INR 7337
Issues in International Security
Spring 2019

Credit: 3 hours

Instructor: Andrew Boutton

Office: 302I Howard Phillips Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00PM-3:00PM & Wednesday, 3:00PM-5:00PM

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Time: M 2:00 - 4:50

Place: HPH 305G

Overview:

This course is intended for doctoral students and will be most beneficial for those who have completed an introductory statistics and research design course. Broadly, the emphasis of the course will be on a variety of security issues, with a particular–though not exclusive–focus on the causes, consequences, and control of both state- and non-state-issued violence. You will be introduced to some of the most important research in the field of international security, including both older works that continue to affect our thinking, and more recent work that represents new substantive and methodological trends.

This course has three primary goals. The first is to introduce students to the primary methodological and substantive approaches to the field of international security studies, with an emphasis on new research, and research that speaks to contemporary policy challenges. Second, students will learn how this research is conducted, as well as the obstacles to assembling and providing evidence for or against a variety of security-related arguments. A result of this is that students will learn how to read, evaluate, and critique the work of others. Finally, students will initiate at least one of their own research projects, which will give them practical experience in elaborating a theoretical argument, drawing out testable implications, assembling and analyzing relevant evidence, and ultimately presenting their work in front of their peers. These goals necessarily constrain our ability to cover the entire subfield, and to read many of what are considered "classic" works in the field of security studies, although I'm happy to suggest reading that may be useful in preparing for comprehensive exams.

The course will be roughly divided into discrete units or topics. We will spend one week on some units, while others consist of a number of sub-topics and will stretch over the course of several weeks. We will cover a fair amount of academic literature on each topic, and will also discuss both contemporary and historical cases that illustrate how the theoretical mechanisms work in "real life.". You will notice that many of the weeks contain a considerable amount of reading. That is by design; the philosophy behind graduate school is similar to that of boot camp: it may hurt now, but you will only be stronger in the future because of it.

Finally, recurring theme throughout this course will be the gap between research and policy in the realm of international security. As you read and think about the material, it would be useful to consider 1) why academic research fails to inform foreign policy actions in many cases; 2) how this gap manifests itself; and

3) what, if anything, can be done to construct a more symbiotic relationship between the academic and policy worlds.[1]

Requirements:

Students are expected to: 1) attend all class meetings; 2) read assigned material prior to the start of each meeting, and be prepared to contribute meaningfully to the discussion of the material during class; 3) submit discussion questions based on the readings the night before class; 4) co-lead seminar discussion; 5) review the work of one of your peers; and 6) complete a number of written assignments, discussed in greater detail below.

Grading

This class is worth 1,000 points, which you can earn by completing the assignments below. Your final grade will be based on the percentage of the 1,000 points that you earn.

Attendance, participation, and discussion leader (300 points)

In-class participation

This is a seminar, not a lecture. While I will generally guide the discussion (typically alongside two students; more on this below), I will not spend time lecturing, and I want you to do most of the talking. Thus, the quality of the class is dependent upon students actively engaging the material along with the instructor and other students. Therefore, students should read the required material *closely* before each class meeting, and come to class prepared to break down each reading in excruciating detail and contribute meaningfully to the discussion.

Weekly discussion questions

As part of the participation grade, each student will submit—by 11:59 PM the night before class, via the Webcourses discussion feature—three questions drawn from that week's reading. Students should view these questions as a partial basis for their contribution to the in-class discussion that week. These could be real questions (e.g. "What did Powell mean when he said X?" "How does this theory account for case Y"?) or merely observations intended to spark discussion (e.g. "I think Fearon's observation is exactly right" or "Gartzke is dead wrong here"). While you only need to submit three questions, the more of these points you have written down before class, the more interesting and productive our discussions will be. The questions you submit will be accessible to everyone before class, and the discussion co-leaders should also use them as a partial guide when structuring the discussion.

Discussion leader

Beginning in Week 4, two students will lead the seminar discussion along with me, although I will play a supporting role. The purpose of this exercise is 1) to force students to think critically about the material; 2) to ensure that as a class, we discuss what you find interesting and/or puzzling; and 3) to improve presentation and public-speaking ability, an essential skill-set regardless of the career path you choose.

The role of discussion leaders is not to simply present or summarize the material. It's assumed that we will all have read the assigned readings, so simply summarizing them is boring and adds nothing to the class.

[1] Blogs such as Political Violence at a Glance, the Monkey Cage, Dart-Throwing Chimp (formerly), and several others are good ways to keep abreast of current developments in international relations research. They also frequently discuss academic engagement with the policy world, and the contributors often have insightful things to say on the subject.

