Theoretical Issues in International Political Economy

Description

This course is designed as an advanced seminar, with two objectives in mind. The first is to broaden your horizons beyond the conventional literature of International Political Economy (IPE) that is available in the United States, to emphasize the full variety and breadth of IPE scholarship as it is practiced around the world. The second is to give you an opportunity to undertake a substantial writing project, as described below. The writing assignment should make the seminar of particular interest to anyone thinking of eventually doing a dissertation on a subject related to IPE. A prerequisite for the seminar is PS 273 or equivalent.

The seminar will meet weekly. The first eight meetings will be devoted to discussion of the required readings for the course. The last two weeks will be reserved for oral presentations based on your individual writing projects. Your final grade will be based on the quality of your class participation and oral presentations as well as on your writing project, which must be submitted in final form no later than Friday June 12.

Readings

The purpose of the readings is to give you a sense of the full breadth of the field of International Political Economy as it presently exists in various parts of the world and how the field has evolved over time. You will be expected to do all the assigned reading as outlined below. You may wish to purchase the following book, since it will be read in its entirety:


The book may be purchased directly from the publisher, Amazon.com, or any other reputable source. Electronic copies of all the other readings will be provided via GauchoSpace, which you can download at your own pace.
Course requirements/grades

Students will be required to attend all scheduled sessions of the seminar, to do all the reading for each week as assigned, and to participate fully and constructively in class discussion. Any absence must be justified by a valid excuse.

In addition, you will be required to undertake a substantial writing project. Each student should consult with me as soon as possible about your project, since a single quarter does not provide a lot of time for delay. Please get in touch immediately to make an appointment. I will do everything I can to get you properly started and to help you realize your individual objectives.

Your writing project may take one of two forms. The choice will be up to you.

Option 1. Research paper. One possibility is to prepare a paper that could be presented at a professional meeting or submitted to a refereed journal for publication. The paper may focus on any current or historical issue related to the field of IPE. Since time is limited, this option should be chosen only if you have already begun a project that you think might, with further work, ultimately be presentable or publishable. This seminar can provide you with the opportunity to upgrade what you have accomplished to date.

If you choose this option, I will first need to see what you have accomplished so far, in order to be in a position to judge how much progress you make over the ten weeks of the seminar. Your prior work should be submitted to me no later than Tuesday April 14, together with a memo outlining what additional work you intend to do on this project in the next weeks.

Option 2. Research proposal. Alternatively, you may prepare a formal research proposal on a topic of your choice, selected in consultation with me. Again, the paper may focus on any current or historical issue related to the field of IPE. The purpose of this option is to give you experience in the design and implementation of a formal research project. You may use the opportunity as a first step toward preparation of a future dissertation prospectus. Alternatively, you may have a conference presentation or journal article in mind.

If you choose this option, you will be expected to complete an outline of your project for my review no later than Tuesday April 14. The outline should be a minimum of 3-5 pages in length and, inter alia, should begin to address the following questions:

1. Subject. What is the central issue? Why is it important or interesting? What specific research questions and/or hypotheses would you plan to investigate?
2. Context. How does your topic fit in the existing scholarly literature? What are the relevant concepts or models? Would you expect your research to represent a logical extension or refinement of conventional views, a refutation, or a new departure?
3. Research design. What would be the appropriate analytical strategy for dealing with your topic? What would be the working premises or assumptions of your research? What methodology (or methodologies) would be most suitable? What data or other source materials would you need, and where would you find them?
4. **Contributions.** What would be your claim to scholarly originality? What new insight or information would you expect to provide? What would be implications for future research?

Whichever option you choose, a full first draft will be due by Friday **May 22**, so that everyone in the seminar can have a chance to review your work before it is presented on either May 26 or June 2. For each student’s work, one other student will be assigned to prepare a brief commentary to get discussion started. The commentary should not summarize the project but rather should concentrate on constructive criticism. What points of strength or weakness can be identified? What questions are raised? What improvements might be made?

Final papers are no later than Friday **June 12**.
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<td>March 31</td>
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<td>May 26</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
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Readings

March 31  American school


April 7  America’s “Left-Out”


Benjamin J. Cohen (1973), *The Question of Imperialism*, chs. 4-5.


April 14       British school


April 21       Britain’s “Far-Out”


April 28  Continental Europe


May 5  Latin America


May 12  China


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May 19  A Global Conversation?


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May 26, June 2  Class presentations