

International Relations 91
(Cross-listed as Political Science 91)
International Research Colloquium
Spring 2006
Eaton Hall 208

Professor Jeff Taliaferro
Eaton Hall 316 A
(617) 627-5847
<http://irm.tccs.tufts.edu>

Block CT: Tues. 9:30-10:20 a.m.
Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs. 2-4 p.m. or
by appointment

Purpose

This is a weekly half-credit class designed to promote and facilitate the development of high quality undergraduate and post-graduate research projects with an international focus. It is designed particularly for sophomores who might study abroad during their junior year and who anticipate writing a senior honors thesis, a research paper as a component of a study abroad program, or a proposal required as part of an application for national and international fellowship competitions. While mainly targeted toward current or prospective majors in international relations (IR), this course is open to undergraduates in any major.

Required Readings

There are two required books for this course. You can purchase paperback copies at the Tufts University Bookstore in the Mayer Campus Center. Alternatively, you can purchase copies online at <http://www.amazon.com>, <http://www.bn.com>, or <http://www.booksamillion.com> often at a discount. The required books are also on three-hour reserve at the Tisch Library.

1. Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), ISBN 0-262-55039-3.
2. Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), ISBN 0-8014-8457-x

There are also some readings taken from scholarly journals and books. You can view these items on the International Research Network (IRN) and/or through the Electronic Journals page at the Tisch Library Website. Many of the items on the IRN are in Adobe Acrobat (*.pdf) format. You should have a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader version 7 (or higher) installed on your computer. If you do not have one already, you should download a copy of this software free at the Adobe Corporation web page (<http://www.adobe.com>):

The readings for this course draw upon several disciplines: the IR and comparative politics subfields of political science, history, economics, sociology, and others. We will explore different substantive topics and methodologies for conducting international research. The members of this class, as well as the professor, have different substantive interests in the study of international relations and come from different disciplinary backgrounds. It is important to remember that there is no single "right" approach to conducting research in international relations.

Assignments, Class Format, and Expectations

INTR 91 should be a cooperative enterprise. Therefore, your attendance and active participation are crucial to the success of this course. The class format will be a mixture of discussions and occasional guest speakers. The reading and written assignments for INTR 91 are relatively light.

However, you must complete all eight assignments on time to pass the course. All written assignments build toward a 5-page research prospectus or précis due in late April. You may or may not use that prospectus as the starting point for a future thesis, research paper, grant proposal, or fellowship application. ***Please post all assignments to the "Student Work" section of the INTR 91 (spring 2006) page on the International Research Network, no later than 12 p.m. on the day indicated in the syllabus.***

The International Research Network (<http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu>)

The International Research Network (IRN) is a web-based support tool to help students and faculty members at Tufts University conduct research on international issues, particularly while abroad. It will play a central role in this course. Think of the IRN as an on-line academic community linking faculty members and students on the Medford/Somerville campus with their colleagues abroad and in other parts of the United States. The IRN also provides convenient links to resources that can facilitate and improve your research project. The website consists of five sections:

- ***The Research Planner:*** This section is a systematic guide to planning and conducting research on international topics. Here you will find guides on how to: (1) plan courses on the Medford/Somerville campus; (2) plan study abroad; (3) chose a research topic; (4) develop a topic into a research question; (5) find and evaluate existing scholarly literature; (6) select an appropriate methodology; (7) make contact with possible faculty mentors; (8) conduct research in an ethical manner; (9) write a research prospectus; (10) find funding for your research project; and (11) obtain information about senior year and post-graduate research opportunities. *You will notice that topics and the assignments for this class actually mirror the topics in the Research Planner.*
- ***Resources:*** This section provides links to libraries, think tanks, research centers, on-line journals, working papers, grant and fellowship opportunities, and writing resources. There are also a growing number of links to various websites on various topics in international relations, political science, history, economics, literature, and other disciplines.
- ***Courses:*** This section contains information about INTR 91 (this class) and INTR 92 (the follow-up class).
- ***Community:*** Conducting research, particularly while abroad, can be an isolating experience. To remedy this, the communications section of the IRN allows you to maintain contact with faculty mentors and to share information, notes, and drafts with your fellow students at Tufts and abroad.
- ***My Work:*** Once you have established an account on the IRN, you can use this section to store various documents. Only you will have access to materials stored in "My Work," unless you decide to grant access to other users on the network.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments

