Course Information

Term: Fall 2014
Class Hours: Mondays, 1:30-4:20 pm
Class Location: SSM 100

Course Description

This graduate course examines the institutions that govern international relations, from the unwritten rules to the formal organizations. States interact on a wide range of topics, from economic to environmental, but their “anarchic” existence leaves them without a common guide for cooperation or conflict. In this course, we will study both the pre-conditions for (or against) interstate cooperation and the actual process thereof. What is cooperation, and how can we measure it? When will states create and join international institutions? How do international institutions operate as actors and mechanisms of cooperation, and how do they affect cooperative outcomes? When will states yield sovereignty to obey them? How and why have international institutions changed?

In this course we will take a political economy approach to understanding various IOs, considering their origins, ostensible functions, the international and domestic political forces that impact their operations, and their effectiveness. We will study many different types of institutions, from intergovernmental organizations like the UN, the WTO, and NATO; to supranational institutions like the EU and the ICC; from “soft” institutions like international law and norms of behavior; to transnational institutions like advocacy networks and terrorist organizations. The course explores the institutional structures, political processes, and effects of international organizations within three issue areas: international peace and security, and global trade and development, and transnational politics such as human rights and the environment.

Political Science Learning Objectives (PLOs)

Through the courses and programs of the political science program, students should acquire:
1. An understanding of the processes, theories, and empirical regularities of political institutions and political behavior in the student’s chosen emphasis area: American politics, comparative politics, or international relations.
2. An ability to employ critical thinking and demonstrate social scientific literacy, including basic quantitative literacy.
3. A capacity to utilize contemporary social science research methods to conduct rigorous research on political phenomena.
4. Effective written communication skills, especially the ability to convey complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner.
5. An ability to apply abstract theory and research methods to understand contemporary political events and public policies.

Course Learning Objectives (CLOs)

Through this course, students should acquire:

1. Familiarity with and the ability to critique the main theoretical approaches used to explain international cooperation (advances PLOs 1 & 2)
2. An understanding of the strategic difficulties of international cooperation and how institutions can be designed to overcome those challenges (advances PLO 1)
3. Familiarity with the definition of an institution and the ability to analyze international institutions according to the Life Cycle of Institutions frames (advances PLOs 1, 2, & 5)
4. A capacity to concisely summarize, engage with, and critique the assumptions, logical reasoning, empirical implications, research design, and inferences of social science research (advances PLOs 3 & 4)
5. Improved capacity to identify an interesting and unexplored political puzzle, motivate a research question using existing research, construct a theory to answer that question, and develop a plausible research design to analyze implications of the theory, while conveying complex theoretical and scientific concepts in a clear and concise manner (advances PLO 4)

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this course beyond graduate standing or the instructor’s approval. However, it is assumed that students have a rudimentary understanding of social science research design and inference, as if you are at least concurrently taking POLI 200 (Research Design) and POLI 210 (Quantitative Analysis I).
Texts for Purchase, Loan, Etc.


Evaluation

Grades will be determined based on the following evaluative processes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature summaries</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research introduction</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation**

At the graduate level, it is expected that your attendance will be perfect. If an emergency comes up, email me as soon as possible; otherwise, I expect to see you on time.

Students must participate in class discussions to succeed in this course. If you must miss more than one class meeting, I highly recommend that you drop the course. Students are expected to be prepared for class. This means not only reading the required materials but also taking the time and care to walk through the logic of individual arguments before coming to class to discuss them. Some readings contain methodological techniques that may be unfamiliar. It is not sufficient to skip this material, but it is okay if some of it is foreign or difficult. Bring questions to class, and we will wrestle with these concepts together. I expect students to be able to explain the assumptions and logic of all theories and methods in the required readings and critically engage the relative merits and flaws of each piece.