Rather, your job as discussion leader is to facilitate in-class discussion by raising questions and thinking about the following:

- Working through the logic of the argument and research design, identifying flaws and areas for improvement
- Is the question important? Does it contribute to our knowledge of international security?
- What do the data look like? Does the measurement of key variables actually capture the concepts we're interested in?
- Discuss the testable implications of the theory.
- Assess the quality of main empirical finding; Can we be confident in the results based on the research design employed? Do the results support the theory?
- Connections–if any–with research we've already covered in class and with other research in the field.
- What case(s) don't fit the conclusions or theoretical assumptions, and why? How could you amend the theory to accommodate this data?
- What is the real-world importance of the research? Should those in the policy community be made aware of these findings? How could the conclusions be applied to contemporary conflicts or other security issues?
- Think about the readings as a whole: Why do they agree or disagree? What are the reasons for different findings and/or conclusions?
- What is the next step in this research agenda? Propose something: it doesn't have to be right, just plausible. If you could have any type of data, what question would you try to answer as an extension of this research?

A few things you should NOT do as discussion leader:

- Summarize the readings. Assume that we are all at least familiar with them, in which case too much summarizing is pointless. Ideally, summary should comprise at most 1/8 of your presentation, and should consist of little more than identifying the motivating question or argument, describing the research design, and highlighting the most important findings or conclusions.
- Place large chunks of text on slides, or copy and paste quotes from the article unless it serves a clear purpose. Tables and plots are the exception. Try to aim for < 50 words per slide. If you can say it with a picture, graph, or diagram, all the better.
- Read your presentation directly from the slides.

Discussion co-leaders will be assigned as Week 4 approaches. Each week, the discussion co-leaders should schedule a time to meet with me briefly before the class meeting to ensure that we are each on the same page.

Keep these guidelines in mind as well when reading for class, writing your peer reviews, response papers, and during in-class discussions. As always, I encourage you to see me, or otherwise let me know, if I can answer any questions about the readings or provide guidance on any of the points above. Visual aids (i.e., slides of some sort) are strongly encouraged for use during the discussions.

Written assignments (6 @ 50 points each = 300 points)

Lave and March assignment

For Week 3, we will read an excerpt from the classic book by Lave and March, *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. This is an excellent guide for learning how to think like a researcher, ask questions, and propose testable scientific explanations. For the assignment, I will give you two prompts in the form of facts. Select one, and following in the framework of Lave and March, you will then construct a "model" that accounts for this fact and all of its observable implications. Write up a 750 word explanation of your model and how you arrived at each stage. We will all give short presentations of our models in class during Week 3.

Short critique papers (4)

To help you think critically about the material we cover, you will prepare a number of 500-word thought papers conducting critical analyses of articles or chapters we read. These papers should help you to crystallize your thoughts on particular readings and will serve in part as a basis for your contribution to the seminar discussion that week. **You must turn in 4 of these over the 15 weeks of the semester**. You may choose any piece in a given week to write on, but you can do no more than one analysis per week. **These reviews are due at the beginning of class the week we discuss the applicable reading**, although I encourage you to turn in the reviews early when you can, as this will allow me to guide the discussion to cover points that may be of interest or that need to be emphasized. Students should be prepared to talk about their arguments in the seminar as appropriate.

These reviews should contain a commentary or critique of the week's readings. It should not summarize them, but rather engage the material meaningfully and critically analyze it from the perspective of theory, logic, design, method, evidence, conclusions, other research, and/or its overall contribution to political science. This critique could take several forms. It could directly critique the arguments or methods in a stand-alone fashion, for instance by discussing why the measures or methods used do not serve to prove the author's point, how they misinterpret the evidence, or why their argument omits some important factor(s) that would call into question their conclusions.

Alternatively, your critique could compare or tie the work into other literature that we have discussed, and comment on how other literature/insights could improve the piece. You may provide some insight into other readings by showing how the central piece is connected to them, but be careful not to stray too far from a central focus on one piece. Finally, your paper could suggest questions or issues raised by the piece that must be analyzed further, for instance alternative hypotheses, alternative theoretical perspectives, or suggest comparisons to other readings that would prove valuable. This analysis should be written in the spirit of constructive criticism - you should identify a weakness or problem in the piece and then offer suggestions about how to improve it. To be successful, your paper will not just throw stones or raise complaints. The first paragraph of your response paper should make clear the central theme of your response/commentary, and you should continue to work that theme throughout the remainder of the paper.

Note that in general an academic review contains three sections: 1) a brief summary of the major theory, method(s), and evidence; 2) a critique of the work on its own terms (i.e., does it answer the question it asks, is the method used correctly, is the evidence convincing, what improvements could be made); 3) a critique of the book from a broader perspective (i.e., is the question important, is the method the right one to use, does it tie into other work, what contribution does the book make). In general, follow the discussion leader guidelines above. Because these are intended to be short reviews, I do not expect you to deal with each of these elements completely, but keep them in mind as another guide.