Class 1: Introduction to the Course**24 January***Assignment 1: International Research Questionnaire and Profile (due by 12 p.m. on 30 Jan.)*

To use the IRN you must first establish an account. On the right side of the main page, simply click on "Request an account." Fill out the questionnaire. After you have submitted the application, some of the information you entered will automatically appear in your personal profile. In order to view your personal profile, please do the following:

- Go to the IRN (<http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu>)
- Select "My Work" located at the top of the main page
- Select "My Profile"
- You will see some headings in the top/middle of the screen
- Click the heading "Academic/Professional"
- In the box labeled "Research Foci," we want you to add some information to what is already there, namely: My Research Topic—a one paragraph summary of a research topic that you might pursue for a thesis, paper, or project. The paragraph does not have to be specific. We will simply use it as a starting point. Over the semester, you will likely refine your topic. We expect and encourage this. Remember, you add this topic to what already appears under "Research Foci."
- You should complete any remaining sections in your profile that are blank or that you wish to edit. Please note that must update each section before moving onto the next section. You can also change your username and password to something you can easily remember. Your default username is your Tufts e-mail account.
- **Technical Problems:** If you experience any technical difficulties with the IRN please contact Kurt Lange (Kirk.Lange@tufts.edu) or Moria Connor (moria.connor@tufts.edu) in the IR Program Office. Please cut and paste any error message you receive in your e-mail to Kurt or Moria. This will help them address problems more quickly. *Please do not send technical questions about the IRN to Professor Taliaferro.*

Class 2: Political, Economic, Historical, and Cultural Dimensions of IR Research**31 January***Readings*

Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, "Introduction: Negotiating International History and Politics," in *Bridges and Boundaries*, pp. 1-36.

Stephen Pelz, "Toward a New Diplomatic History: Two and Half Cheers for International Relations Methods," in *Bridges and Boundaries*, pp. 85-110.

Stephen M. Walt, "The Relationship between Theory and Policy in International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 8 (2005): 23-47. Available on the Annual Reviews website:
<http://www.library.tufts.edu/ezproxy/ezproxy.asp?LOCATION=http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.012003.104904>

Please note, this class has the heaviest reading assignment for the entire semester. It is very important that you read the two chapters in *Bridges and Boundaries* and Walt's article from *Annual Review of Political Science* before class on 31 January since the readings will be the basis of our discussion.

Class 3: Translating a "Topic" into a Research Question I

7 February

Readings

Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, pp. 89-95.

(Although this chapter deals with choosing topics for doctoral dissertations in political science, Van Evera's advice is applicable to *undergraduate* research projects as well.)

"Step 4: Developing a Research Question: Turning a Topic into a Research Question," including Steps 4a through 4d: http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/4.cfm

Assignment 2: Proposed Research Question or Puzzle (due 10 Feb. by 12 p.m.)

Write a one-page memo (double-spaced). In this memo, lay out a research question (or more likely questions) that you might pursue at some point in the future. This tentative research question may be a refinement of what you wrote in Assignment 1 or the question may involve an entirely different topic. *This research question is tentative. You are welcome to modify it or abandon it during the semester.* You are under no obligation to actually pursue a research project based upon this question. In completing Assignment 2, pay attention to what we discussed over the past two weeks.

Please remember that different disciplines (e.g., political science, history, economics, sociology, literature, anthropology, and others) have different criteria for what constitutes a "good" or "appropriate" research question. In completing this assignment, you should consult the Research Planner section of the IRN, particularly the pages on research questions and research puzzles.

Class 4: Translating a Topic into a Research Question II—What are Research Programs, Theories, and Testable Hypotheses?

14 February

Reading

Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (Spring 1998): 29-46. Available on Pro Quest:
<http://www.library.tufts.edu/ezproxy/ezproxy.asp?LOCATION=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=27433753&Fmt=2&clientId=28972&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

Jack S. Levy, "Explaining Events and Developing Theories: History, Political Science, and the Analysis of International Relations," in *Bridges and Boundaries*, pp. 39-83.

Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, pp. 5-27.

Assignment 3: Developing Tentative Hypotheses (due 24 Feb. by 12 p.m.)

