Trinity 410
Researching Critical Cases in International Relations
Winter 2020

Instructor: Dr. Mark Nieman

Time and Location: W 2–4pm, Online – Synchronous

Contact: mark.nieman@utoronto.ca

Student Hours: Schedule through `https://nieman.youcanbook.me` and meet via Zoom

Overview and Objectives

This course allows students with majors in International Relations to apply some of the techniques and skills they have developed during their undergraduate careers to an original research. The course introduces several methodological tools that are used to understand and analyze a variety of major developments affecting contemporary international relations. Students will examine the strengths and weaknesses of each research method and apply those that are most appropriate to their own study.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students should be able to:
- Describe analytical approaches to studying international relations.
- Critically read and evaluate scholarly work.
- Apply empirical results to current cases and make educated predictions.
- Conduct and present an independent research project.

Required Texts

There is no required textbooks for this class. All books/chapters are available on Quercus and all articles through the library at `https://search.library.utoronto.ca/index`. To find articles, search the article title and verify it is correct with the author's name.

Grading

Grades are based on a series of take-home assignments, class participation, and a research project. All required readings should be completed prior to class. All assignments should be uploaded to Quercus by the start of class; late assignments are not accepted. The course follows the standard university grading scale (`https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-1-2020`). Final grade percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

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Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percentage
Participation	10
In-class Assignments	
Research Question Group Discussion	5
Theory and Hypothesis Group Discussion	5
Take-home Assignments	
Revised Research Question	10
Revised Theory and Hypotheses	10
Research Design	10
Final Research paper	50
Total	100

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Participation consists of a student's contribution to in-class discussion. Participation is dependent on your attendance and positive, thoughtful contribution to class discussion. This is a 400-level class and is treated as a seminar. This means that students are required to have read the week's assigned readings prior to class, are expected to describe the readings' theory and findings, and are able to critically discuss all readings (and complete occasional in-class assignments) as to demonstrate a mastery of the material.

In-class Assignments: There are two in-class assignments. Each in-class assignment provides students with feedback to improve their project, as well as an opportunity to improve the work of a peer.

Research Question Group Discussion: Students upload a research question to Quercus that they will then work on in small peer groups to revise and improve. The research question should clearly specify the topic, describe a question that the student intends to answer, and how this question fits into the discipline of international relations. Students should also provide constructive feedback to improve their peers' research question. Students will be graded based on their having completed the one-page research question and the quality of feedback they provide their peers' research question (50% of assignment value each). **Due January 20.**

Theory and Hypothesis Group Discussion: Students should prepare a two- to five-page theory with hypotheses and upload it to Quercus before class. In class, students work in small peer

groups providing feedback to on one another's theory and hypotheses. The theory should clearly identify the dependent and independent variables, the causal mechanism (i.e. the *process* in which the independent variables causes the dependent variable), and at least one testable hypothesis (i.e. what is the expected effect of a change in the independent variable on the dependent variable?). That is, students should know what their conceptual variables are, why they expect to find a relationship, and the expected relationship. Students should also describe how their theory builds on existing research, i.e. incorporate a literature review describing at least 2 common existing explanations. Students are expected to provide constructive criticism and suggestions to improve their peers' theory and hypotheses. Students will be graded on having completed the two- to five-page theory and the quality of feedback they provide their peers' theory and hypotheses (50% of assignment value each). **Due February 10.**

Take-home Assignments: These assignments are designed to facilitate the completion of the independent research project.

