

Political Science 500
Capstone Course in Political Science

Spring 2011

Wednesdays, 3:30-6:10 pm, Bolton B46

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Course Description

The capstone course is taken by political science majors in their senior year. In this course, students “cap off” their education in political science by completing a research paper that, as far as possible, approaches the standards of professional, peer-reviewed political science journals. The course has two major purposes: 1) practicing standard political science research methods, in a manner that 2) helps students to learn how to do good applied research in political science.

All political science majors are required to take at least one course in research methodology. The capstone course provides an opportunity for majors to solidify their understanding of these research methods in an applied manner. It is hoped that the methods will thereby become more intuitive and “automatic” for students thinking about how to answer political science research questions.

Students do not ordinarily have adequate time and guidance to undertake well-designed and detailed research projects. This course sets aside significant time for this purpose. In addition, repeated, in-depth feedback on the research project is provided, not only through written assignments, but also through interaction with the instructor and fellow students. To maximize the benefits of this interaction, it is recommended that students write their papers on one of a number of suggested “classic topics” in international politics. However, with the instructor’s approval, students may choose to write on topics in other areas of political science. This process will make it easier for students to see that answers to political science research questions may be gradually improved and refined, but are typically not ever final and complete. It will help students to think constructively about how to make incremental improvements to answers on all topics of interest to them.

We begin with a brief review of political science research methods, and then move on to discuss some classic and more recent examples of research in the politics of international economic relations. The remainder of the course will be devoted to work on student research papers.

Grades

Final grades are based on the following five assignments. On February 16, there will be a short quiz on political science research methods (worth 10% of the grade). On March 2, a 3-5 page methodological critique paper (20% of the grade) will be due. Between April 6 and May 4, each student will make two oral presentations (each one worth 5% of the grade). One will be a presentation of their own research paper, and another will be as a constructive reader of another student's research paper. Each paper will be discussed in under 15 minutes: 2-5 minutes each for the presenter and the reader—closer to 5 for the presenter and closer to 2 for the reader—and the remainder of the time for discussion. The final research paper (60% of the grade) is due on May 16.

Required Readings on Electronic Reserve in the Library

Readings can be downloaded from the Library's E-Reserve web page:

<https://millib.wisconsin.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do>. Look under my name and Political Science 500.

Ethridge, Marcus E. (2002) *The Political Research Experience: Readings and Analysis*. Third Edition. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. (Chapters 1, 12, and 13.)

Fish, M. Steven. (1998) "The Determinants of Economic Reform in the Post-Communist World." *East European Politics and Societies* 12, 1 (Winter), 31-78.

Gourevitch, Peter Alexis. (1977) "International Trade, Domestic Coalitions, and Liberty: Comparative Responses to the Crisis of 1873-1896," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8, 281-313.

Horowitz, Shale. (2004) "Structural Sources of Post-Communist Market Reform: Economic Structure, Political Culture, and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, 4 (December), 755-78.

Rogowski, Ronald. (1987) "Political Cleavages and Changing Exposure to Trade," *American Political Science Review* 81, 4, 1121-1137.

Course Schedule

There will be no general class meetings after February 16, so that students can work on their research projects. Students are encouraged to discuss their research projects with the instructor at any time. In addition to office hours, which are always open for walk-in discussions, students are encouraged to talk with the instructor by phone or by appointment.

Weeks 1-2 (January 26, February 2): Introduction. Review of Political Science Research Methods.

Reading: Ethridge, chapters 1, 12, and 13.

Weeks 3-4 (February 9, February 16): Classic and Recent Examples of Research in the Politics of International Economic Relations (International Trade Policy; Post-Communist Market Reform). **Quiz on Research Methods (February 16)**.

Reading (in order): Gourevitch; Rogowski; Fish; Horowitz.

Week 6 (March 2): Short methodological critique paper due in my mailbox, Bolton Hall, 6th Floor, by 5:00 pm.

Week 8 (March 16): Research paper proposal, in outline form (3-5 pages), due in my mailbox by 5:00 pm. The outline should follow the structure of the research paper given below.

Winter break: March 21-25.

Week 9 (March 30): Annotated bibliography (2-3 pages) due in my mailbox by 5:00 pm.

Weeks 10-15 (April 6-May 11): Participation once as presenter and once as reader in workshops on draft research papers. Draft research papers must be turned in to my mailbox and emailed to me (to be forwarded to the reader) at least five days prior to the workshop session at which your paper is presented. (A schedule for presenters and readers will be distributed separately.)

May 16: Final research paper due in my mailbox at 10 am. Papers may not be emailed.

