INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS RESEARCH
—POLITIC5001—

Spring term 2017

Lecture: Wednesdays, 12 noon - 1pm, St Andrews Building 237A/B
Seminar 1: Wednesdays, 1pm-2pm, St Andrews Building 218
Seminar 2: Wednesdays, 3pm-4pm, Sir Charles Wilson Building 101A/B

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Character of the course

This course introduces key arguments, research designs, and methodologies for studying and understanding cutting-edge research in International Relations. In particular, it investigates the roles of state and non-state actors in shaping international politics and examines the motivations for actor behavior. The course explores these issues by analysing a number of examples and seeks to train students in how to apply their knowledge to current political challenges in international politics.

Format of teaching

The class is taught in ten sessions, which are intended to bring together elements of lecturing and student participation. Each class will start with a one hour lecture (for all students), followed by two one-hour seminars. Students only need to participate in one of these seminars. Seminars will open with short collaborative student presentations to introduce each week’s readings and relate them to a recent newspaper article of their choice, followed by discussion and student group work. Every student is expected to have completed all required readings prior to class and be adequately prepared to contribute to discussions. As this class is research-intensive, detailed knowledge of the assigned readings is a necessity and helps ensure that this class is rewarding for everyone.

Course content and dates

This course focuses on providing students with analytical tools to understand current developments in research in International Relations. Specifically, the course aims to provide a deep understanding of more advanced theories and concepts from the International Relations literature.

The course consists of three parts. The first part (weeks 1/2) introduces students to both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The second part (weeks 3-5 & 9), taught by Dr Florea, analyses how modern sovereignty norms emerged and were institutionalized, how the nation-state became the dominant unit in international politics, how rebel actors claim and exercise authority in a system dominated by sovereign countries, and how criminal activities undertaken by non-state actors help explain internal conflict. The third part (weeks 7/8 & 10/11), taught by Dr Bayer, studies multilateral treaties and international organizations as well as the role of domestic politics and democratic institutions in IR research. There is no class in week 6, which is the reading week.

The summary of the course topics with class dates is as follows:

Week 1: 11 January — Qualitative research designs (Dr Florea)
Week 2: 18 January — Quantitative research designs (Dr Bayer)
Week 3: 25 January — Sovereignty (Dr Florea)
Week 4: 1 February — War and state making (Dr Florea)
Week 5: 8 February — Rebel group behavior (Dr Florea)
Week 6: 15 February — Reading week (no class)
Week 7: 22 February — International institutions: Fundamentals and design (Dr Bayer)
Week 8: 1 March — International institutions: Compliance, enforcement, & effectiveness (Dr Bayer)
Week 9: 8 March — Crime and civil war (Dr Florea)
Week 10: 15 March — Domestic politics in IR and audience costs (Dr Bayer)
Week 11: 22 March — Democratic institutions: Trade and the global environment (Dr Bayer)

Aims

• To critically examine and apply different approaches to understanding international politics and policy in IR research.
• To identify and assess the behavior of state and non-state actors in international politics.
• To explore the nature and causes of contemporary challenges that are beyond the capacity of individual states to address.
• To consider appropriate international responses to dealing with these challenges and explore the opportunities and obstacles for effective multilateral cooperation.

Intended learning outcomes

By the end of the course, through essays, seminar preparation, and presentations, students should be able to:

• demonstrate a command of key concepts for understanding international politics and cutting-edge research in international relations;
• analyse the nature of and evaluate the significance of state and non-state actors in international relations;
• explore and assess the range, nature, extent, and causes of contemporary challenges in international politics, including the reasons for their complexity;
• construct their own understanding, both theoretically and in terms of research design, of the most appropriate policy responses to dealing with these challenges and explore associated trade-offs.

In addition, through seminar presentations and discussions and through essay writing, students should also acquire the following transferable skills:

• the ability to access and make effective use of bibliographical and electronic sources of knowledge and information;
• the ability to analyse written texts and prepare, articulate, and defend reasoned answers to set questions;
• written communication skills, conveying information and ideas fluently to form sustained arguments;
- presentation skills, conveying information and ideas succinctly and effectively by using visual support and handouts and by keeping within prescribed time-limits;
- working collaboratively with others to reach and sustain convincing lines of argument;
- self-motivation and time-management in order to meet specified deadlines;
- experience of how to use empirical data to evaluate theoretical claims.

