

Department of International Relations
BILKENT UNIVERSITY

IR 227: Research Methods
Fall 2009

Lectures: WED 13.40, 14.40

FRI 15.40

Classroom: AZ 27

Instructor

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Office Hours: TUE 15.30-16.30 and WED 15.30-16.30

Course Description

This course aims at providing the student with the basic tools of conducting research and writing papers in international politics. The key concepts are scientific methods, theories, variables, hypotheses, causal relations, inferences, arguments, and explanations. Students are expected to formulate research questions, conduct projects, understand and evaluate research on their own by the end of the course.

The course is organized around three interconnected parts. The first part presents the basic foundations of research focusing on how different IR theories deal with explanations. The second part contains quantitative and qualitative tools including elementary statistical methods and games. The third part provides guidance in designing, writing research papers, and types of dissertations students may find appealing to their research interests. In essence, the first two parts give the theoretical nuts and bolts of IR research and the last one focuses upon writing.

Students will choose a question about international politics at the start and will try to advance their research by applying the concepts and methods presented in lectures. Their work will progress parallel to the course content and will therefore constitute and indicate a dynamic learning process. The students will present their advances encouraging a scholarly discussion in class. The research and presentations make up student participation grades together with attendance. The absence on presentation periods will count as absence in two sessions.

Readings and Required Textbooks

The assigned readings for each week are listed in the course schedule below. There is a reasonable amount of readings for each week. Therefore, please do keep up with the readings each week. This class will be far more rewarding for you if you do so. Reading the material every week will enable you to be more engaged while listening to lectures and contributing to discussions. Both your exam and participation grades will be positively affected by reading the material on a regular basis and prior to class.

There are two required textbooks. The second textbook is a basic guide for writing a research paper for undergraduate students in international relations.

1. Laura Roselle and Sharon Spray, *Research and Writing in International Relations*, (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2008).
2. W. Lawrence Neuman, *Understanding Research*, New York: Pearson-Longman, 2009.

The other books you will use are:

3. Avinash Dixit and Susan Skeath, *Games of Strategy*, Norton. 2nd Edition. 2004.
4. Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores Hidden Side of Everything*. Harper Torch. 2005.
5. Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H.T. Reynolds. 2004. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th Edition. CQ Press: Washington DC.

Course Requirements

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|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Mid-Term Exam: | 30% |
| 2. Final Exam: | 40% |
| 3. Assignment (Research design paper) | 20% |
| 4. Presentation and participation | 10% |

Assignment:

- Students will use what they learn during the lectures via working on a research question that is interesting for themselves and related to different topics in international relations.
- The research design will be developed step by step by during the semester. Students will design a research proposal, make a literature review of related resources at the Bilkent Library and develop a research design to carry out the investigation.
- Students will first present her/his research question and design in class and submit a research proposal in the required format at the end of the course.

Attendance and Participation

Your progress in this class is highly dependent on your perfect attendance. Therefore, participation constitutes a substantial part of your grade.

Make-up Policy

No make-up examinations will be granted without a university-approved excuse to miss a scheduled exam or quiz. In cases of severe illness or deaths in the family, I require proof (e.g. a signed doctor's note and an explanation on the doctor's letterhead describing why you cannot take the exam; obituaries; e-mails from your academic adviser explaining the specific situation).

Make-up exams will be possible only if you contact me *in advance* by e-mail and provide me with the appropriate document. There will be no make-up assignments or tests for unexcused absences. Also, I usually require a research paper as a replacement of a make-up exam.

Office Hours

Please visit me during the following hours for questions regarding the class:
TUE 15.30-16.30 and WED 15.30-16.30

Classroom Etiquette

I expect you to observe all rules of proper classroom conduct to provide an appropriate environment conducive to learning by all:

1. Please turn off your cell phones and pagers. No calls, incoming or outgoing, or text messaging are allowed.
2. Please refrain from talking, eating or other disruptive activity during class;
3. Please come to class on time and do not leave early; if you must do so, let me know beforehand and please sit near the door so your exit will be less disruptive. Unpunctuality will result in a lower participation grade.
4. Please do not read newspapers or any other publications in the classroom. Also, please do not play games or surf on the web when you use a laptop computer.

Policy on Academic Honesty

The academic work of all students must comply with all policies that appear in the Bilkent Website: <http://www.provost.bilkent.edu.tr/procedures/AcademicHonesty.htm>

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. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to the following: cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession of examinations, unauthorized changing of grades. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

Course Schedule and Readings

PART I: Inquiry in Social Sciences, Why do research?

Week 1 (Sep. 10): Introduction to the course

Week 2 (Sep. 15 & 17): What is Science? What is Social Science?
“Studying Politics Scientifically” by Johnson and Reynolds.

Week 3 (Sep. 22&24): What is Theory? What is Methodology? Is political science a “science”?
Three “laws” in political science. Three different methods in political science.
Neuman Chp.1- Why do research?

Week 4 (Sep. 30 and Oct.2): Why do research?
Neuman Chp.1- Why do research?
Neuman Chp.2- Planning a Study
Freakonomics: “Hidden Side of Everything”

Week 5 (Oct. 7 & 9): Preparing for Research
Roselle and Spray Chp. 1& 2.
Becoming an Ethical Researcher: Chp.3 (Skim)
Freakonomics: How is the Ku Klux Klan Like a Group of real Estate Agents?

Week 6 (Oct. 14 & 16): Data Collection
Neuman Chp.4- Sampling
Neuman Chp.5- Measuring Social Life
Freakonomics: Why Do Drug Dealers Still Live with Their Mom?

PART II: Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Week 7 (Oct. 21 & 23): Surveys and Statistics
Neuman Chp.6- Survey: Asking People Questions
Neuman Chp.8- Research with nonreactive measures
Freakonomics: Why Do Drug Dealers Still Live with Their Mom?

Week 8 (Oct. 27): **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 9 (Nov. 4 & 6): Variables, Hypotheses and Statistical Analysis
Neuman Chp.9- Making sense of numbers
Roselle and Spray Chp. 3.
Freakonomics: Where Have all the Criminals Gone?

Week 10 (Nov. 11 & 13): Mathematical Models and Game Theory
Philip A. Schrod. 2002. ‘Mathematical Modeling.’ In Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich and Lars Wilnat eds. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Fifth Edition. Longman, Inc.
Games of Strategy: Chp 1-2

Week 11 (Nov. 18 & 20): Mathematical Models and Game Theory
Games of Strategy: Chp 3-4

Week 12 (Nov. 25 & 27): Neuman Chp.10- Observing People in Natural Settings
Neuman Chp.11- Looking at the Past and Across Cultures
Presentations and discussion

PART III: Research Report and Writing

Week 13 (Dec. 2 & 4): Roselle and Spray Chp. 4, 10 & 11.
Student presentations and discussion

Week 14 (Dec. 9 & 11): Student presentations and discussion

Week 15 (Dec. 16 & 18) and Week 16 (Dec. 23):: Student presentations and discussion