

THINKING STRATEGICALLY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POL 4887
Spring 2013
WF 1:00-2:15
BlegH 230
Office Hours: M 1.00-2.15

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Course Description

The purpose of this class is threefold: First, to introduce students to the use and value of formal models of strategic interaction (game theoretic models) in international relations. Second, to impart (some basic) tools of such modeling to students. And third, to examine the contribution of theoretical models to substantive areas in international relations.

In keeping with these three goals, the course is divided into three sections. The first two weeks will devoted to such questions as: What is a theoretical model? What are rational choice and game theory? How are game theoretic models employed in international relations and what have been seminal contributions to the literature?

The next portion of the class will introduce students to the basic tools employed in game theoretic analysis. The readings will illustrate the use of the tools introduced in class. And two problem sets will be administered, requiring students to make use of these tools.

The final portion of the class will examine substantive questions in international relations through the lens of game theory. The topics to be presented include: Domestic Politics and War, International Agreements and Treaties, International Finance and Trade, Conditionality, Terrorism, and Human Rights.

Students will be required to complete a final paper making use of the mechanisms emphasized in the course – though the construction of a complete game theoretic model will not be required. Paper topics must be approved following the submission of a proposal, which is due on April 24th.

Assignments

Readings: Are to be completed by the beginning of the class session they are listed under on the syllabus.

Problem Sets: Two problem sets covering the game theoretic techniques and readings discussed in class will distributed over the first half of the semester. Each problem set is due during the class session immediately following the notice **Problem Set Due** on the syllabus.

Final Paper: 10-15 pages. Students will be asked to select an example from current or historical events that reflects mechanisms emphasized throughout the class (an absence of credible commitments, individually rational decisions leading to collectively suboptimal outcomes, attempts to signal information, etc.) The example used for the paper may be drawn from international or domestic politics. Ideally, the paper should communicate the relevant actors in the interaction, their preferences, their choices of possible actions, and (where appropriate) what information they have or lack. Students should link these characteristics to the modeling mechanisms discussed in class, and – given these mechanisms – students should generate predictions about the outcome of the interaction. When examining historical cases, students should examine how modeling predictions fit with historical outcomes. There is no requirement for students to fully develop and characterize a game theoretic model of the interaction – though, such efforts are certainly permitted.

A brief 1 page proposal will be due on April 24th, outlining the topic of the final paper.

Grading

Problem Sets (50%)

Final Paper (35%)

Participation (15%)

Recommended Texts:

Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010

Readings

The Uses of Models in IR

January 23: Introduction

January 25: What are Models? What is their Purpose?

- Paul Krugman. The fall and rise of development economics. 1994
Sections on “The Evolution of Ignorance” and “Metaphors and Models”
- Chapter 2 in Kenneth A. Shepsle. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2nd edition, 2010
- Robert Powell. *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1999
“The Role of Formal Models” (pp. 23-39)

January 30: Applying Models to International Relations

- Chapter 2 and “A Primer on Game Theory” in Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010
- Michael J. Gilligan and Leslie Johns. Formal models of international institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15:221–243, 2012

Modeling Techniques and Examples

February 1: Normal Form Games

- Pages 1-28 in Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

February 6: Realism, Liberalism and Normal Form Games

- Robert Jervis. Cooperation under the security dilemma. *World Politics*, 30(2):167–214, January 1978
- Arthur A. Stein. Coordination and collaboration: Regimes in an anarchic world. *International Organization*, 36(2):299–324, Spring 1982

February 8: Mixed-Strategy Equilibria

- Pages 29-48 in Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

February 13: Mixed-Strategies Cnt’d

- Pages 96-131 in Martin J. Osborne. *An Introduction to Game Theory*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2004

February 15: International Enforcement and Mixed Strategies

- James D. Morrow. Modeling the forms of international cooperation: Distribution versus information. *International Organization*, 48(3):387–423, Summer 1994
- George Tsebelis. Are sanctions effective? a game theoretic analysis. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 34(1):3–28, March 1990

Problem Set 1 (Covering Everything Through Mixed Strategies) Due

February 20: Repeated Interactions

- Chapter 14 in Martin J. Osborne. *An Introduction to Game Theory*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2004

February 22: Repeated Interactions cnt'd

- Pages 82-102 in Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

February 27: Repeated Interactions and International Cooperation

- Robert Axelrod. The emergence of cooperation among egoists. *American Political Science Review*, 75(2):306–318, June 1981
- James D. Fearon and David Laitin. Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war? *The American Political Science Review*, 97(1):75–90, February 2003

March 1: Extensive Form Games

- Pages 55-81 in Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

March 6: Deterrence and Credible Commitment

- Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal. Rational deterrence theory and comparative case studies. *World Politics*, 41(2):143–169, January 1989

- James D. Morrow. Alliances, credibility, and peacetime costs. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 38.2:270–297, June 1994

