

Methods for Studying International Relations/ World Politics

Syllabus

Summer 2016

Professor Detlef F. Sprinz, Ph.D.

Purpose and Contents

The purpose of this methods seminar is to provide students with an overview of the main methods used in international relations/world politics research, incl. experimental methods, case studies, quantitative methods, and formal models. Central to this course is the *application* of methods. Students who have successfully taken this course will be prepared to make methodology-related decisions in their future research (e.g., MA thesis) and take more specialized methods courses.

Logistics

Time: → *Course Overview*

Location: University of Potsdam, Griebnitzsee, 3.06.S12 (check email for additional sessions)

Study Areas:

- MA Internationale Beziehungen (U Potsdam, FU Berlin, HU Berlin)
- MA Political Science (U Potsdam) (please verify with Dr. Kletzin, SoWi Examination Board)
- MA Verwaltungswissenschaft (U Potsdam) (please verify with Dr. Kletzin, SoWi Examination Board)

Prerequisites:

- Enrollment in an eligible MA program.

Course Registration: <https://puls.uni-potsdam.de> (Course Number: 428111). If you do not have access to this registration facility, please contact the coordinator of your *program*).

Capacity:

- 25 students. Priority will be given to students with mandatory curricular requirements.

ECTS Credits: 10

Remarks:

- This course is especially targeted to students of the MA Internationale Beziehungen as well as students interested in broad exposure to methods.
- The seminar is an intensive reading course with frequent assignments.
- It is important *not* to underestimate the workload! Start reading as early as possible and use any intermissions to go ahead with your readings.

Course website: <https://moodle2.uni-potsdam.de/course/view.php?id=10326>

Contact Details:

dsprinz@uni-potsdam.de (include "Methods IR 2016" in the subject line)

Skype: sprinz.teaching

Office Hours: by appointment

www.sprinz.org

Code of Conduct

All students are assumed to be familiar with and will abide by the rules of proper academic conduct as specified by the University of Potsdam and their respective inter-university academic programs. In case various programs and universities offer different rules and procedures, the more stringent code of conduct will apply. You are expected to undertake all your assignments independently of other students. By submitting your first assignment, you agree to abide by these rules.

In the past, some students appeared to have fallen in love with around-the-clock reachability, their smartphones, tablets, social networks, etc. During our seminar sessions, I expect you to concentrate on this course.

Course Requirements

This seminar combines

- intensive readings *in advance* of the sessions, and
- a series of 4 short papers (dual degree MAIB students: 2 papers) (see below for details).

The short papers will be written according to the schedule (see below) and are 500-750 words *each* in length (everything included).

In the papers, you should *not* review the material covered in the required readings; it is assumed that you have read it. Instead, focus on the assignment (read the instructions carefully!) and innovate in a way not found in the readings. Leave the reader with the impression that *your* ideas have been carefully chosen and could be expanded upon in a longer paper. Please note that keeping it short is the art of structuring one's mind and concentrating on the main points rather than on peripheral considerations. It is more difficult to write a convincing short paper than a long paper!

Papers include your student ID number (no names, please), university, paper & module number (see overview), and word count (all included) on the first page. At a minimum, leave one inch margins from all four edges of A4-sized sheets. Footnotes are strongly discouraged. All text is 1.5-spaced, 11-12 point font. Paper length will be strictly enforced. Papers shall be submitted – in PDF format – via Moodle2 by the due date and time (→*Course Overview*). Missing the deadline will incur a penalty of one third of a full grade per hour. Extensions will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances, following written petition.

Students are expected to attend *all* sessions. In case you cannot submit assignments due to medical reasons, you must submit an appropriate medical certificate. In addition, in case you need accommodations (“Nachteilsausgleich”), please inform the instructor to this effect ahead of time and provide the necessary documentation.

Course Requirements & Grading

Assignments: Four short papers, each weighting 25%.

Students who do not need a course grade (e.g., dual degree MAIB students) have to actively participate in the course and submit at least two papers at the level of a passing grade.

Sustained oral engagement in the seminar is expect of *every* student.

Textbook

The following textbook is used throughout this course and has been put on reserve at the University Library at Griebnitzsee:

Sprinz, Detlef F., and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias (eds.). 2004. *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press [henceforth: *Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias. 2004*].

