

Methods for Studying International Relations/ World Politics

Syllabus

Summer 2014

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 and take more advanced methods courses.

Logistics

Time & Specific Location (→Course Overview)

Study Areas:

- MA Internationale Beziehungen (U Potsdam, FU Berlin, HU Berlin)
- MA Political Science: Internationale Politikfeldforschung (U Potsdam)
- MA Verwaltungswissenschaft – Public Policy: Internationale Politikfeldforschung (U Potsdam)
- Master of Public Management (U Potsdam)
- Deutsch-Russischer Master Verwaltungswissenschaft (U Potsdam)

Prerequisites:

- Enrollment in an eligible MA program.

Course Registration: <https://puls.uni-potsdam.de> (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 all students interested in broad exposure to methods.
- The seminar is an intensive reading course with weekly assignments.
- It is important not to underestimate the workload! Start reading as early as possible and use the hiatus in the beginning of the course to get ahead with your readings.

Course website: <https://moodle.uni-potsdam.de> (to be developed). Students from outside the University of Potsdam should contact moodle-team@uni-potsdam.de.

Contact Details:

dsprinz@uni-potsdam.de (include “Methods IR 2014” 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. You are expected to undertake all your assignments independently of other students. By submitting your first assignment, you agree to abide by these rules.

Select students appear to have fallen in love with around-the-clock reachability and social networks. During our seminar sessions, I expect you to concentrate on this course.

Course Requirements

This seminar combines

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

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 first and last names, student ID number, name of university, paper & module number (see overview), and word count 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 Moodle 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.

Course Requirements & Grading

Short Papers: Four short papers, each weighting 17.5%. Short Paper total = 70%.
 Oral Participation: 30%.

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.

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	Location	Topic	Assignment
Introduction	1	07 April 2014	17:00-18:15 h	Building 6, S 14	Course Overview	
Epistemological Foundations	2	10 April 2014	8:45-10:15 h	Building 6, S 12	Epistemological Foundations	
Experiments	3	10 April 2014	10:30-11:00 h	Building 6, S 12	Experimental Design (1)	
	4	15 May 2014	8:45-10:15 h	Building 6, S 12	Experimental Design (2)	#1: Investment dashboard paper (due 14 May 2014, noon, via Moodle)
Case Study Methods	5	15 May 2014	10:30-12:00 h	Building 6, S 12	Case Study Methods (1)	
	6	22 May 2014	8:45-10:15 h	Building 6, S 12	Case Study Methods (2)	#2: Case study paper critique (due 21 May 2014, noon, via Moodle)
Quantitative Methods	7	22 May 2014	10:30-12:00 h	Building 6, S 12	Quantitative Methods (1)	

	8	26 May 2014	13:00- 15:00 h	PIK, place t.b.d., www.pik- potsdam. de/ contact/ where	Guest Lecture	Prof. Martin L. Weitzman: Climate Sensitivity and Some Speculative Implications for Modeling Fat-Tailed Catastrophes
	9	05 June 2014	8:45- 10:15 h	Building 6, S 13	Quantitative Methods (2)	#3: Systematic abstract of statistical journal (due 04 June 2014, noon, via Moodle)
Formal Modeling: Game Theory	10	05 June 2014	10:30- 12:00 h	Building 6, S 13	Game Theory (1)	
	11	12 June 2014	8:45- 10:15 h	Building 6, S 12	Game Theory(2)	#4: Prisoner's dilemma paper (due 11 June 2014, noon, via Moodle)
Review & Outlook	12	12 June 2014	10:30- 12:00 h	Building 6, S 12	What Have We Learned ? – A Review & Outlook	
Backup		19 June 2014	8:45- 12:00	Building 6, S 12	Backup	

All regular sessions take place at the University of Potsdam, Griebnitzsee.

Modules and Assignments

Module 1: Course Overview

Overview of the Course & Requirements

Module 2: 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,

www.pupress.princeton.edu/chapters/s5458.pdf#search=%22ing%20keohane%20verba%22.

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.

Additional Readings:

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

Module 3: Experiments (1)

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, et al. (2011). Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski and A. Lupia. Cambridge, NY, Cambridge University Press: 15-26.

Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams (2008). Experimentation in Political Science. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 340-356.

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green (2008). Field Experiments and Natural Experiments. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 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 4: Experiments (2)

Colloquium

First Paper Due on 14 May 2014, noon, to be submitted via Moodle.

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](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511002113) .
- Economist (2012). Experimental Psychology - The Roar of the Crowd. *Economist*. 26 May 2012,
www.economist.com/node/21555876/print .
- 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 .
- 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 .
- 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 2-4). The relevant files will be supplied to you via Moodle.

Module 5: 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 6: Case Study Methods (2)

Second Paper Due on 21 May 2014, noon, (see details below), to be submitted via Moodle.

Colloquium

Required Readings:

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.

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 7: 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, www.jamesmahoney.org/articles/A%20Tale%20of%20Two%20Cultures%20Proofs.pdf.

Module 8: Prof. Martin L. Weitzman (Harvard University): Climate Sensitivity and Some Speculative Implications for Modeling Fat-Tailed Catastrophes

Date & Time: 26 May 2014, 13:00-15:00 h

Location: PIK, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, location: t.b.d.

Required Readings:

Weitzman, Martin. L. (2014). Fat Tails and the Social Cost of Carbon. manuscript.
scholar.harvard.edu/files/weitzman/files/fattaileduncertaintyeconomics.pdf

Weitzman, Martin L. (2011). Fat-Tailed Uncertainty in the Economics of Catastrophic Climate Change. *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy* 5(2): 275-292,
scholar.harvard.edu/files/weitzman/files/fattaileduncertaintyeconomics.pdf .

Module 9: Quantitative Methods (2)

Third Paper Due on 04 June 2014, noon (see details below), to be submitted via Moodle.

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, J. A. et al. (2000). State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings,
www.cidcm.umd.edu/publications/papers/SFTF%20Phase%20III%20Report%20Final.pdf (*browse*).

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 2012, 2013, or 2014 volumes or online for advance 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 (-> Moodle). 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.

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, muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v057/57.4hovi.pdf.

Module 11: Game Theory (2)

Fourth Paper Due on 11 June 2014, noon (see details below), to be submitted via Moodle.

Prisoners' Dilemma Game Played in Class

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.

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, dx.doi.org/10.2307/2082426.
- 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#search=%22%22mapping%20political%20methodology%22%20moses%22.