

PS 248, *Special Topics in International Relations*
Winter 2018
Tuesdays, 9-11:50 AM
SSB 104

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This course is intended to introduce students to the research frontier in international relations and develop critical analysis skills. For the first eight weeks, each class will feature a single book by a first-time author. The last two weeks will focus on a book manuscript that I am developing and on which I want your feedback.

Assignments:

- 1) All students must write a critical analysis (no more than 10 pages double-spaced) of the book assigned for a single week and any supplementary readings they select. Books will be assigned during in the first class to ensure a relatively equal distribution across the course (students interested in writing for week one should contact me in advance). This paper is due at the beginning of class during the relevant week and will constitute 40 percent of the grade for this course.
- 2) All students are expected to read each book each week. Participation in class discussions is mandatory, regardless of whether you wrote on the book assigned for that week. Participation will count for 30 percent of the course grade.
- 3) All students must also write a *critical* analysis (no more than 10 pages double-spaced) of the draft chapters from my book manuscript assigned in either week 9 or 10. (At this point in my career, I have developed a very thick skin; the more critical the paper, the better.) This paper will constitute the remaining 30 percent of the grade for the course.

Readings

I have not ordered books through the UCSD bookstore, which charges at least list price and sometimes a surcharge for university press books. I suggest you order online or directly from the publisher. Please be aware, however, that online orders can sometimes be subject to delays. You will want to order the books as soon as possible. Several of the recent books published by Cambridge University Press are outrageously priced and likely too recent to be available in the library. My apologies for this, but they are books I want to read and discuss. You may want to share copies.

Week 1, Jan. 9

Jonathan D. Caverley, *Democratic Militarism: Voting, Wealth and War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Week 2, Jan. 16

Jessica Green, *Rethinking Private Authority: Agents and Entrepreneurs in Global Environmental Governance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Week 3, Jan. 23

Phillip Y. Lipsky, *Renegotiating the World Order: Institutional Change in International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Week 4, Jan. 30

Elizabeth Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

Week 5, Feb. 6

Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Week 6, Feb. 13

Michael J. Hiscox, *International Trade and Political Conflict: Commerce, Coalitions, and Mobility* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Week 7, Feb. 20

Joshua D. Kertzer, *Resolve in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

Week 8, Feb. 27

Aila M. Matanock, *Electing Peace: From Civil Conflict to Political Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Week 9, March 6

David A. Lake, *U.S. Power and World Order: The International Political Economy of International Hierarchy*. Chapter 2 (draft) and TBA.

Week 10, March 13

David A. Lake, *U.S. Power and World Order: The International Political Economy of International Hierarchy*. Additional chapters TBA.

Guide for Critiques:

The critical analyses and our discussion in weeks 1-8 should address the following questions. You do not need to follow these questions in any rigid format, but every analysis should be sure to address every question. You may find it useful to consult the author's CV, articles by other authors they engage, and the writings of their dissertation supervisors and other mentors.

A. General:

1. What is the argument?
2. Why is it important? What does it contribute to the stock of human knowledge?

B. Sociology of Knowledge:

3. Why did this person, from this graduate program, at this time write the dissertation that became this book?
4. What theoretical debates were occurring in the field at the time? Who is being addressed? Who is the author arguing against?
5. Who were his/her advisors – and what ideas were “in the air” in his/her graduate program at the time? If not their dissertation advisors, who were the critical mentors in shaping the ideas in this book?
6. What real world events promoted this particular inquiry?

C. Critical Evaluation:

7. Is the theory deductively valid?
 - a. What are the assumptions?
 - b. Do the propositions follow logically from the assumptions?
8. Are the hypotheses deductively valid? That is, do the hypotheses follow logically from the propositions?
9. Are the constructs valid? Are the IV and DV operationalized appropriately?
10. Are the tests internally valid? How serious are the threats to causal inference?
11. What other tests might have been conducted? Is there room for improvement?
12. Is the theory and test externally valid?

D. Overall evaluation:

13. Is the work persuasive?
14. Is it progressive? That is, is theory extended to uncover “new” facts?
15. What directions for new research does it suggest?