Manuscript peer review

Each student will submit a first draft of their final paper for review by me and one of your fellow students. The drafts will then be randomly assigned to another student in the class, who will read it and write an **anonymous**, 500-750 word review of the paper. The review should be comprehensive and should address all aspects of the paper, both substantive and stylistic. A good rule of thumb would be to use the "Discussion leader" bullet points above as a guideline. But a useful review accomplishes more than simply throwing stones; rather, if there is something to criticize, the reviewer should provide concrete steps that the author can take to fix the problem(s). I will provide examples of reviews that I have written and received in the past, and students should follow the general format.

The tentative due date for the first paper draft is **Monday, March 25**, with the peer reviews due **Monday, April 8**. This should allow sufficient time for students to incorporate the reviewers' comments into their presentations and final drafts.

Final paper (250 (final paper) + 100 (rough draft) + 50 (presentation) = 400 points)

You will have two options for the final paper, which will be due in its final form on **Friday, April 27, by 5:00 PM.**

Option A: Original research

The first option is to prepare an original research design on some topic related to international security (the topic does not have to be drawn from the syllabus). The paper should lay out a clear plan for analyzing a key theoretical or empirical issue in security. The research designs should include:

1. A review of the extant research related to your question. The literature review should justify your research question by noting problems or lacunae in the existing literature.
2. A clear and succinct statement of a theoretical argument on an important question that you extract from the literature or develop yourself.
3. A research design section detailing how you plan to make inferential claims, either detailing an identification strategy or outlining how your theory implies a set of observable relationships that are inconsistent with competing arguments.
4. A description of the data and characterization of the population of cases to which the theoretical argument/hypotheses apply, and the description of a sample (or way of sampling) from this population.
5. A preliminary assessment or "plausibility probe" based on brief examination of one or more cases from a sample, or a "quick" coding of variables for a simple descriptive analysis or reduced-form regressions.

Option B: Replication & extension

The second option for the final paper is to select a piece of existing international security research that you feel can or should be altered or improved, and then to obtain the materials necessary to replicate and extend that study. You should describe the initial study and the ease with which the results are reproduced. Then, identify any research design or methodological flaws in the research, and propose a new or improved design. The extension should move beyond simply adding an additional control variable, and the paper should include a thorough justification of why this extension represents an improvement.

For more information about the importance of reproduction and replication see:

- King, Gary. 2006. "Publication, Publication." PS: Political Science and Politics 39: 119-125.

- King, Gary. 1995. "Replication, Replication." PS: Political Science and Politics 28: 443-499.

The point of the final paper is to encourage you to think about and develop ideas you wish to pursue in your research after the seminar, and to begin developing your skills as researchers. You will be graded on the quality of the paper, as well as your effort to incorporate the comments you receive at each stage, from both the anonymous reviewer and during your in-class presentation. We will discuss the particulars of the final paper as the semester moves along. All students should at least briefly discuss their paper topics with me no later than **March 5**. **If you are having trouble coming up with a research question or finding the right data, PLEASE see me. I'll be happy to help point you in the right direction**

Paper presentations (50 points)

The last two days of class **(April 15 & 22)** will be entirely devoted to presentations in which each student will give a 20-minute presentation of his/her final project (with visual aids/slides). This will be followed by a collegial Q & A session in which I and the rest of the class can ask questions and offer constructive criticism. The point of this exercise is to allow students one final opportunity to get feedback and suggestions on the project before submitting the final product to me. Since papers are due a week or so after the presentations, it is expected that students will make an effort to incorporate whatever comments they receive into the final draft.

Readings:

Required readings will be articles in published journals, which should be available on Google scholar or through the UCF library website. On occasion, I will assign online content or an excerpt from a book. In both cases, I will let you know well in advance how to access the readings.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (January 7): ***Course intro***

Week 2 (January 14): ***Why do wars happen? Bargaining explanations***

Week 3 (January 21): ***MLK Day - No class***

Week 4 (January 28): ***Domestic politics and international behavior: Audience costs & public opinion***

Week 5 (February 4): ***Domestic politics and international behavior: Domestic institutions, military power, and decision-making***

Week 6 (February 11): ***When, why, and how do wars end? More bargaining***

Week 7 (February 18): ***Alliances & cooperation, part I***

Week 8 (February 25): ***Alliances & cooperation, part II***

Week 9 (March 4): ***Nuclear weapons***

Week 10 (March 11): ***No class - Spring Break***

Week 11 (March 18): ***International organizations & multilateral cooperation***

Week 12 (March 25): ***Civil conflict & insurgency***

Week 13 (April 1): ***State failure & state-building***

Week 14 (April 8): ***TBD***

Week 15 (April 15): ***Paper presentations***

Week 16 (April 22): ***Paper presentations***

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you are writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at `http://www.uwc.ucf.eduhttp://www.uwc.ucf.edu`, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

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Note to students with disabilities:
The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, Phone: (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.