Characteristics and Structure of Research Papers

Length: 15-20 typed, doubled-spaced pages, including footnotes and bibliography. Any standard system of citing sources is acceptable. There must be at least five references to published political science journal articles or books—in addition to any web or journalistic sources used. Research papers must include the following elements:

- 1) Introduction: What research question or questions are you trying to answer? What political behavior or outcomes are you trying to explain?
- 2) Literature review section: Give a brief summary of related publications, designed to motivate the particular approach you take in the remainder of the paper. Use your annotated bibliography, but slant your discussion so that it leads into your own discussions of theory and evidence. It is most natural to write this section after the rest of the paper is completed.
- 3) Theory and hypotheses section: What are the different possible answers to the research question? In other words, what are the different factors that may account for the behavior and outcomes to be explained? How would each of these factors be expected, logically speaking, to affect the outcomes? Set out explicit hypotheses, which you will in some way test by examining evidence.
- 4) Research design section: Hypothetically, what kinds of evidence are available to determine whether or not each hypothesis is supported? What kinds of evidence have you gathered? What are the strengths and limitations of the evidence? Here you are discussing how the outcomes and the various explanatory factors are going to be measured; the set of cases for which you are gathering this evidence; and how the evidence will be used to evaluate the hypotheses.
- 5) Results section: Present and discuss the actual evidence gathered. Explain how and why the evidence does or does not support the hypotheses. Explain what the evidence shows about the *relative* persuasiveness and importance of the different explanatory factors.
- 6) Conclusion: Conclude by summarizing the question, possible answers, and results; by discussing how future research might go beyond or improve upon what you have done; and by mentioning any significant practical or policy implications of the research.

Related assignments:

Methodological critique papers should examine how one political science journal article related to your research topic carries out each of these six steps. The critique should discuss strengths as well as weaknesses.

Research paper proposals should summarize, in an outline format, the first four sections of the research paper (introduction, literature review, theory and hypotheses, and research design). (Results and conclusions sections can be left out, because they could only be outlined once the research is complete.)

Annotated bibliographies should do the same thing as methodological critique papers—but more briefly—for the other main sources and references to be used in your research paper.

Useful Research Resources

See the Library's Resources A-Z webpage,

<http://xerxes.library.wisconsin.edu/uwm/?base=databases&action=alphabetical>. The following are particularly useful search engines for political science journal articles:

JSTOR

Social Sciences Full Text

Worldwide Political Science Abstracts

Suggested Classic Topics in International and Comparative Politics

1. International War Onset or Non-Onset

Examples of case studies:

Bridge, F. R. (1983) *1914: The Coming of the First World War*. London: The Historical Association.

Ganguly, Sumit. (2001) *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions since 1947*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Oren, Michael. (2002) *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

"X." [Kennan, George F.] (1947). "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July), 566-582.

Example of a statistical article:

Maoz, Zeev and Bruce Russett. (1993) "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946-1986." *American Political Science Review* 87, 3 (September), 624-38. (JSTOR)

2. Internal War Onset or Non-Onset (Civil War or Internal Ethnic War)

Examples of case studies:

Dumond, Dwight Lowell. (1959) *Antislavery Origins of the Civil War in the United States*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Huston, James L. (2003) *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the Civil War*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Lankford, Nelson D. (2007) *Cry Havoc! The Crooked Road to Civil War, 1861*. New York: Viking.

Malefakis, Edward. (1970) *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Example of a statistical article:

Fearon, James D. and David Laitin. (2003) "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97, 1 (February), 75-90. (JSTOR)

3. International Military Intervention or Non-Intervention in Internal War

Examples of case studies:

Burg, Steven L. and Paul S. Shoup. (1999) *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Croissant, Michael P. (1998) *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Little, Douglas. (1985) *Malevolent Neutrality: The United States, Great Britain, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Example of a statistical article:

Huibregtse, Ada. (2010) "External Intervention in Ethnic Conflict." *International Interactions* 36, 265-93.

4. Political Explanations of Economic Development Policies

Examples of case studies:

Åslund, Anders. (1995) *How Russia Became a Market Economy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Gourevitch, Peter. (1986) *Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to International Economic Crises*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Haggard, Stephan. (1990) *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Horowitz, Shale and Uk Heo, eds. (2001) *The Political Economy of International Financial Crisis: Interest Groups, Ideologies, and Institutions*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

North, Douglass. (1982) *Structure and Change in Economic History*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Example of a statistical article:

Horowitz, Shale. (2004) "Structural Sources of Post-Communist Market Reform: Economic Structure, Political Culture, and War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, 4 (December), 755-78. (JSTOR)

5. Political Explanations of International Trade Policies

Examples of case studies:

I.M. Destler. (2005) *American Trade Politics*. Fourth edition. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.

Horowitz, Shale. (2004) "Restarting Globalization after World War II: Structure, Coalitions, and the Cold War." *European Journal of International Relations* 10, 1 (March), 33-59.

Milner, Helen. (1987) "Resisting the Protectionist Temptation: Industry and the Making of Trade Policy in France and the United States during the 1970s," *International Organization* 41, 4, 639-665. (JSTOR)

Example of a statistical article:

Frye, Timothy and Edward D. Mansfield. (2003) "Fragmenting Protection: The Political Economy of Trade Policy in the Post-Communist World." *British Journal of Political Science* 33, 4 (October), 635-57.