In the social sciences generally, good research projects build upon an argument or thesis informed by a more general theory of social or political behavior. Theories are simply tools for understanding reality. An empirical theory is a causal statement (A causes B), together with an explanation of how A causes B. A good theory should generate a number of testable or arguable hypotheses.

Like the natural sciences (e.g., chemistry, physics, and biology), in some of the social sciences (e.g., sociology, economics, the IR, American politics, and comparative politics subfields of political science, and history) the empirical theory upon which a research project proceeds or which it contests should be *explicit*. Frequently in history and the humanities, however, the theory upon which an argument proceeds may be implicit. The extent to which a research can "test" hypotheses may be sharply constrained by the unmaleable and incomplete nature of the sources. It may be inappropriate (and sometimes impossible) to draw broader causal inferences. In the absence of empirical proof, however, *Occam's razor*—the notion that simpler theories are preferable to complex theories and that all theories should elucidate through simplification—still applies.

You will find examples of these two types of research questions and hypotheses (one drawn from history and the other from the IR sub field of political science) in the INTR 91 section of the IRN, under Assignment 3.

Based upon the readings and discussions over the past few weeks, please write a two-page memo that sets forth two tentative hypotheses that might answer the research question you developed in Assignment 2. In developing your two hypotheses, you may wish to draw upon existing theories in the IR and comparative politics subfields of political science, history, economics, literature, or other disciplines. Alternatively, you might wish to develop your own theories and derive specific hypotheses from them. Remember, these hypotheses are tentative. They need not be competing or in opposition to each other. Like every researcher, you will modify or perhaps discard one or both tentative hypotheses as you proceed with your research project.

21 February: No class meeting

The Schools of Art & Sciences and Engineering will observe a Monday class schedule today.

Class 5: Defining and *Evaluating* the Scholarly Literature (Example: 1958-61 Berlin Crisis)

28 February

Readings

Carmen C. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations," *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 3, no. 4 (November 2003): 351-72. Available on Blackwell Synergy:
<http://www.library.tufts.edu/ezproxy/ezproxy.asp?LOCATION=http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.t01-1-00099>

Marc I. Trachtenberg, "Doing Cold War History: A Practical Guide"
<http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/trachtenberg/guide/guidehome.html>

[Just skim] Vojtech Mastny, "Survey Article: The New History of Cold War Alliances," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (spring 2002): 55-84. Available on Project Muse:
http://www.library.tufts.edu/ezproxy/ezproxy.asp?LOCATION=http://Muse:jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_cold_war_studies/v004/4.2mastny.pdf

Class 6: Find Scholarly Literature—Some Tips from a Tufts Librarian

7 March

Guest speaker: Ms. Connie Reik, reference librarian and government documents coordinator, Tisch Library

Readings:

"Scholarly Research Resources in International Relations"

http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/documents/5/irbibliography.htm

"Using RefWorks" http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/5.cfm

Assignment 4: Constructing a Tentative Bibliography (due. 13 March by 12 p.m.)

Please provide an annotated bibliography of scholarly literature that specifically addresses the research question that you presented in Assignment 3. Consult the "Scholarly Literature" memo on the IRN. Please post a bibliography that includes no fewer than ten (10) and no more than twenty (20) of the best references that you can find related to your topic. For each item on the bibliography, you should have two or three sentences that provide a brief synopsis of the main argument or finding. To ensure that you cite these sources properly, you may wish to consult "Footnotes & Bibliographic Citations: Print and Electronic Formats" on the Tisch Library website.

Class 7: Choosing an Appropriate Methodology for Your Research

14 March

Readings

"Tip: What is Methodology?"

http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/documents/6/methodology_tips.doc

Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, pp. 27-48.

Andrew Bennett and Alexander George, "Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science," in *Bridges and Boundaries*, pp. 137-66.

Assignment 5: Choosing an Appropriate Methodology (due. 31 March by 12 p.m.)

Before completing Assignment 5, you might want to review "Step 6: Choosing Appropriate Methodologies" in the Research Planner section of the IRN. Any methodology tells the researcher what information (data) to gather and then how to analyze and measure the information gathered. Please write a two-page memo that describes the most appropriate methodology or methodologies for the research question you posed in Assignment 2 and the tentative hypotheses you posed in Assignment 3.