Course Overview

| Part | Module | Date | Time | Topic | Assignment |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Introduction | 1 | 21 April 2016 | 10:00-11:30h | Course Overview | |
| What If - Counterfactuals | 2 | 21 April 2016 | 11:35-13:05h | Counterfactuals in Political Science | in class readings |
| Epistemological Foundations | 3 | 28 April 2016 | 14:00-15:30h | Select Epistemological Foundations | |
| Experiments | 4 | 28 April 2016 | 15:45-17:15h | Experimental Design (1) | |
| | 5 | 12 May 2016 | 14:00-15:30h | Experimental Design (2) | #1: Investment dashboard paper (due 11 May 2016, noon) |
| Case Study Methods | 6 | 12 May 2016 | 15:45-17:15h | Case Study Methods (1) | |
| | 7 | 26 May 2016 | 14:00-15:30h | Case Study Methods (2) | #2: Case study paper critique (due 25 May 2016, noon) |
| Quantitative Methods | 8 | 26 May 2016 | 15:45-17:15h | Quantitative Methods (1) | |

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|------------------------------|----|--------------|--------------|---|---|
| | 9 | 02 June 2016 | 14:00-15:30h | Quantitative Methods (2) | #3: Systematic abstract of statistical journal (due 01 June 2016, noon) |
| Formal Modeling: Game Theory | 10 | 02 June 2016 | 15:45-17:15h | Game Theory (1) | |
| | 11 | 09 June 2016 | 14:00-15:30h | Game Theory(2) | #4: Prisoner's Dilemma paper (due 08 June 2016, noon) |
| Review & Outlook | 12 | 09 June 2016 | 15:45-17:15h | What Have We Learned ? – A Review & Outlook | |
| Backup | | t.b.d. | t.b.d. | | |

Modules and Assignments

Additional required or additional readings may be announced throughout the course.

Module 1: Course Overview

Overview of the Course & Requirements – Q&A

Module 2: Counterfactuals

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Select readings, in class, from Economist. 2015. The World If. Available from <http://worldif.economist.com/>.

Additional Readings:

Economist. 2015. The World If. Available from <http://worldif.economist.com/>.
 Tetlock, Philip E., and Aaron Belkin. 1996. Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics - Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives. In Tetlock, Philip E. and Aaron Belkin (eds.) *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics - Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1-38.

Module 3: Select Epistemological Foundations

Colloquium

Required Readings:

- Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias. 2004. ch. 1,
www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472098616-intro.pdf.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, ch. 1,
press.princeton.edu/chapters/s5458.pdf.
- Lakatos, Imre. 1986. Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes. In: Lakatos, Imre and Alan Musgrave (ed.): *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 91-138 & 173-180.
- Anonymous. 2015. The Case of the Hypothesis That Never Was; Uncovering the Deceptive Use of Post Hoc Hypotheses. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 24(2): 214-216, doi:10.1177/1056492614567042.

Additional Readings:

- Wendt, Alexander (1999): *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-44.

Module 4: Experiments (1)

Colloquium

Required Readings:

- Angrist, Joshua. D. and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2015. *Mastering 'Metrics - The Path from Cause to Effect*. Princeton and Oxford. Princeton University Press, xi-33.
- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, et al. 2011. Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts. In Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski and A. Lupia (eds.) *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge, NY, Cambridge University Press: 15-26.
- Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams (2008). Experimentation in Political Science. In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady and David Collier (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 340-356.
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green (2008). Field Experiments and Natural Experiments. In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady and David Collier (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 356-381.

Additional Readings:

- Gerring, John. 2005. Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Sciences. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17 (2): 163-198,
jtp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/17/2/163?gca=17%2F2%2F163&sendit=Get+All+Checked+Abstract%28s%29&.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, ch. 3.

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald Thomas Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs For Generalized Causal Inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1-102.

Module 5: Experiments (2)

Colloquium

First Paper Due on 11 May 2016, noon, to be submitted via Moodle2.

Required Readings:

Ellis, Cali M. and Rahul Sami. 2012. Learning Political Science with Prediction Markets: An Experimental Study. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45(2): 277-284, dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511002113.

Economist. (2016). GDP is a Bad Gauge of Material Well-Being. Time For a Fresh Approach. *Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21697834-gdp-bad-gauge-material-well-being-time-fresh-approach-how-measure-prosperity>.

