

**Scientific Study of International Relations**  
FEBRUARY, 2015

**Instructor:** Vito D’Orazio, PhD

**Time and Location:**

<b>Week 1 (9 to 13 Feb)</b>	Monday 9 Feb	18 to 19h	Room 14
	Tuesday 10 Feb	18 to 19h	Room 14
	Thursday 12 Feb	11 to 13h	Seminar 14
<b>Week 2 (16 to 20 Feb)</b>	Monday 16 Feb	18 to 19h	Room 14
	Tuesday 17 Feb	18 to 19h	Room 12
	Thursday 19 Feb	11 to 13h	Room M01

**Contact:** vjdorazio@gmail.com. Please put “SSIR: ” in the subject line.

**Office Hours:** My office is Amigos 2030. I will generally be available Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays before class, and I encourage you to stop by at any time. I am also available by appointment.

## Course Goals and Overview

This short course is designed to introduce some of the contemporary debates in the field of International Relations and the scientific ways we go about studying them. Substantive topics of discussion include the role of China, civil wars, the use of violence, Islam and authoritarianism, and democratization. We will study theory development and assessment, examples of large-n regression analysis, within-case microdynamics, natural experiments, and forecasting/prediction models.

## Grading Policy

### Attendance and participation (10%)

These are the easiest points you can get. Show up, be attentive, and participate to get full credit.

### Short homework assignments (40%)

There will be five short homework assignments to be emailed to me by midnight **the day before class**. For each assignment: summarize the reading (3 sentences), raise two thoughtful questions, and discuss your reaction to the reading (5 sentences). For example, by midnight of February 9, read Fravel (2010), complete the assignment—typed and saved as a PDF document—and email it to vjdorazio@gmail.com with “SSIR: ” in the subject line.

Notice that for each Thursday, half of you (Group 1) will read one article and the other half (Group 2) will read a different article. Group 1 will consist of students whose last name starts with A-M, and Group 2 last names N-Z. For these classes (each Thursday), I will lead discussion for the first hour. Then, we will split into groups and develop questions to ask the

other group. We'll start with 5 questions for each group, but time permitting we'll ask more. Group 1 asks Group 2 questions about their article, and then Group 2 asks Group 1. Part of the value of this exercise is learning to ask the right questions, so I'll record your questions and we will discuss them at a later date. Everybody is responsible for both articles, as I may ask about both on the exam, but prior to class **do not** read the other group's article.

### **Final exam (50%)**

The final exam will be a take-home exam given to students on February 18 after class. Students will select one question out of several options and write a short, 500–1000 word essay. **The essay is to be emailed to me by midnight of February 18.** If you submit answers to more than one question, I will only grade the first. The exam is to be typed and emailed to me as a PDF document. While answers should include citations to works we have read, feel free to cite sources that we have not discussed in class. **Notice on lateness:** For each day late, you will be marked down a full letter grade.

## **Administrative Issues**

### **Academic dishonesty**

Any issues of academic dishonesty will be subject to university protocol.

### **Students with disabilities**

In accordance with university standards, every effort will be made to accommodate students with disabilities.

## **Required Reading**

There is no required text. Copies of articles may be found by searching Google Scholar. If you cannot locate a copy, let me know and I will send you one.

- Fearon, J. D. and Laitin, D. D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American political science review*, 97(01):75–90
- Fish, M. S. (2002). Islam and authoritarianism. *World Politics*, 55(01):4–37
- Hyde, S. D. (2007). The observer effect in international politics: Evidence from a natural experiment. *World Politics*, 60(01):37–63
- Kalyvas, S. N. (2008). Promises and pitfalls of an emerging research program: The microdynamics of civil war. In Kalyvas, S. N., Shapiro, I., and Masoud, T., editors, *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, pages 397–421. Cambridge University Press, New York
- Lyall, J. (2009). Does indiscriminate violence incite insurgent attacks? evidence from chechnya. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 53(2):331–362

- Mearsheimer, J. J. and Walt, S. M. (2013). Leaving theory behind: Why simplistic hypothesis testing is bad for international relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, 19(3):427–457
- Taylor Fravel, M. (2010). International relations theory and china's rise: Assessing china's potential for territorial expansion. *International Studies Review*, 12(4):505–532
- Ward, M. D., Greenhill, B. D., and Bakke, K. M. (2010). The perils of policy by p-value: Predicting civil conflicts. *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(4):363–375

## Course Outline

### Feb 9 (Day 1): Course introduction

- Mearsheimer & Walt (2013): Introduction & Conclusion (p. 427-431, 449-450)

### Feb 10 (Day 2): Theory

- Mearsheimer & Walt (2013): Theory and social science (p. 431-437)
- HW1: Fravel (2010)

### Feb 12 (Day 3): Multiple regression

- Mearsheimer & Walt (2013): What is simplistic hypothesis testing? (p. 437-445)
- HW2 (Group 1): Fearon & Laitin (2003)
- HW2 (Group 2): Fish (2002)

### Feb 16 (Day 4): Within-case microdynamics

- Mearsheimer & Walt (2013): Why is IR headed in this direction? & Can anything be done? (p. 445-449)
- HW3: Kalyvas (2008)

### Feb 17 (Day 5): Forecasting

- HW4: Ward, Greenhill, & Bakke (2013)

### Feb 19 (Day 6): Natural Experiments

- HW5 (Group 1): Hyde (2007)
- HW5 (Group 2): Lyall (2009)
- Exam due by midnight of February 19