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Formal Models of International Relations
GVPT808D
Spring 2010

Course Description

This is a research seminar on formal approaches to international relations, with a particular emphasis on international conflict. The course will focus both on a series of selected issues in the study of international conflict as well as generic skills necessary to read and understand formal analysis in international relations. We will begin with an overview of the current state of scientific research on world politics. In the remainder of the course we will examine a selected topics in detail. Students are expected to contribute an original research paper building upon or critiquing one or more of the pieces of scholarship discussed in class.

Tentative Weekly Schedule

- Course Overview and Introduction
- Rational Choice Approaches [35], [4], [13], [16], [19], [40], [34]
- Decision Theory [2], [1], [32]
- Game Theory [12], [3], [29]
- Bargaining I [9], [11]
- Bargaining II [21], [20]
- Capabilities and Conflict [18], [37]
- Deterrence [31], [38]
- Conflict Outcomes [39], [36], [33]
- Nuclear Weapons [17], [8]
- Domestic Politics I [30] [7], [24]
- Domestic Politics II [5] [6]
- Alliances [14], [27], [28]
- International Cooperation [15], [10]

- Empirical Papers [25], [26], [22], [23]
- Paper Workshops

Evaluation

25% Class Participation

Students are expected to attend class prepared to actively discuss the assigned material. Please talk to me as soon as possible if for some reason you feel uncomfortable speaking in class. Grades for participation will be assigned at the end of the semester, but you may ask for feedback on your performance at any time.

25% Weekly Reading Summaries and Discussion Questions

Before every class one student will submit a brief two page single spaced summary of the assigned readings. These summaries are due by 9:00 am on the day of class and should be distributed via email to all of the students in the course. The student writing the summary will lead class discussion for that week.

50% Research Paper and Presentation

One of the central goals of this seminar is to provide advanced students the chance to develop a research project. You may select any topic that fits the course theme. In your paper you should identify a research question, explain why it is important, review the extant research on the topic, develop an argument from which you can derive testable hypotheses, and provide some empirical evidence about the hypotheses. The paper is due in stages. We will discuss this in more detail as the semester progresses.

Readings

The readings are articles drawn from scholarly journals or working papers. Copies of the articles are available through the electronic journals on campus.

Academic Integrity

The University is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered Honor Code and an Honor Pledge. The Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a “community of trust” on the College Park campus. Allegations of academic dishonesty should be

reported directly to the Honor Council (314-8450) by any member of the campus community. Cases are decided by joint faculty-student boards. For additional information, consult the Office of Student Conduct website. For a description of the University's definition of academic dishonesty, suggestions on how to prevent cheating, and practical answers to frequently asked questions about the Code of Academic Integrity, consult the Student Honor Council's Resources webpage.

Religious Observances

The University of Maryland policy Assignments and Attendance on Dates of Religious Observance states that students should not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances and that, whenever feasible, they be allowed to makeup academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, the student must personally hand the instructor a written notification of the projected absence within two weeks of the start of the semester. The request should not include travel time. Instructors should take the validity of these requests at face value. For your reference, an extensive list of religious holidays appears at <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University is legally obligated to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who seek special accommodations due to disabilities must first set up an appointment with Dr. Jo Ann Hutchinson or her staff at the Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Counseling Center, 314-7682. Students should download the DSS registration forms and bring appropriate documentation to the DSS office (Shoemaker 0126) prior to the meeting

The DSS representative will make a determination of the appropriate accommodations and provide an accommodation form to distribute to instructors. Faculty should request that students both present these forms at the beginning of the semester and make an appointment to discuss the arrangements. When the arrangements involve modifications of testing procedures, students will present a test authorization form which instructors are to complete and hand deliver along with the test to 0106 Shoemaker. This material can also be faxed to 301-314-9478.

References

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