Economist. 2016. The Trouble With GDP, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21697845-gross-domestic-product-gdp-increasingly-poor-measure-prosperity-it-not-even>.

Jensen, Nathan M., Bumba Mukherjee and William T. Bernhard. 2014. Introduction: Survey and Experimental Research in International Political Economy. *International Interactions* 40(3): 287-304. doi: 10.1080/03050629.2014.899222.

Mintz, Alex, Yi Yang, and Rose McDermott. 2011. Experimental Approaches to International Relations. *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 493-501, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00662.x/pdf.

Tingley, Dustin. H. 2011. The Dark Side of the Future: An Experimental Test of Commitment Problems in Bargaining. *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 521-544, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00654.x/pdf.

Paper: You will be given access to information on a stock market competition between three major groups (Investment Dartboard). Please review the history of all completed and the “current” competitions. Subsequently analyze and summarize the findings and evaluate them from a methodological perspective (see readings for Modules 2-5). The relevant files will be supplied to you via Moodle2.

Additional Readings:

Economist (2012). Experimental Psychology - The Roar of the Crowd. *Economist*. 26 May 2012, www.economist.com/node/21555876/print.

International Interactions. 2014. vol. 40(3): Special Issue: Survey Research and Experiments in International Political Economy.

Sekhon, Jasjeet. S. and Rocio Titiunik (2012). When Natural Experiments Are Neither Natural nor Experiments. *American Political Science Review* 106(1): 35-57, doi:10.1017/S0003055411000542.

McDermott, Rose. 2011. New Directions for Experimental Work in International Relations. *International Studies Quarterly* 55(2): 503-520, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00656.x/pdf.

Module 6: Case Study Methods (1)

Colloquium

Required Readings:

- Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias. 2004. ch. 2.
- Gerring, John. 2004. What Is A Case Study and What Is It Good For? *American Political Science Review* 98 (2):341-354,
[dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404001182](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404001182).
- Collier, David. 2011. Understanding Process Tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(04): 823-830,
polisci.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/people/u3827/Understanding%20Process%20Tracing.pdf.
- Qualitative and Multi-Method Research. 2012. Symposium: John Gerring's *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework* (2012). Qualitative and Multi-Method Research 10(1), 1-27,
www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/moynihan/cqrm/Newsletter10_1.pdf.

Additional Readings:

- George, Alexander L, and Andrew Bennett (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Thomas, George (2005): The Qualitative Foundations of Political Science Methodology. *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (4):855-866,
[dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1537592705050486](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592705050486).

Module 7: Case Study Methods (2)

Second Paper Due on 25 May 2016, noon, to be submitted via Moodle2.

Colloquium

Required Readings:

- Steinberg, Paul F. 2015. Can We Generalize from Case Studies? *Global Environmental Politics* 15(3): 152-175, doi: 10.1162/GLEP_a_00316.
- Seawright, Jason and John Gerring. 2008. Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research. *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 294-308,
people.bu.edu/jgerring/documents/CaseSelection.pdf.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas. 1996. Strategies for Studying Causation in Complex Ecological-Political Systems. *Journal of Environment and Development* 5 (2): 132-148.

Additional Readings:

- Brady, Henry E., and David Collier (eds.). 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, esp. chs. 12+13.
- Marx, Axel, Benoit Rihoux, et al. (2014). The Origins, Development, and Application of Qualitative Comparative Analysis: The First 25 Years. *European Political Science Review* 6(1): 115-142, [dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1755773912000318](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773912000318).
- Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York, N.Y.: Wiley-Interscience.
- Schwartz, Daniel M., Tom Deligiannis, and Thomas F. Homer-Dixon. 2000. The Environment and Violent Conflict: A Response to Gleditsch's Critique and Some Suggestions for Future Research. *Environmental Change & Security Project Report*, Issue 6.

Paper: Homer-Dixon (1996) presents a comparative case research strategy for the investigation of environmental security problems. Which are the main advantages *and* disadvantages of his approach?

Module 8: Quantitative Methods (1)

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias. 2004. chs. 6-9.

Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz (2006). A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227-249, web.archive.org/web/20150215062349/http://jamesmahoney.org/articles/A%20Tale%20of%20Two%20Cultures%20Proofs.pdf.

