3-6, 10 (pp. 67-124, 205-32).

Ian S. Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (1996), pp. 605-18.

(251 pages)

Recommended Readings

Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Strategies of Inquiry* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), pp. 79-137.

Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in P.G. Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press), pp. 43-68.

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (September 1971), pp. 682-98.

Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1982), esp. Chaps 1-2.

Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 2 (1990), pp. 131-52.

David Collier, "The Comparative Method," in Ada W. Finifter, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (Washington: The American Political Science Association, 1993), pp. 105-120.

Robert K. Yin, 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, second edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).

James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Assignment 2: Research Question, Theory, Variables and Hypotheses: Building on the previous memo, and perhaps some preliminary research, begin to move beyond a general topic area, and focus instead on defining a specific research question (or questions) in that area that you would like to research and answer. Focus on the following four questions: (a) What is the basic *research question* of your study? (b) Can you phrase this research question in terms of *dependent and independent variables*? If so, what are they? (c) What *theory* or theories in the social sciences seem particularly relevant to your research question? (d) What sort of testable *hypotheses*, if any, do these theories generate? Once again, you will be working with these questions through all semester, and your introductory chapter will no doubt look quite different from this early draft. Nevertheless, even this preliminary memo will force you to think hard about your question, the relevant theories, and some preliminary hypotheses, *before* you begin your research design in the next memo.

Week 5: Qualitative Methods and Case Studies in IR (Sept 25)

Required Readings

Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, eds. (2004). *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), chapters 2-5 (pp. 19-125).

Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-50; rest of book strongly recommended for those doing historical research).

Stephen D. Krasner, "Global Communications and National Power: Life on the Pareto Frontier," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (April 1991), pp. 336-356.

Christopher Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (January 1989), pp. 143-69.

(202 pages)

Recommended Readings

Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological and Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Week 6: Statistical Methods in IR (October 2)

Required Readings

Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, eds. (2004). *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), chapters 6-9 (pp. 129-223).

David Dessler, "Beyond Correlations: Toward a Causal Theory of War," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 1991), pp. 337-55.

Jon C. Pevehouse, "Democracy from the Outside-In? Regional Organizations and the Transition to Democracy," *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Summer 2002), pp. 515-49.

(146 pages)

Recommended Readings

Emilie Hafner-Burton, "Trading Human Rights: How Preferential Trade Agreements Influence Government Repression," *International Organization*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (2005), pp. 593-629.

Edward Mansfield and Jon C. Pevehouse, "Democratization and International Organizations," *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Jan 2006), pp. 137-67.

Assignment 3: Research Design: In another short memo, begin to identify the research design for your paper. Specify briefly, in light of your previous memo, your research question, your preliminary hypotheses, and your dependent and independent variables (plus any obvious control variables or alternative explanations). Now, take the next step: How do you propose to test your hypotheses in the real world? What is the universe of cases you seek to explain? What subset of those cases can you actually examine empirically? Will you use primarily qualitative or quantitative methods, or some combination of these (and why)? How, specifically, will your research design allow you to test your proposed hypotheses, while controlling for other competing explanations or control variables?

Week 7: Formal Models and Multi-Method Research (Oct 9)

Required Readings

Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, eds. (2004). *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), chapters 10-11, 13-15 (pp. 227-89, 317-81).

Andrew Bennett, A. Barth and K. Rutherford, "Do We Preach What We Practice? A Survey of Methods in Political Science Journals and Curricula," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (2003), pp. 373-78.

Robert A. Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, J. Rosenthal and Barry Weingast, eds., *Analytic Narratives*, Introduction (pp. 3-22; and substantive chapters according to your interests).

Jon Elster, "Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2000), pp. 696-702.

James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, pp. 379-414.

Judith Kelley, "International Actors on the Domestic Scene: Membership Conditionality and Socialization by International Institutions," *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (2004), pp. 425-57.

(224 pages)

Recommended Readings

James D. Morrow, *Game Theory for Political Scientists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

David A. Lake and Robert Powell, eds., *Strategic Choice and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Lisa L. Martin, *Coercive Cooperation: Explaining Multilateral Economic Sanctions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

Kenneth Schultz, "Do Democratic Institutions Constrain or Inform? Contrasting Two Institutional Perspectives on Democracy and War," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 233-66.

Assignment 4: Annotated Working Bibliography. Having nailed down at least preliminary versions of your research question, hypotheses, variables, and research design, take a few hours to construct an annotated bibliography of key primary and secondary sources that will inform your study. These should include not only the social-science books and articles that you used in putting together your proposal, but also empirical resources – primary or secondary, qualitative or quantitative – that you will use in elaborating and testing the causal claims of your dissertation. This will *not* be a

complete bibliography – indeed, the full bibliographies of completed dissertations are often 30, 40 and 50 pages long – but you will benefit from the effort to identify the key works that form the background of your study, as well as the empirical sources of information from which you will draw in the research that still lies before you.