Assessment

Assessment comprises formative (non-assessed) and summative (assessed) assessments.

a. Formative assessment: Group presentation

The formative assessment comes in the form of a short, 10-minute group presentation. Each week, students will be tasked with offering a short summary of the three core readings, focusing on the papers’ arguments. The summary should be analytical and not simply a description of the readings. In addition, each student group is to identify a newspaper article that is directly relevant to the course readings, which illustrates how the academic arguments surface in current, public debates in international politics. As part of this exercise, each student group will also produce a written, one-page summary that will be uploaded to Moodle and should offer fellow students a good point of reference for the course readings.

Presentations can be casual, and there is no need for any form of visual support. The assessments will not be graded, but we are happy to provide you with feedback about your performance. Students will be randomly assigned to groups and topics, and group presentations will start in week 3.

b. Summative assessment: Essay

The summative assessment is a single essay (5,000 words), which comprises the following three parts:
- Part I: Research design question (1,000 words, 20% of final grade)
- Part II: Short answer question on “conflict” topic (2,000 words, 40% of final grade)
- Part III: Short answer question on “institutions” topic (2,000 words, 40% of final grade)

The essay deadline is Tuesday, 18 April 2017 at 4pm. Word limits for each part are strict word limits, and penalties apply once you go more than 10% over the allowed word count. Please consult the MSc/MRes in International Relations and the SPS PG Student Handbooks for details on submission of assessed work, Urkund, marking conventions, penalties, extensions and other matters. Exchange or disability students should contact the lecturers to make special arrangements. Please contact us immediately if you have any questions or concerns!

Good essays should show consistency of argumentation together with acknowledgement of rival arguments, clear structure, simple and direct writing, good punctuation and evidence of wide reading. For Part I of the assessment choose one of the two questions on research design, for Part II
choose one out of four questions on “conflict” topics (i.e., weeks taught by Dr Florea), and for Part III choose one out of four questions on “institutions” topics (i.e., weeks taught by Dr Bayer). As the individual parts are independent from each other, we suggest you start working on your answers already during the course to avoid “end of term congestion.”

Essay questions

a. Part I: Research design (choose one!)

(1) The “Democratic Peace Theory” argues that democracies interact more peacefully than their autocratic counterparts. Describe and defend a research design that would allow you to rigorously test this claim!
(2) Some scholars posit that countries with discriminated minorities are more susceptible to experiencing civil wars. Think of a qualitative or quantitative research design that allows you to test this hypothesis.

b. Part II: Conflict topics (choose one!)

(3) How does the organizational structure of rebel groups influence civil conflict outcomes, such as duration or termination? Discuss with reference to one or two ongoing insurgencies.
(4) Besides fighting against government forces or against other insurgents, many rebel groups engage in governance activities, such as taxation or public goods provision (e.g. local administration; healthcare; schooling). Why do some rebels undertake the onerous task of governing the territory they control while others don’t? Discuss with reference to one or two ongoing or past insurgencies.
(5) On the European continent, warfare has historically been a key driver behind state consolidation. Is this process visible in other regions as well? Why (not)?
(6) What are the key mechanisms through which criminal activities undertaken by insurgents affect civil conflict processes, such as duration, severity, or termination? Discuss with reference to at least two insurgencies.

c. Part III: Institutions topics (choose one!)