Module 9: Quantitative Methods (2)

Third Paper Due on 01 June 2016, noon, to be submitted via Moodle2.

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Economist. 2013. Problems with Scientific Research - How Science Goes Wrong. Economist. 19 Oct. 2013, www.economist.com/node/21588069/print.

Economist. 2013. Unreliable Research - Trouble at the Lab. Economist, 19 Oct. 2013, www.economist.com/node/21588057/print

Schrodt, Philip A. 2014. Seven Deadly Sins of Contemporary Quantitative Political Analysis. *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 287-300, jpr.sagepub.com/content/51/2/287.full.pdf+html.

Additional Readings:

Goldstone, Jack A. et al. 2000. State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings, www.cidcm.umd.edu/publications/papers/SFTF%20Phase%20III%20Report%20Final.pdf.

King, Gary, and Langche Zeng. 2001. Improving Forecasts of State Failure, *World Politics* 53: 623-658, gking.harvard.edu/files/civil.pdf.

Paper: Abstract a quantitative article from the 2014, 2015, or 2016 volumes or online advanced publication of an international relations or political science journal (e.g., American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, Conflict and Cooperation, International Interactions, International Studies Quarterly, International Organization, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Peace Research, World Politics, etc.) using the Singer & Packer (2003) tableau (→Moodle2). The goal of this exercise is to abstract an international relations article according to predefined categories and to focus on the interplay of theory and methodology. Please enclose an electronic copy of the journal article with your paper.

Module 10: Game Theory (1)

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias (2004), chs. 10-14.

Quealy, Kevin. 2016. Lessons From Game Theory: What Keeps Kasich in the Race?,
The New York Times, 24 Feb. 2016,
<http://nyti.ms/21gpziv>.

Additional Readings:

Morrow, James D. 1994. *Game Theory for Political Scientists*. Princeton, N.J.:
Princeton University Press.

Hovi, Jon, Robert Huseby, and Detlef F. Sprinz (2005): When Do (Imposed)
Economic Sanctions Work? *World Politics* 57 (4):479-499,
<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/197267/pdf>.

Module 11: Game Theory (2)

Fourth Paper Due on 08 June 2016, noon, to be submitted via Moodle2.

Prisoners' Dilemma Game Played in Class

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Weingast, Barry. 2002. Rational Choice Institutionalism. In: Katznelson, Ira and
Helen Milner (eds.): *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. New York,
NY: W W Norton, 660-692.

Cameron, Charles M. and Rebecca Morton. 2002. Formal Theory Meets Data. In:
Katznelson, Ira and Helen Milner (eds.): *Political Science: The State of the
Discipline*. New York, NY: W W Norton, 784-804.

Additional Readings:

Walt, Stephen M. 1999: Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security
Studies. *International Security* 23: 5-48 & discussion in vol. 24, issue 2.

Paper: Discuss the Prisoner's Dilemma (PD) game: For which types of problems in
international relations/world politics is the PD game a good representation
and for which types of problems is it inadequate?

Module 12: What Have We Learned ? – A Review & Outlook

Review & Outlook
Course Evaluation

Required Readings:

Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias. 2004. chs. 1 + 15.

Eakin, Emily. 2000. Think Tank, Political Scientists Leading a Revolt, Not Studying
One. *The New York Times*, 04 Nov. 2000.

- Mertens, Donna M. 2015. Mixed Methods and Wicked Problems. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 9(1): 3-6, doi: 10.1177/1558689814562944.
- Jackson, John. 2012. On the Origins of the Society. *The Political Methodologist* 19(2): 2-7,
http://johnbeielser.org/code/downloads/tpm_v19_n2.pdf

Additional Readings:

- American Political Science Review. 1993. Review Symposium: The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation: Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba's Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research. *American Political Science Review* 89 (2): 454-481,
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8761871&fileId=S0003055400096490>.
- Caucus for a New Political Science. 2001. The Perestroika-Glasnost "Revolt." Caucus for a New Political Science. *Newsletter of the New Political Science Section of APSA* 9(2)
- Moses, Jonathan, Benoit Rihoux, and Bernhard Kittel. 2005. Mapping Political Methodology. *European Political Science* 4:55-68,
www.svt.ntnu.no/iss/jonathon.moses/personal/eps%20methodology.pdf.