PLIR 8630
Statecraft and International Security

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Spring 2010
Monday 7:00-9:30PM
Gibson #S-342

Description

This is a seminar devoted to examining prominent research in political science about tools of international statecraft. The course is designed specifically for graduate students intending to write a dissertation or thesis in the field of international security; all others should see the instructor before enrolling.

Objectives

1. Evaluate recent social science research about the use and effectiveness of instruments of diplomacy, statecraft, and foreign policy.
2. Build a cache of potential research proposals upon which to draw when selecting a dissertation or thesis topic.
3. Prepare for the comprehensive examination in international relations by gaining familiarity with a broad class of international security literature.

Requirements

1. Readings. The course will succeed only if students read all assigned readings prior to class meetings. Required books are available at the University of Virginia Bookstore; all other readings can be accessed via Collab. If you are off campus you may need to use the UVa-Anywhere VPN (instructions located at: http://www.itc.virginia.edu/network/vpn). For those who wish to follow up on specific interests later, most weeks’ lists contains a few supplementary books and articles, denoted by [+].
2. Class Participation. Discussion constitutes the entirety of each seminar meeting; students must come prepared to offer critical thoughts on each of the readings.
3. Research Proposals. Eight times during the semester, students must prepare a one-page research proposal related to the week’s topic. (Each student may choose three off-weeks.) Proposals should describe one puzzle raised by the readings or during class discussions and propose a brief research plan for resolving it. Proposals are due via email (in PDF or Word format) to tsechser@virginia.edu no later than 48 hours after each class meeting. To encourage creativity, research proposals are not graded, but they are nonetheless a central requirement.
4. Review Essay. Beginning with the seminar on February 22, one or more students will prepare a review essay evaluating the week’s reading. Essays must be no
longer than 3500 words and are due via email no later than 48 hours before the class in which the readings are to be discussed. A good review essay will contain the following elements:

a. **Critique the theoretical argument.** Essays should not just summarize the material. What are the independent, independent, and intervening variables? Is the causal logic plausible? Are there reasons the argument might be problematic?

b. **Offer alternative explanations.** Are there other ways to account for the puzzle(s) identified by the author? Does the author offer a satisfactory logical or empirical rebuttal?

c. **Assess the empirical evidence.** Are the cases chosen appropriately? Are the variables operationalized well? Might alternative tests be equally valid? If the author’s data are available, can you replicate the results?

d. **Discuss related literature.** How does this literature compare and contrast with other work on the subject? Is it an improvement?

e. **Add value.** This is the most important and difficult element of the paper. Can you suggest new hypotheses, data sources, or research strategies? Can the research design be improved? Suggest how we might move forward.


5. **Final Exam.** The final examination will be given on Thursday, May 6 and will mimic the format of comprehensive exams: students will choose one essay question to answer in a two-hour period. The use of books and notes will be prohibited. The examination will be emailed to the class at 12:00 PM and will be due via email to tsechser@virginia.edu by 2:00 PM that day.

**Evaluation**

Course requirements carry the following relative weights:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Readings**

The following books are required and are available at the University of Virginia Bookstore. All other readings are available on Collab.


Students should also become familiar with the following book if they are not already:

Schedule

0. Organizational Meeting (25-Jan-2010)


1. Threats and Coercive Diplomacy (01-Feb-2010)

- Schultz, Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy, chapters 1-5, 8; skim chap. 6-7.
- Schelling, Arms and Influence, chapters 1-3.

2. Reputation and Credibility (08-Feb-2010)

- Press, Calculating Credibility, chapters 1 and 5, plus one of the case studies.
• Walter, *Reputation and Civil War*, chapters 1-5, 8.


3. Methodological Discussion: The Deterrence Debate (15-Feb-2010)


4. Air Power and Coercion (22-Feb-2010)

• Pape, *Bombing to Win*, chapters 1-3, 9, and one of the case studies.

5. Military Power and Effectiveness (01-Mar-2010)

• Biddle, Military Power, chapters 1-4 and 8-10.

No Class: Spring Break (08-Mar-2010)

6. Nuclear Proliferation (15-Mar-2010)

• Feaver, Peter D. “Neooptimists and the Enduring Problem of Nuclear Proliferation.” Security Studies, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Summer 1997), pp. 93-125.

7. War Termination (22-Mar-2010)

• Fortna, *Peace Time*, entire.


9. Civilian Victimization, Occupations, and Counterinsurgency (05-Apr-2010)

- Downes, Targeting Civilians in War, chapters 1-2, 4-5, and 7, plus introduction and conclusion.

10. Terrorism (12-Apr-2010)

- Pape, Robert A. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.” American Political Science Review, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Spring 2003), pp. 343-361.

No Class: Prof. Sechser at Princeton (19-Apr-2010)

11. Public Opinion and War (26-Apr-2010)

- Special assignment: Compile your three best research memos into a single file and email them with your name removed to tsechser@virginia.edu before class this week.
- Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler, Paying the Human Costs of War, entire.


12. Review of Research Memos *(03-May-2010)*

- **Special assignment:** No later than 6:00pm on Friday, April 30, please rank-order the research memos distributed in the packet (1 being the top score) and send your rankings in spreadsheet form to tsechser@virginia.edu.
- Readings this week to be distributed by the instructor.