This seminar is designed to prepare students to carry out methodologically sound research at the cutting edge of international political economy and political economy. To achieve this purpose, the course will focus on the writing and presentation of a senior thesis. Its goal is to teach students to evaluate scholarly literature, assess its merits and limitations systematically, and make progressive contributions to the field. We will analyze contributions to ongoing debates and research programs using a set of research design questions as a guide. Students are expected to apply the same critical skills when writing and presenting their own research in class. Student presentations and papers will be evaluated using the same research design criteria. Greater understanding of the core works in the field is a positive externality in this course, but its focus will be on the writing, presentation and evaluation of senior theses.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions and complete all assigned reading before the class. All students are expected to abide by the university honor code. Students are encouraged to share ideas and help one another throughout the course, but their work must be original and completed independently.
The research paper: Each student will be responsible for writing an article-length paper, approximately 25 pages in length, excluding tables, charts, figures, etc. In the paper, students are expected to evaluate, critique, test, and build upon a current debate of their choosing in the fields of international political economy and political economy. Students should develop competing hypotheses and test them using either qualitative or quantitative methods. The papers will account for 60% of the final grade. All assignments will be evaluated using the research design criteria presented in class. The papers should be written so that they could be presented at a professional conference or submitted to a journal after suggested revisions. Students are encouraged to revise and submit their final papers for publication.

The research proposal: students are responsible for selecting a topic for their paper in consultation with the professors. Topics must be approved by one of the professors. Once approved, each student must submit and present a formal research proposal to the class (10% of the final grade). The paper proposals should be 2 pages in length and address all relevant points of the research design questions distributed in the second class. The presentations will be strictly limited to 10 minutes -- 5 minutes for the speaker, followed by 5 minutes of discussion. Paper proposals are due via email to both professors by 10:00am on the day prior to the day they will be presented in class. All students who wish to be considered for honors in IPEC or PECO must submit a formal request with their paper proposal. Students must get approval before changing their topics. Final papers are due at the beginning of the last class meeting on May 4.

Research presentations: Each student will also present a penultimate version of his or her paper to the class (10% of the final grade). Student presentations should be no more than 15 minutes in length and will be followed by 10 minutes of questions and answers. The presentation should be treated as if it were a formal paper presentation at the American Political Science Association or American Economic Association annual meetings. Use of overheads, PowerPoint slides, and other presentation materials are encouraged. A complete draft of your presentation is due by 10:00am on the day prior to the classroom presentations and must be sent via email to both Professors. The drafts will be distributed to and reviewed by your colleagues. You may identify an article, book chapter, or other material for members of the seminar to read in preparation for the discussion of your paper.

Critiques: Every student will be responsible for writing three short (2-page) papers, each of which will count for 5% of the final grade. For the first paper, students will conduct and write-up an econometric analysis of an issue or hypothesis in PE or IPE. It will be due on February 10, and we encourage you to write this as a group (of no more than 4 students). For the second and third short papers, students will critique two other students’ research and presentations of their penultimate papers. He or she will also act as a discussant and is responsible for coordinating classroom discussion when the author presents the
penultimate version of the paper to the class. The critiques should be based on the criteria specified in the Research Design Questions discussed in the second class. Professors Olofsgard and Shambaugh must receive the critiques at the latest by the lecture after the presentation.

Grades will be estimated as follows: 60% of the grade will depend on the final paper, 10% on the paper proposal, 10% on the presentation of the penultimate version of the final paper, 5% each for the econometric paper, the two critiques of your colleague’s papers, and 5% for classroom participation. Everybody is expected to attend all class sessions and presentations. All assignments will be downgraded a letter grade per day after the due date. Except in truly extraordinary circumstances, no extensions will be granted.

To receive honors in IPEC or PECO, students must submit an application for honors with the paper proposals and fulfill all of the requirements specified in the description of the majors. Among other things, these requirements specify that honors students must receive an A in this class. Professor Olofsgard and Professor Shambaugh will determine the grades on the theses in consultation with other members of the IPEC/PECO committee.

Books


Recommended:


Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction (January 13)

Class 2: Methodology I. How to write research a paper. (January 15)

“Research Design Criteria.” (On reserve: Bring a copy to class.)


Classes 3 & 4: Methodology II. Qualitative Methods (January 20, 22).


Classes 5 & 6: Methodology III. Introduction to Econometrics, the theory. (January 27 & January 29).


Classes 7 & 8: Methodology III. Hands-on Introduction to Econometrics (February 3 & 5)

All students should confirm beforehand that their net ids grant them access to the university computer system. The data are available on G:\Olofsgard and G:\Shambaug on the UIS-lab network. We will be using Eviews statistical software.
Classes 9-14: Presentation of draft proposals. (February 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26)

** Each student must sign-up for a specific time slot during one of the four presentation days. Half of the class will meet in WGR 203, half will meet in WGR 211.

Class 15-18: Preparation of Research (March 2-18)

Students are expected to use these weeks to make substantial progress on their thesis. Professors will hold extra office hours during class time to counsel students on their thesis.

Class 19-29: Student Presentations (March 23-April 29)

** Students must select a specific date and time to make their presentations. There are 22 class sessions, 3 students will present in each session. Half of the class will meet in WGR 203, half will meet in WGR 211.

Class 30: Revise, Reprise and Riposte (May 4)

A hard copy of your final paper is due in class on May 4.