Graduate Seminar on International Institutions
Political Science (PSCI) 7043
Spring 2014

Professor:
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Course Description:
Day/Time: Tuesdays 11:00AM – 1:30PM
Location: Ketchum 116

This is a PhD-level seminar on the study of international institutions. The course introduces students to this field of research by exposing students to some seminal and classical works as well more contemporary works. Students should have had significant exposure to IR theories prior to taking this seminar. The course has three main objectives:

1. familiarize students with the extant literature on international institutions format them to be able to engage scholarly works on the topic;
2. professionalize students to skillfully devise and present critiques of scholarly works and to present their own research projects; and
3. guide students to devise their own research projects and complete a full research paper by the end of the semester.

Course Requirements:

1. Short papers (30% of your grade): Between week 2 and week 14, each student will write eight short papers. You may choose one of two styles for each paper you write.
   - Write a critical analysis of the papers/chapters assigned for the week. You should address all the readings, and your central criticism should have a theme that addresses the set as opposed to one that is targeted at a particular reading. Writing these papers will help you think critically about the readings and prepare for active discussion in class. Think of these as mini comprehensive exam style essays.
   - Write a brief research proposal. This proposal should be longer than the abstracts you wrote for Data I/Scope and Methods but shorter than a full-length research design. Identify a research question that emerges from the readings assigned for the week. While a full literature review is not needed, you should discuss why the question is important and interesting to pose based on the readings. Advance a potential argument and sketch out a research design that can help you answer the research question posed. Explore potential data sources and operationalizations.
The papers should be approximately 1,000–1,250 words. The papers are due by Monday at 3PM each week. Please e-mail me your paper as a PDF document, named with your last name and the number of your paper, e.g. Smith1.pdf, Smith2.pdf, etc.

2. Discussant presentations (20% of your grade): Throughout the semester, students will have opportunities to serve as a discussant in two different settings.
   - Between week 2 and week 14, each student will serve three times as a discussant on the week’s readings.
   - On the last day of the seminar, students will present their research paper. Each student will serve as a discussant for another student’s presentation.

Specific guidelines for serving as a discussant are at the end of the syllabus.

3. Research paper (50% of your grade): Every student will write a full research paper, addressing a research question dealing with some aspect of international institutions. The paper should contain a literature review, a well developed argument and full quantitative and/or qualitative analysis, even if preliminary. I will discuss my expectations about the paper assignment further throughout the semester. Research presentation at the end of the semester will constitute 25% of the grade for the assignment.

Readings:

- All readings can be obtained electronically online on the NB course web site.

- Karns, Margaret P. and Karen A. Mingst (2010) *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*. 2nd edition. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers. This is a semi-optional textbook that you should consult for basic but specific empirical information about what international institutions are and what they do. You can use the textbook to get ideas about your possible research as well.

Schedule of Readings:

Part I: What are (international) institutions?

**Week 1: Introduction (January 14)**


**Week 2: Conceptualizing Institutions (January 21)**

Part II: What do international institutions do?

Week 3: Information Provision (January 28)


Week 4: Commitment Device (February 4)


Week 5: Socialization (February 11)

Part III: What are the consequences of international institutions?

**Week 6: International Security** (February 18)


**Week 7: International Economy** (February 25)


**Week 8: International Environment** (March 4)


Week 9: Human Rights (March 11)


Part IV: When international institutions go awry

Week 10: Accountability and Legitimacy (March 18)


Week 11: Accountability and Organizational Pathologies (April 1)

Part V: Design and Changes in International Institutions

**Week 12: Design of International Institutions (April 8)**


**Week 13: Evolution of International Institutions (April 15)**


Part VI: The State and the Future of IO

**Week 14: PEIO Papers (April 22)**

- Select pieces from PEIO 2014 conference

**Week 15: Wrap-Up (April 29)**

- Student presentations

**Short Paper Template (Style #1):**

Being able to provide a succinct and argumentative summary of readings is a critical skill for graduate students to develop. The best way to approach this assignment is to pretend that you are the discussant on a conference panel that consists of papers assigned for a class. Below is a general template for the papers and presentations. As you begin to feel more comfortable, you may choose to deviate from this format. However, keep in mind that the main objective is to provide an argumentative summary of the readings.
1. Your paper should cover all of the assigned readings for the week, even if you focus more on a subset of the readings for #7.

2. What is the research question that authors pose in their research? (There may be more than one related questions.) What is the phenomenon of interest (i.e. the dependent variable)?

3. Why do we/should we care about this question? The reasons we care may be normative as well as positive.

4. What are the answers to the research question that the authors advance? What is their argument? i.e. What are their explanatory or independent variable?

5. What is the methodology they use to examine their argument?

6. What is the theme or connection across the works that you are addressing?

7. (The most critical component) Given what the authors do, what are your assessments of the works? What do they do well and what do they do not so well? How would you do it—make the argument, carry out the analysis, etc.—differently?

Despite the short length, the papers of this style should be written in a “paper format”—with an introduction summarizing your argument, a body that addresses the questions above, and a conclusion.

**Discussant Presentation Template:**

Being able to provide a succinct and argumentative summary and critique of academic works is a critical skill for young scholars to develop. The objective of the discussant presentation assignment is to help students develop this skill. The best way to think of the assignment is to imagine yourself serving as the discussant on a panel at a professional conference. Below is a general template for discussant presentations. If you feel more comfortable, you may choose to deviate from this format. However, keep in mind that the main objective is to provide an argumentative critique of the readings.

1. Your presentation should cover at least two readings on a week’s reading list. The idea is to provide a summary/review that is a synthesis. You may cover as many readings as you would like within the time constraints of the assignment and if you can do so without straining your argument.

2. Summary

   - What is the research question that authors pose in their research? (There may be more than one related questions.) What is the phenomenon of interest (i.e. the dependent variable)?
   - What are the answers to the research question that the authors advance? What is their argument? i.e. What are their explanatory or independent variables?
   - What is the methodology they use to examine their argument?
   - What is/are their finding(s)?

3. Critique
• What do they do well and what do they do not so well? What is your overarching argument about the pieces you are reviewing? You should avoid listing a series of disparate comments and critiques.
• What is the basis for your critique (e.g. empirical, logical, etc.)?
• What would you do differently and how if you were to redo their research?
• What questions would you pose to the authors?

Your presentations should be about 12 minutes maximum. About two students per week will be presenting. You may use the laptop projector should you wish. Alternatively, you may prepare concise handouts for the class with any helpful visual aids—e.g. charts, diagrams, etc.

Research Presentation Template:
I will discuss this further in class, but you should refer to this presentation slides template (direct PowerPoint file download link) by Marc Busch.