

International Relations 513  
Social Scientific and Historical Research Methods: Introduction to Research Design

Spring 2006

Instructor

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Office Hours: 11:30-12:30, Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment

Class Blackboard Site

The site will contain basic information that is essential to the course, such as the schedule for seminar leadership, review sheets for exams and themes for classroom discussion.

Course Description

This course is intended as an introduction to social scientific and historical methods for International Relations, with an emphasis on research design. The semester unfolds in four parts.

The first part, which consists of four sessions, will focus on International Relations as a discipline. The first session is an overview of the course as a whole. The second and third sessions, respectively, introduce major approaches and methodological orientations. Session four provides an overview of substantive fields.

The second part, with three sessions, pertains to philosophy of science, paradigms and progress. The first and second sessions focus on applications of the concept of a research paradigm to assessment of a range of areas, while the third session features an attempt to synthesize perspectives and assess scientific progress for one of the most prominent approaches in the discipline over the last quarter-century, namely, structural realism.

The third part, with three sessions, focuses on historical, case-oriented methods. Session one introduces a major work that criticizes 'traditional' research based on case studies, while session two consists of responses. The third session is devoted to the ways in which political scientists and historians may be able to inform each other about the study of International Relations.

The fourth and final part, with three sessions, pertains to the research process. The first session provides an overview of the research process, which includes subjects such as research design and the writing of a research report. Session two covers experiments, surveys and ethics. The third session focuses on field research, available data, multiple methods and basic data analysis.

### Course Requirements

Take-Home Mid-term Examination (Mar. 22 – due March 29 at 9 a.m.)	15%
Take-Home Final Examination (April 26 – due May 2 at 9 a.m.)	25%
Review Essay (due Feb. 15, two-page outline due Feb. 1)	20%
Research Design Essay (due April 26, one-page outline due April 12)	10%
Seminar Leadership	15%
Class Participation	15%

Review sheets (i.e., study guides) will be provided on Blackboard so you can prepare effectively for the take-home mid-term and final exams. All of the material from the assigned readings and class discussions will be tested on the exams. The mid-term will appear on email on March 22 at 9 a.m. and a ten-page, double-spaced answer is due by 9 a.m. on March 29. The respective dates for the final exam are April 26 and May 2. The final exam will be 15 double-spaced pages.

The review essay, limited to 15 double-spaced pages, is due in class on Feb. 15. The format is straightforward. I expect you to provide a critique of research in a major area within one of the substantive fields of International Relations. Your essay should be based upon (approximately) ten articles or book chapters from the last decade. The topic and bibliography should be identified through discussion with me. Examples of review essays appear in International Studies Review. A two-page outline and bibliography for your paper is due on Feb. 1 or there will be a 20% penalty on the final paper. This should be sent to me for review and approval via email. Please do visit with me as you begin to put together your outline. I expect to see a proposal for a paper that offers constructive criticism and some ideas for synthesis in a significant area of the literature in International Relations.

The research design essay, limited to seven double-spaced pages and due in class on April 26, will focus on questions related to the research process in a specific area of interest. You will be asked to identify a theory in an area that interests you, isolate a hypothesis based on that theory and, in effect, address the range of research design issues that arise along the way. More specific instructions will be made available to you later in

the semester but well ahead of the deadline of April 12 for your one-page outline. As with the other essay, there will be a 20% penalty if you do not hand in the outline on time.

Each student will take a turn as seminar leader at one point during the semester. The date at which you will serve as seminar leader will be determined by a lottery held in the first class session. (Trades between students are permitted but must be approved in advance by the instructor.) The seminar leader is expected to (a) prepare a set of discussion points about the material and (b) take primary responsibility for leading the discussion throughout the seminar session. The discussion points are due to on Blackboard at the beginning of the week before your session as seminar leader. For example, if you are seminar leader for April 12, your material is due on April 5 at 9 a.m.

Your participation is essential to the success of this seminar. Thus a grade for participation in sessions other than those for which you are seminar leader also is included. Participation is not the same as attendance. I expect each of you to play an active role in our discussions each week.