As part of the participation grade, each student must do a short presentation on a single assigned reading. In this presentation, the student should summarize the main research question and contribution of the paper in very few sentences. The point of the presentation is to center the paper in the literature. In other words, the presenter should describe the major scholarship that came before and led to this particular paper, identify how this paper builds on or critiques this extant scholarship, and demonstrate its impact on the literature in terms of how other scholars have responded to the paper. Remember the theme of the week, but you are not limited to this. This presentation should take no more than ten minutes, and I will be strict.
in holding presenters to that time limit. Students will bring a bibliography citing all works discussed in the presentation, with enough copies to distribute one to each student and the professor. *Students will sign up for their preferred reading presentation by the second week.*

**Literature Summaries**

There are 11 weeks in which we cover scholarly material after the first meeting, and each week features a theme. Each student must complete TEN literature summaries, 1-3 pages each, summarizing and engaging with all of the readings for a given week. For each reading in the weekly summary, concisely but precisely describe the following:

1. The puzzle motivating the study and the resulting research question
2. The primary theoretical argument; central, foundational assumptions; and major empirical implications (hypotheses)
3. The chief empirical test and results (if any)
4. One significant critique identified by the student, with a clear argument as to how the challenge potentially undermines the paper’s original inferences

Use bullets, table, or paragraph form, delineated by reading (cite it in full). Each summary is due at the start of class on the day the readings are assigned (i.e., do them before we discuss the readings). Note that, of the 11 substantive meetings after September 8th, each student must turn in 10 literature summaries, giving you one freebie. Use it wisely. I will not accept these late under any circumstances. Summaries will be graded using the “check” system, with the following criteria:

- **Excellent:** Strong summaries that identify the puzzle the research question seeks to answer, the assumptions on which the theory is constructed and the most important contribution of the theory, and an insightful critique that identifies a structural flaw with the theory or the test and makes a complete argument as to how that flaw impacts what conclusions we can draw from the theory. Most of the summaries must meet these criteria, and those remaining should at least meet expectations.

- **Meets expectations:** Complete, with general understanding of the arguments of all readings. Attempts at critiques for all readings must go beyond calls for empirical study of the phenomenon.

- **Needs Improvement:** Missing readings, summaries without critiques, incomplete thoughts, missing requirements, simplistic or lazy critiques.

**Research Presentation and Introduction**

Students will identify a theoretical or empirical puzzle related to international institutions in some way, address it with a novel, rigorously derived theory, describe a research design to test that theory, and identify the contributions this project will make to the literature and/or policy-making. Students will write a *concise introduction* for a future research paper with clear and precise arguments. The introduction will be no more than three double-spaced pages (not including references) with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. It must also have a title. I will circulate an example outline for an introduction, but this format is not required. The idea here is to do all of the background work required for a paper, but to make arguments precisely and
succinctly. This paper cannot be a reproduction, in whole or in part, of work already completed for another course. Students will submit a draft of this introduction to the professor on or before October 27.

Students will present the project to the class in a 10-12 minute, conference-style presentation on December 8, circulating a revised version of the introduction by midnight on Friday, December 5. As part of the research presentation grade, all students must read all circulated introductions and prepare a list of positive comments as well as critiques and things that can be improved for each paper. These comments will be given to the presenter for incorporation in the final draft. Cultivating a reputation for being tough can get you far in the professional world: people will respect your opinion; smart people will want to write with you. Gaining a reputation for being a jerk will do just the opposite.

Finally, students will revise the introduction once more, incorporating comments from the presentations, submitting the final draft of the introduction to Dr. Ritter by 1:30pm on Monday, December 15.

Final Exam
The final exam will take the format of a standard comprehensive exam in political science at the University of California, Merced. Details will be forthcoming.

Course Policies

Syllabus Changes
I will post announcements and syllabus changes to the UCM CROPS website for this course. Though I will announce changes in class, please keep an eye out. If a change to the syllabus or requirements is posted in the announcements of this site, you are responsible for those changes.

Academic Honor Code
Students are assumed to have read and agreed with the University of California, Merced Academic Honesty policy, found at URL: http://studentlife.campuscms.ucmerced.edu/_les/page/documents/academichonestypolicy.pdf
The following is taken verbatim from that document: “Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, altering graded examinations for additional credit, having another person take an examination for you, or facilitating academic dishonesty or as further specified in this policy or other campus regulations.” These and other forms of cheating are all potentially grounds for penalties including failure of the assignment or the course, as well as program- or university-level disciplinary action.
Other Classroom Policies
Feel free to bring food/drink. I certainly will.