(7) Why and how does treaty design matter for international cooperation. Discuss this statement and illustrate your answer with examples.
(8) International organizations cannot be effective as they typically lack enforcement power. Discuss why this is (or is not) a legitimate claim.
(9) In what ways do audience costs matter for explaining international politics outcomes, both theoretically and empirically?
(10) Democracies are more supportive of free trade than autocracies. Carefully discuss why and under which conditions this statement is true.
Essay submission

You must respect the following guidelines when you submit an assessed essay:

- Submit **two hard copies** to the postgraduate administrator, Ms Clair Clarke;
- Complete an essay cover sheet for each hard copy of the essay; do not put your name on your essay or cover sheet, just your matriculation number.
- Essays should be typed or word-processed, double-spaced in 12pt type and should have a one-and-a-half inch margin (3.81 cm).
- **Word limits** for all assessed work include footnotes and bibliography. Students should clearly state the word count on the cover sheet of their assessed work. Students who exceed the word limit will be penalised: 1 point for exceeding the word limit by 10-15%, 2 points for 15-20%, 3 points for 20-25%, and so on.
- For all Politics PG courses, you are required to upload an electronic version of your essay to Urkund before handing in the two hard copies.

Detailed guidance about Urkund, how to upload your work and how to interpret your originality reports, as well as for **penalties for late submission**, can be found in the MSc/MRes in International Relations and SPS PG Student Handbooks and on the following website: [https://goo.gl/yVDhai](https://goo.gl/yVDhai)
Guide to essay marking

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Excellent performance is characterised by most but necessarily all of the following: Clear, comprehensive answer that displays sound critical thinking and insights Relevant evidence and readings from the course, and perhaps beyond, are cited accurately with very few errors All key points are addressed fully Originality, creativity, and independent judgement are present</td>
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<td>A2</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>A3</td>
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<td>B1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Very good performance is characterised by most but not necessarily all of the following: Clear answer that fully addresses the key points Sound reasoning that displays a good understanding of the subject matter Relevant evidence and course readings are used with few errors Less critical thinking, originality, and insight than in an excellent performance</td>
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<td>B2</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>B3</td>
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<td>C1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Good performance is characterised by most but not necessarily all of the following: Answer displays a basic understanding of the subject matter Evidence of reading from course materials, but some points may not be fully relevant Little in the way of an argument or critical thinking Some errors may be present</td>
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<td>C2</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>C3</td>
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<td>D1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance is characterised by most but not necessarily all of the following: Only a modest understanding of the subject matter is displayed Modest evidence of reading from course materials, with the inclusion of a few relevant points Many errors may be present</td>
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<td>D2</td>
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<td>D3</td>
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<td>E1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Weak performance is characterised by most but not necessarily all of the following: Failure to answer question, though there may be an answer to a similar question Little evidence of any understanding of the subject matter is displayed Significant errors may be present</td>
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<td>E2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>E3</td>
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<td>F1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Poor performance is characterised by most but not necessarily all of the following: Failure to answer question directly Very little evidence of any understanding of the subject matter is displayed Many significant errors are likely to be present</td>
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<td>F2</td>
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<td>F3</td>
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<td>G1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Very poor performance is characterised by most of the following: Failure to answer question No evidence of any understanding of the subject matter is displayed</td>
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<td>G2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Absence of positive qualities</td>
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Plagiarism

Plagiarism constitutes academic fraud and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s work as your own. The University Calendar says that it is “considered as an act of academic fraudulence and is an offence against University discipline.” The University Calendar sets out the procedure that a Head of Department must follow if plagiarism of assessed work is suspected. The presentation of someone else’s essay is obviously fraudulent, but the dividing line between your own work and that of your sources is less clear. The solution is always to acknowledge your sources and to use quotations when repeating exactly what someone else has said. Generally you should avoid excessive paraphrasing of others’ writings, even with acknowledgement; it does not demonstrate that you have understood the material you are reproducing. If in doubt seek guidance from your teachers. For more information about plagiarism, please refer to the MSc/MRes in International Relations and SPS PG Student Handbooks as well as the following website:  http://www.gla.ac.uk/plagiarism/.

Course requirements

- Regular attendance to seminars: A record of your attendance will be kept.
- Completion of all required readings. Identifying and sharing additional material relevant to the class (e.g. news items) is strongly encouraged.
- Participation in class discussions and completion of assigned tasks in-between weeks, as requested by the lecturers.
- Group presentations as a summary of three core readings plus a news article, including a one-page handout.
- Submission of a single, written 5,000-word long essay.