All assignments are subject to change as noted in class, although none is expected at this time.

Be sure to back up all of your computer files. Do not turn in your only copy of any requirement.

The grading scale is as follows: A (90-100); B (80-89); C (70-79); D (60-69); F (< 60).

### Americans with Disabilities Act

Students requesting accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday 8:30-5:00. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is 213-740-0776. Students must make their request in the stipulated period prior to an exam.

### Make-up Requirements

There will be no make-up assignments or tests for unexcused absences. Acceptable excuses, meaning medical or family emergencies and official university-related business, must be provided either to me in person, in writing, or by phone before an absence and in writing afterwards in order to be considered. Students who are unable to complete a requirement for legitimate reasons that do not qualify as excused under university guidelines, and who notify me ahead of time may, at my discretion, complete a

requirement belatedly. Any requirement turned in on the day that it is due but after the time specified will face a 20% penalty. Each additional late day will mean a further 20% deduction.

### Policy on Academic Ethics and Honesty

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

### Required Textbooks

Please buy the following books. Any previous edition of one of these books is not acceptable as a substitute. Each book available at the bookstore:

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier, eds. Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

Brecher, Michael, and Frank P. Harvey, eds. Millennial Reflections on International Studies (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

Elman, Colin, and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds. Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

Elman, Colin, and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds. Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

James, Patrick. International Relations and Scientific Progress: Structural Realism Reconsidered (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2002).

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Singleton Jr., Royce A., and Bruce C. Straits, Approaches to Social Research 4th. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

## Schedule

### Part I: International Relations as a Discipline

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|----------|----|---|
| January  | 11 | Introduction  |
|          | 18 | Approaches to International Relations as a Discipline<br>Brecher and Wilkenfeld, pp. 1-280.<br>Alker, on Blackboard.                            |
|          | 25 | Methodological Orientations to International Relations<br>Brecher and Harvey, pp. 283-475.  |
| February | 1  | Substantive Fields of International Relations<br>Brecher and Harvey, pp. 479-684.<br><br><u>Note</u> : Two-page outline of review essay is due. |
|          | 8  | <u>Class Cancelled</u><br><br><u>Note</u> : Open date to work on review essay.  |

### Part II: Philosophy of Science, Paradigms and Progress

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|-------|----|---|
|       | 15 | Assessing Paradigms, I<br><br>Elman and Elman, <u>Progress in International Relations Theory</u> , vii-xii, pp. 1-243.<br><br><u>Note</u> : Review essay is due in class. |
|       | 22 | Assessing Paradigms, II<br><br>Elman and Elman, pp. 245-494.  |
| March | 1  | The Case of Structural Realism<br><br>James, entire.  |

Part III: Historical, Case-Oriented Methods

8 Scientific Inference and Case Studies

King, Keohane and Verba, entire.

Note: The formal examples (pp. 65, 70, 71-74, 95-97, 97-99, 121-122, 123-124, 161-163, 166-168, 175-176, 184-185, 195-196) are not required reading.

Odell, on Blackboard.

Note: Study guide on Blackboard for mid-term exam.

15 Class Cancelled

Spring Break.

22 Class Cancelled

Note: Take-home Mid-term examination (on Blackboard on Mar. 22 at 9 a.m. and due March 29 at 9 a.m.).

29 The Critics Respond

Brady and Collier, entire.

April 5 Historians, Political Scientists and International Relations

Elman and Elman, Bridges and Boundaries, pp. 1-110, 137-358, 385-416.

Part IV: The Research Process

12 An Overview of the Research Process

Singleton and Straits, pp. 1-152, 540-556.

Note: One-page outline for research design essay is due.

Note: Study guide on Blackboard for final exam.

19 Research Methods: Experiments, Surveys and Ethics

Singleton and Straits, pp. 155-305, 515-539.

- 26 Research Methods: Field Research, Available Data, Multiple Methods and Basic Data Analysis

Singleton and Straits, pp. 306-408, 445-482.

Note: Research Design Essay Due In Class.

Note: Take-Home Exam (available on email at 9 a.m. and due May 2 at 9 a.m.).