Think about how you might go about answering your research question. Remember, your research question should determine whether you rely on a *qualitative methodology* (e.g., textual analysis, archival work, the use of secondary sources, unstructured or structured interviews, ethnographic studies, or participant observation) or a *quantitative methodology* (e.g., statistical or correlation analysis, large-N surveys, or experimental designs).

SPRING RECESS

18-27 March

Class 8: Establishing and Maintaining Contact with Faculty Mentors and Other Experts

28 March

Readings

* "Tips on E-mailing Faculty"

http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/documents/7/faculty_email_tips.doc

* "Identifying a Senior Thesis Director and Readers"

http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/documents/7/identifying_senior_thesis_director.doc

Assignment 6: Making Faculty Contact (due 10 April by 12 p.m.)

Before completing this assignment, please review "Step 7: Making Faculty Contact" in the Research Planner section of the IRN. Imagine that you are considering a senior honors thesis, an independent study, a research project while abroad, or even a senior seminar required for your major. Based upon our presentation and discussion, contact at least one professor at Tufts University to discuss the possibility of mentoring that project.

After the meeting, write a brief report of no more than one page of that initial contact and any follow-up meeting that you had with that professor. Please post that report on the IRN. In seeking out a possible faculty mentor, please remember the following:

- Ideally, your initial contact with a professor should be face-to-face. If a face-to-face meeting is not possible, then please following the guidelines for sending professors e-mail listed on the IRN.
- Remember that many professors will only agree to direct senior theses or other research projects for topics on which they have a real depth of expertise. Furthermore, since senior theses and other projects are time-intensive endeavors, many professors will only supervise projects proposed by students with whom they are familiar (i.e., students who have actually taken and done well in their classes).
- Be prepared for your meeting with a potential faculty mentor. Preparation includes obtaining information about that professor's research interests, completing a brief prospectus or one-page statement of your proposed research project, and thinking through how your research project will build upon your previous coursework and study abroad experience.
- Remember, you should not expect a professor to commit to mentor your project during an initial meeting. Rather, the purpose of that meeting is to begin a dialogue with a possible faculty mentor.
- *Finally, remember that as the semester comes to an end professors become extremely busy. For the purposes of Assignment 6, you may not be able to meet with the most appropriate potential faculty mentor because of schedule constraints.*

Class 9: Securing Research Funding and Institutional Support

4 April

Readings

Richard Eichenberg, "INTR 91: Grant and Proposal Writing"

http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/resource_uploads/Grant%20Writing11.doc

"How to Write a Research Précis" http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/resource_uploads/Research%20Precis1.doc

"A Model Research Précis" http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/resource_uploads/Model%20Precis.doc

Class 10: Interviewing/ Oral Collection Abroad—Some Practical Considerations

11 April

Guest Speaker: Professor Jeanne Marie Penvenne, Department of History

Readings

"The Bennish Principles" http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/documents/8/bennish_principles.doc

Jeanne Penvenne, "Tip Sheet: Reflecting on Our Role as Researchers"

http://irn.tccs.tufts.edu/research_planner/documents/8/reflecting.doc

Assignment 7: Draft Research Précis or Proposal (due 17 April by 12 p.m.)

This assignment calls for you to revisit the research question (or questions) that you prepared in Assignment 2 and the hypotheses you proposed in Assignment 3. Please prepare a research proposal or précis, not longer than five (5) double-spaced pages. We will discuss your and refine your research proposals over the next two weeks. The proposal should address the following:

- The research question that you seek to answer and why it is important;
 - A brief evaluation of one or two scholarly works that address your question;
 - Your tentative hypotheses;
 - A brief discussion of the methodology appropriate to your research question; and,
 - The types of data that you plan to gather and organize.
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Class 11: Ethics in Research Involving Human Subjects

18 April

Guest speaker: Rev. David O'Leary, chair, Institutional Review Board (Medford campus)

Assignment 8: Revising your Research Précis or Proposal (due 24 April by 12 p.m.)

This assignment calls upon you to revisit the research proposal that you submitted last week. Think about your research question, your evaluation of the scholarly literature, the tentative hypothesis (or hypotheses), the methods, and the data requirements. Remember, your project will continue to evolve as you continue your research both on campus as well as away from Tufts in your junior year.

Class 12: Rethinking your Research Project and Going Abroad

25 April

Discussion of our research designs, strategies for international research, and study abroad plans