March 8: Imperfect Information

- Pages 143-151 in Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

March 13: Imperfect Information Cnt'd

- Pages 173-205 in Robert Gibbons. *Game Theory for Applied Economists*. Princeton University Press, 1992

March 15: Imperfect Information, War and Signaling

- Chapter 3 in Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010
- James D. Fearon. Signaling foreign policy interests: Tying hands versus sinking costs. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41.1:68–90, February 1997

March 27: Imperfect Information and Government Accountability

- Chapter 3, pages 98-123 in Timothy Besley. *Principled Agents? The Political Economy of Good Government*. Oxford University Press, 2006
- Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. Politics and the suboptimal provision of counterterrorism. *International Organization*, 61:9–36, 2007

Selected Applications

Domestic Politics and War

March 29: Diversionary Wars

- Pages 126-142 in Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010
- Chapter 3 in George W. Downs and David M. Rocke. *Optimal Imperfection?* Princeton University Press, 1995

Problem Set 2 (Covering Extensive Forms, Repeated Games, and Imperfect Information)

Due

April 3: Democratic Peace

- Pages 154-169 in Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010
- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. An institutional explanation of the democratic peace. *The American Political Science Review*, 93.4:791–807, December 1999

International Agreements and Treaties

April 5: Who Joins International Agreements

- George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter N. Barsoom. Is the good news about compliance good news about cooperation? *International Organization*, 50(3):379–406, Summer 1996
- Jana von Stein. Do treaties constrain or screen? selection bias and treaty compliance. *The American Political Science Review*, 99(4):611–622, November 2005

April 10: Treaty Flexibility and Enforcement

- B. Peter Rosendorff. Stability and rigidity: Politics and the design of the wto's dispute resolution procedure. *The American Political Science Review*, 99(3):389–400, August 2005
- Lisa Blaydes. Rewarding impatience: A bargaining and enforcement model of opec. *International Organization*, 58:213–237, Spring 2004

April 12: Domestic Politics and International Cooperation

- Robert D. Putnam. Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games. *International Organization*, 42.3:427–460, Summer 1988
- Fiona McGillivray and Alastair Smith. Trust and cooperation through agent-specific punishments. *International Organization*, 54.4:809–824, Autumn 2000

International Trade

April 17: International Trade and Domestic Politics

- Pages 216-237 in Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010
- Ronald Rogowski. Political cleavages and changing exposure to trade. *The American Political Science Review*, 81(4):1121–1137, December 1987

April 19: International Trade Agreements

- Edward D. Mansfield, Helen V. Milner, and B. Peter Rosendorff. Free to trade: Democracies, autocracies and international trade. *American Political Science Review*, 94(2):305–322, June 2000
- John R. Oneal, Bruce Russett, and Michael L. Berbaum. Causes of peace: Democracy, interdependence, and international organizations, 1885-1992. *International Studies Quarterly*, 47:371–393, 2003

Paper Proposals Due.

Democratization

April 24: Democratization

- Adam Przeworski. Democracy as an equilibrium. *Public Choice*, 123:253–273, 2005
- Leonard Wantchekon. The paradox of “warlord” democracy: A theoretical investigation. *The American Political Science Review*, 98.1:17–33, February 2004

International Finance

April 26: Finance and Credibility

- Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast. Constitutions and commitments: The evolution of institutional governing public choice in seventeenth-century england. *The Journal of Economic History*, 49.4:803–832, 1989
- Chapter 2 in David Stasavage. *Public Debt and the Birth of the Democratic State: France and Great Britain, 1688-1789*. Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions. Cambridge University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2003

May 1: Financial Crises and Political Institutions

- Pages 320-326 in Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A. Lake, and Kenneth A. Schultz. *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010
- David Leblang and Shanker Satyanath. Institutions, expectations, and currency crises. *International Organization*, 60(Winter):245–262, 2006

International Institutions, Conditionality, and Credibility

May 3: Conditionality and Compliance

- Adam Przeworski and James Raymond Vreeland. The effect of imf programs on economic growth. *Journal of Development Economics*, 62:385–421, 2000
- James R. Hollyer. Conditionality, compliance and domestic interests: State capture and eu accession policy. *Review of International Organizations*, 5(4):387–431, 2010 <http://www.springerlink.com/content/x078gwt4q1t2m8m7/fulltext.pdf>

International Human Rights

May 8: Human Rights Criminalization and Enforcement

- James R. Hollyer and B. Peter Rosendorff. Why do authoritarian regimes sign the convention against torture? signaling, domestic politics, and non-compliance. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 6(3-4):275–327, December 2011
- Michael J. Gilligan. Is enforcement necessary for effectiveness? a model of the international criminal regime. *International Organization*, 60(4):935–967, 2006 <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=531056>

Final Paper Due: May 10

May 10: Review session for questions regarding final paper.