Revised Research Question: Students should take the peer feedback from the January 20 in-class assignment and submit a revised research question to the instructor. Students should specify a clear research question and describe how it relates to a topic within international relations, i.e. how does answering the research question advance our knowledge. **Due January 27.**

Revised Theory and Hypotheses: Students should take the peer feedback from the February 10 in-class assignment and submit a revised theory and hypotheses to the instructor. Students should clearly identify the dependent and independent variables, the causal mechanism, and testable hypotheses generated from the theory. Students should be able to describe how their theory differs/builds on existing theoretical accounts, i.e. incorporate a literature review describing at least 2 common existing explanations. Students should use one of the conventional citation styles. **Due February 24.**

Research Design: Students should explain how they intend to evaluate and test their theory and hypotheses. Students should describe their selected research method (quantitative, comparative case study, process tracing, etc), stating why it is appropriate to test their hypotheses while noting any limitation this method introduces. Students should also specify the level of analysis of their data (how are the data aggregated in space and time), and detail how they conceptualize and measure the dependent and independent variables, including their primary data sources. **Due March 10.**

Final Research Paper: Students are expected carry out the analysis described in their research design, and combine it with the previous sections to creating a complete research paper. The final paper should incorporates all feedback from the class. The completed manuscript should read as a journal article, with an introduction (including the research question), literature review, theory and hypotheses, research design, results, and conclusion sections. There is no set length, but most working paper will be 15–25 pages. The goal is for the paper to be publishable in an undergraduate social science journal. **Due April 9.**

Course Policies

Student Responsibilities in the Learning Process: Students are expected to complete all required readings on a topic prior to completing that topic's assessment. Students are also expected to complete all assessments on time. This means accessing the materials with sufficient time to complete assessments prior to deadlines. In the event that a student has questions concerning the material, they should formulate specific questions to ask the professor via office hours or email with sufficient time for a response prior to assessment deadlines (i.e. emailed questions should be sent at least 24 hours prior to a deadline, excluding weekends).

Classroom Conduct: Students are expected to participate in class in a thoughtful and respectful manner while in the pursuit of knowledge accumulation. Generally, this means engaging with one another's ideas and treating others as you would like to be treating as well as *not* treating others how you would *not* like to be treated. Please see university policies on freedom of speech (`https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/freedom-speech-statement-may-28-1992`) and discrimination and harassment (`https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/harassment-statement-prohibited-discrimination-and-discriminatory-harassment`).

Accommodations: Please discuss any special needs with the instructor start of the semester, for example to request reasonable accommodations if an academic requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should complete the appropriate documentation with Student Life Programs and Services (`https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/`).

Academic Misconduct: All acts of dishonesty in any work constitute academic misconduct. The Student Disciplinary Regulations (`https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019`) will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.
A special note on plagiarism: plagiarism is the act of representing directly or indirectly another person's work as your own. It can involve presenting someone's speech, wholly or partially, as your; quoting without acknowledging the true source of the quoted material; copying and handing in another person's work with your name on it; and similar infractions. Even indirect quotations, paraphrasing, etc., can be considered plagiarism unless sources are properly cited.

Copyright: Course materials, including recorded lectures and slides, are the instructor's intellectual property covered by the Copyright Act, RSC 1985, c C-42. Course materials posted on Quercus are for registered students only and may not be posted to other websites or media without the express permission of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction, copying, or use of online recordings will constitute copyright infringement.

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus to reflect the pace of the course.

Schedule

January 13: Introduction and Research Question

Lave, Charles and James G. March. 1975. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences.* New York: Harper and Row. Chapter 1, pp 2–7.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton University Press. Ch 1, pp 14–19.

Anonymous. 2001. The Roadrunner and Coyote Guide to IR Theory. *International Studies Perspectives* 2(3): Inside back cover.

January 20: Theory Construction—Focus on Process

Research Question due.

In-class Assignment: Research Question Group Discussion.

Lave, Charles and James G. March. 1975. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences.* New York: Harper and Row. Chapter 2–3, pp 10–79.

Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. *International Organization* 52(4): 887–917.

January 27: Theory Construction—Building Techniques

Revised Research Question due.

Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. 2007. Modernizing Political Science: A Model-based Approach. *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4): 741–753.

Blagden, David. 2016. Induction and Deduction in International Relations: Squaring the Circle between Theory and Evidence. *International Studies Review* 18(2): 195–213.

Weeks, Jessica L. 2012. Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict. *International Organization* 106(2): 326–347.

February 3: Theory Evaluation

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 1985. Toward a Scientific Understanding of International Conflict: A Personal View. *International Studies Quarterly* 29(2): 121–136.

