Summary

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.

General Requirements

1. Complete the 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. For those who wish to follow up on specific interests later, supplementary books and articles (denoted by +) are listed below the required readings.

2. Contribute to Class Discussion. Discussion constitutes the entirety of each seminar meeting; students must come prepared to offer critical thoughts on each of the readings.

3. Write Eight 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 must be uploaded to Collab in PDF format not later than 48 hours after each class.
meeting. To encourage creativity, research proposals are not graded, but they are nonetheless a central requirement.

4. **Write a Review Essay.** Beginning with the fifth class meeting, one or more students will prepare a review essay evaluating the week’s reading. Essays must be no longer than 3,500 words and must be uploaded to Collab in PDF format *not later than 48 hours before the class* in which the readings are to be discussed. A good review essay will contain the following elements:

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

   - **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?

   - **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?

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

   - **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. **Complete the Final Exam.** The final examination will mimic the format of the department’s comprehensive exams: students will choose one essay question to answer in a two-hour period. The use of books and notes will be prohibited.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

There are three main components to the final semester grade.

- Participation 30%
- Review Essay 40%
- Final Exam 30%

**Professionalism, Ethics, and Other Policies**

1. **In-Class Distractions.** Please do not use your laptops in class. It is essential that seminar participants focus on the discussion and not hide behind a computer screen.
Please also turn off your phones before class. Texting during class is distracting for the instructor, those around you, and most importantly, you.

2. Late Arrivals. Please be prompt so that class may begin and end on time.

3. Academic Integrity. Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously in this course. All assignments must be solely the original work of the student. Quoting or paraphrasing another author without attribution on any written assignment is considered plagiarism. Avoid plagiarism by using footnotes (with page numbers) whenever you quote, paraphrase, or otherwise borrow someone else’s ideas. Citing others’ work is a standard scholarly practice, and there is no punishment for having too many citations. If you are unsure whether you are committing plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask the instructor for guidance (before you submit your work). Violators risk failing the course and being reported to the Honor Committee.

4. Group Collaboration. Colleagues are essential to one’s intellectual growth, and I urge students to collaborate with classmates. Sharing written summaries, reading draft papers, and commenting on others’ work are all acceptable forms of collaboration. On the other hand, writing portions of a classmate’s paper or copying a paragraph from a book or website without attribution are very serious violations.

5. Late Assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted for any reason. To ensure that illness, computer failures, or other unanticipated events do not cause you to miss an assignment deadline, it is recommended that you begin the assignments well in advance of the deadline. Further, you should back up your work off-site using the University’s Home Directory, Google Drive, Dropbox, or another free cloud backup service.

Books and Readings

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


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


**Schedule**

Readings denoted by “•” are required; those denoted by “+” are supplementary.

1. **Organizational Meeting**


2. **Threats and Coercive Diplomacy**


3. Reputations, Coercion, and Credibility


4. Methodological Discussion: The Deterrence Debate


5. Air Power and Coercion

6. Nuclear Coercion


7. Military Power and Effectiveness


8. **War Termination**


9. Economic Sanctions


10. Occupation and Counterinsurgency


11. Terrorism and Counterterrorism


12. **Review of Research Memos**

• *Special assignment*: Please rank order the research memos contained in the packet available on Collab (1 being the top score) and upload your rankings in spreadsheet form.

• Readings this week to be distributed by the instructor.
Bibliography