Readings and how to use the reading list

The weekly readings for this class are listed below. You are expected to read all of the required readings in advance of every seminar, so that you can contribute to the discussions. Seminar readings are taken from widely-cited journal articles or books. Electronic versions of all required readings as PDFs are available for download from Moodle. For your coursework, you will need to draw on the recommended readings which can be accessed through the Library webpage.

The majority of journal articles are available online, even if a hyperlink is not included. The easiest way to find them is to google the title and follow the link to the journal’s webpage. To gain access to the full text, you will need to be on campus or to log in with your GUID password (if you don’t know it, ask at the Library). In some cases, you may need to access the articles via the Library page. If you are off campus, you might need VPN access.

Note: The digital course pack uploaded on Moodle has been compiled to facilitate access to most of the mandatory readings. However, because of copyright issues, generally we can only provide one
chapter per book. If more than one chapter is listed in the reading list, it is your responsibility to borrow the book from the library for further reading. All key books will be on short loan.

Students should use Moodle for access to seminar notes and other additional resources, including unpublished readings. Please note that copyright of these pieces, unless otherwise stated, remains with the author/s of the piece.

**Don’t limit yourselves to the reading list.** If you have difficulty getting hold of any of the items listed, you are expected to use your initiative and look for other appropriate material or to contact the lecturers. You are also encouraged to make use of the internet and newspapers to gain relevant information and keep up with current affairs.


We strongly encourage you to read the required readings in the **order listed below**. The first reading is always a theoretical (overview) piece, while the second and third readings offer an in-depth discussion, case studies, or elaboration of the arguments/concepts introduced in the first paper. The final reading is always a current application or an illustration of how the academic arguments are useful for our understanding of current debates and policy discussions. Readings indicated with ‘[*]’ are the ones you should read after you have done the required readings.

**Week 1 (9/1): Qualitative research designs**

Module 1 offers an introduction to the course, and discusses the core elements of qualitative research designs.

**Required readings:**

Recommended readings:


Week 2 (16/1): Quantitative research designs

This module introduces and discusses quantitative research designs. We will focus specifically on the conceptual foundation of statistical inference as well as problems of identification, measurement, and selection.

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


**Week 3 (25/1): Sovereignty**

Module 3 explores how sovereignty norms were established, how they became institutionalized in the post-World War II environment, and how they are challenged by contemporary state and non-state actor practices.

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


**Week 4 (1/2): War and state making**

This module investigates the mechanisms through which warfare is related to the birth and consolidation of modern states. The module also discusses how contemporary insurgencies engage in statelike practices.

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


**Week 5 (8/2): Rebel group behavior**

This module investigates important questions about the behavior of armed rebel groups: why they enter alliances with other insurgent organizations, when they are more likely to fragment, why some are more resilient than others, and why some engage in governance activities.

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


Week 6 (15/2): Reading week

Week 7 (22/2): International institutions: Fundamentals and design

This module focuses on the fundamental problem of international cooperation, why international institutions (e.g., treaties or IOs) are created, and how institutional design matters for problem solving.

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


**Week 8 (1/3): International institutions: Compliance, enforcement, and effectiveness**

This module builds on the previous week by extending the analysis of international institutions (e.g., treaties or IOs) to areas of compliance, enforcement, and effectiveness. We investigate these topics from a substantive and methodological perspective.

**Required readings:**

Recommended readings:

Week 9 (8/3): Organised crime and conflict

This module discusses the links between clandestine political economies and internal conflict.

Required readings:


Recommended readings:

**Week 10 (15/3): Domestic politics in IR and audience costs**

This module looks at the role which domestic politics play in International Relations and specifically examines the audience cost argument.

**Required readings:**

- Check out this website: EU Commission. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Link: [https://goo.gl/cvEci0](https://goo.gl/cvEci0)

**Recommended readings:**


**Week 11 (22/3): Democratic institutions: Trade and the global environment**

This module revisits the “democratic difference” claim that democracies consistently cooperate more than their autocratic counterparts. We ask how to rationalise this claim (if at all) and draw on examples from the IR literatures on trade and the global environment.

**Required readings:**


• Looney, R. 2016. Democracy is the Answer to Climate Change. *Foreign Policy*. Link: https://goo.gl/9SClvf

**Recommended readings:**