Pouliot, Vincent. 2007. "Sobjectivism": Toward a Constructivist Methodology. *International Studies Quarterly* 51(2): 359–384.

Barkin, J. Samuel and Laura Sjoberg. 2015. Calculating Critique: Thinking Outside the Methods Matching Game. *Millennium* 43(3) 852–871.

February 10: Case Selection

Theory and Hypotheses due.

In-class Assignment: Theory and Hypotheses Group Discussion.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. *Political Analysis* 2(1): 131–150.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton University Press. Ch 4, pp 115–149.

Singer, J. David. 1961. The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations. *World Politics* 14(1): 77-92.

February 17: No Class–Reading Week

February 24: From Theory to Analysis—Operationalizing Concepts

Revised Theory and Hypotheses due.

Adock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research. *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529–546.

Jurkovich, Michelle. 2019. What Isn't a Norm? Redefining the Conceptual Boundaries of "Norms" in the Human Rights Literature. *International Studies Review* 22(3): 693–711.

Izadebski, Adam, Tymon Słoczyński, Anton Bonnier, Grzegory Koloch, and Katerina Kouli. 2020. Landscape Change and Trade in Ancient Greece: Evidence from Pollen Data. *The Economic Journal* 130(632): 2596–2618.

March 3: Qualitative Methods

Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2007. Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield. *Comparative Political Studies* 40(2): 170–195.

Bashevkin, Sylvia. 2018. *Women as Foreign Policy Leaders: National Security and Gender Politics in Superpower America.* Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 & 4.

March 10: Case Studies

Research Design due.

Thies, Cameron G. 2002. A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations. *International Studies Perspectives* 3(4): 351–372.

Carson, Austin and Keren Yarhi-Milo. 2017. Covert Communication: The Intelligibility and Credibility of Signaling in Secret. *Security Studies* 26(1):124–156.

Greitens, Sheena Chestnut, Myunghee Lee, and Erir Yazici. 2020. Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression: China's Strategy in Xinjiang. *International Security* 44(3): 9–47.

March 17: Experimental Design

Hyde, Susan D. 2015. Experiments in International Relations: Lab, Survey, and Field. *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 403–424.

Mattes, Michaela and Jessica L. Weeks. 2019. Hawks, Doves, and Peace: An Experimental Approach. *American Journal of Political Science* 63:1: 53–66.

Henrich, Joseph. 2000. Does Culture Matter in Economic Behavior? Ultimatum Game Bargaining among the Machiguenga of the Peruvian Amazon. *American Economic Review* 90(4): 973–979.

March 24: Statistical Analysis

King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression. *American Political Science Review* 107(2): 326–343.

Barceló, Joan and Elena Labzina. 2020. Do Islamic State's Deadly Attacks Disengage, Deter, or Mobilize Supporters? *British Journal of Political Science* 50(4): 1539–1559.

Piazza, James. 2020. Political Hate Speech and Domestic Terrorism. *International Interactions* 46(3): 431–453.

March 31: Formal Theory

Chyzh, Olga V. and Elena Labzina. 2018. Bankrolling Repression? Modeling Third-Party Influence on Protests and Repression. *American Journal of Political Science* 62(2): 312-324.

Larson, Jennifer M. and Janet I. Lewis. 2018. Rumors, Kinship Networks, and Rebel Group Formation. *International Organization* 72(4): 871–903.

Powell, Robert. 2003. Nuclear Deterrence Theory, Nuclear Proliferation, and National Missile Defense. *International Security* 27(4): 86–118.

April 7: Mixed Methods

Final Paper due April 9.

Stephan, Maria J. and Erica Chenoweth. 2008. Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. *International Security* 33(1): 7–44.

Mir, Asfandyar and Dylan Moore. 2019. Drones, Surveillance, and Violence: Theory and Evidence from a US Drone Program. *International Studies Quarterly* 63(4): 846–862.

Lyall, Jason and Isaiah Wilson III. 2009. Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars. *International Organization* 63(1): 67–106.

April 13–23: Final Assessment