I don’t mind if you choose to bring the readings and your notes to class on your laptop or tablet rather than hard copies—I certainly will. If it turns out, though, that you can’t contribute to discussion with your screen in front of you, I will ask you to turn it off.

Course Schedule & Readings
Most readings not found in the purchased texts are available through the University’s electronic holdings. Readings not available in this medium will be scanned and posted on CROPS under Course Documents. These readings are primarily excerpts from books that were not included in the required text list.

Under each class session you will find a list of required and a list of recommended readings. You are expected only to complete the required list for class. The recommended list is meant to provide you with some noteworthy contrasting opinions, further elaborations/tests, or simply extra information on topics you find particularly interesting. The list of recommended readings is also a good place to look for your paper, your in-class presentation on a reading, etc.

Required readings are listed in alphabetical order, for convenience. In practice, it makes most sense to read in chronological order, and we will probably discuss them this way in class.

Week 0 (September 1): Labor Day. No class meeting.

Week 1 (September 8): The Big Picture
Cover course expectations, assign reading presentations. Define institutions, and the international cooperation problem. Explain the rationalist approach to institutions and predicting state behavior.

Required
- Syllabus. **Students should come to class with a few papers from the required readings in mind for their reading presentations.**
Week 2 (September 15): Core Theories of International Cooperation

Define the problem that necessitates international institutions. When, and why, do states cooperate with one another? What are the barriers to cooperation, and when will states use institutions to overcome them? Big, traditional theories in the debate over international cooperation.

**Recommended**


**Required**


**Recommended**

September 18: Last Day to Add/Drop

Week 3 (September 22): Rational Design of International Institutions

**Designing international institutions.** How do states design institutions to solve the problems of international cooperation? Specific mechanisms to facilitate cooperation: stability vs rigidity, breadth vs depth. How is design determined from among states with divergent preferences?

**Required**


**Recommended**

Week 4 (September 29): Questions of Legitimacy
Why do states form and join international institutions? How can states delegate enough authority to independent international institutions to be useful while holding IOs accountable to their mandates? How do international organizations become legitimate, and then how do they wield that legitimacy?

Required

Recommended

Week 5 (October 6): Institutions as Organizations
*Institutions as actors.* How do institutions act on their own behalf? How do institutions attempt to fulfill their mandates and otherwise maximize utility? How do states attempt to control organizational agency?

Required

Recommended

Week 6 (October 13): Reputation and Cooperation

Compliance. Why do states cooperate with one another in the context of international institutions? What are the benefits of compliance? Do states act as if their reputation is on the line—as if reputation is valuable? How does a state garner and protect a reputation as a cooperator?

Required

Recommended

Week 7 (October 20): Compliance vs Selection

More compliance. Do treaties and international organizations constrain state behavior or screen compliant members? What mechanisms can enforce compliance, and how do they...
work? Why do states obey rulings and rules? Does the expectation of compliance affect IO rulings? How can we measure compliance? Why join international institutions?

**Required**


**Recommended**

Week 8 (October 27): Enforcement: Coercion and Self-Imposition

More compliance. Do states comply because they want to avoid punishment or because compliance is beneficial? What kinds of punishment yield state cooperation? What forms of punishment are available to IOs, and when will states punish one another for non-compliance?

**Required**


**Recommended**


Week 9 (November 3): Information and Signaling

How do international institutions gather and send information? How is that information used to affect outcomes of interest? How do international actors monitor compliance with IOs?

**Required**


**Recommended**

**Week 10 (November 10): No class meeting**

**Week 11 (November 17): Domestic Politics and International Cooperation**
What role do domestic institutions and actors play in constraining or incentivizing a state’s willingness to cooperate with international actors? How do international institutions alter domestic institutions and politics?

**Required**

Recommended

Week 12 (November 24): Focal Points and Socialization
Informal institutions. How do states cooperate in the absence of formal international organizations? What are norms, and how do they affect state behavior? Why do states comply with international law?

Required
Recommended


Week 13 (December 1): Transnational Organizations and Networks

Some problems require international cooperation across but not between states. How do institutions differ when the primary actors are international but not intergovernmental? How do international institutions cooperate with one another? How do states navigate the network of IOs with which they can cooperate?

Required

**Recommended**


**Week 14 (December 8): Research presentations**

**December 13-19: Final Papers and Exam**