

# The Strategic Approach to International Politics

Spring 2008  
Political Science 790: 322  
Mon. & Th., 10:55–12:15  
CDL-109

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## Course Description:

This course surveys the contributions of the strategic approach to the study of international politics. We will consider how strategic models have contributed to our understanding of specific topics like crisis bargaining, alliance formation, cooperation, participation in international institutions, and the effects of international “anarchy.” The course does not require any prior mathematics beyond simple algebra or any prior familiarity with game theory, although we will learn some elementary game theory along the way.

The course proceeds in three parts. In the opening weeks, we will learn the basics of the “strategic perspective” and consider how it can help us understand broad patterns of international conflict and cooperation. In the second part of the course, we will focus more closely on the use of coercive force and the manipulation of beliefs in international relations. In the third part of the course, we will see how the strategic perspective can help us understand different domestic political systems and their effects on international behavior.

Attendance is important, because my lectures will include material that does not appear in the readings but which may appear on the tests. By the same token, the readings may include material that does not appear in my lectures but which may appear on the tests. You should complete the required readings each week *before* the appropriate lecture. Before. Really. I have asked the bookstore to stock the student workbook designed to accompany the textbook. The two should be bundled together at a discount. You are not required to do the problems in the workbook that correspond to the assigned chapters in the textbook, but I strongly encourage you to do so in preparation for the in-class exams. In my experience, students who do not use the workbook usually regret it.

Please note that I may change some of the readings listed on this syllabus. You should check my website regularly for course-related announcements, including changes in reading assignments. Assignments and announcements posted on this website should be treated as annexes to this syllabus, and you will be responsible for them: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~jeffritt>

If you need to reach me for any reason, e-mail is much more reliable than the telephone. The answering machine in my office rarely works—and when it works, it lies.

## Grading:

There will be two in-class exams during the semester in addition to the final exam. The in-class exams will be given on February 25 and April 7, as indicated on the schedule below. Each of the in-class exams will count for 25% of your semester grade, while the final exam will count for 50%.

## Texts:

The readings for the course are contained in:

- Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. 2006. *Principles of International Politics: People's Power, Preferences, and Perceptions*. (3rd Edition) Congressional Quarterly press.
- Leanne C. Powner and D. Scott Bennett. 2006. *Applying the Strategic Perspective: Problems and Models*. (3rd Edition) Congressional Quarterly Press. (Optional but strongly recommended; bundled with the textbook at a discounted price.)

**On Used Textbooks:** The third edition of the textbook (green cover) is preferred. If your budget is extremely tight and you cannot find an affordable copy of the third edition, the second edition (blue cover) is acceptable. You should avoid the first edition (black cover), because it omits too much of the assigned material. When buying a used textbook, bear in mind that the workbook is fairly expensive if you buy it separately (Publisher's prices from the CQ Press website: textbook alone \$84.95; workbook alone \$38.95; textbook & workbook bundle \$86.73). So a used textbook priced at \$47.78 plus a new workbook at the publisher's price would cost exactly the same as buying the bundle new.

Supplementary Readings on electronic reserve and/or at course website.

## Course Schedule and Readings:

**January 24 (TH)**

**Course Overview**

**January 28 (M)**

**Theories, Models, and Abstractions**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 2.

**January 31 (TH)**

**Preferences and Policy**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 9.

## February 4 (M)

### Strategic Interaction: Elementary Game Theory

- David M. Kreps. 1990. Basic Notions of Non-Cooperative Game Theory. In *Game Theory and Economic Modeling*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 3 (pp. 9–36).
- Avinash Dixit and Susan Skeath. 1999. Selections on identifying Nash equilibria in pure- and mixed-strategies. In *Games of Strategy*. New York: W.W. Norton. (pp. 97–99, 125–136).
- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 3

## February 7–February 11 (TH, M)

### Power and Coercion

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 7.
- Thomas Schelling. 1966. The Diplomacy of Violence. In *Arms and Influence*. Yale University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 1–34).

## February 14–February 18 (TH, M)

### Cooperation and Accommodation

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 8.
- James D. Fearon. 1998. Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation. *International Organization* 52, 2 (Spring): 269–305.

## February 21 (TH)

### An Empirical Study of Institutional Design

- Geoffrey Garrett. 1992. International Cooperation and Institutional Choice: the European Community's Internal Market. *International Organization* 46, 2 (Spring): 533–560. (Available at <http://www.jstor.org> through your university account)

## February 25 (M)

### TEST 1

## February 28–March 3 (TH, M)

### Perceptions and Beliefs

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 10.
- Barry R. Weingast. 1995. A Rational Choice Perspective on the Role of Ideas: Shared Belief Systems and State Sovereignty in International Cooperation. *Politics and Society* 23, 4 (December): 449–464.

**March 6–March 10 (TH, M)**  
**Conventional Deterrence**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 11.
- James D. Fearon. 2002. Selection Effects and Deterrence. *International Interactions* 28: 5–29.
- Roger B. Myerson. 2007. *Force and Restraint in Strategic Deterrence: A Game-Theorist's Perspective*. Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. (Free download from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=823>).

**March 13 (TH)**  
**Nuclear Deterrence**

- Thomas Schelling. 1960. The Threat that Leaves Something to Chance. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Yale University Press. (pp. 187–203).
- Robert Powell. 1990. “The Nuclear Revolution and the Problem of Credibility” and “An Appraisal.” In *Nuclear Deterrence Theory: The Search for Credibility*. Cambridge University Press (pp. 6–32, 174–186).

**March 17–20 (M, TH)**  
**Spring Break**

**March 24 (M)**  
**Alliances**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 15.

**March 27 (TH)**  
**No Class**

**March 31 (M)**  
**War**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapters 16–17 .
- James D. Fearon. 1995. Rationalist Explanations for War. *International Organization* 49, 3 (Summer): 379–414. (Available at <http://www.jstor.org> through your university account)

### **April 3 (TH)**

#### **Examples and Cases**

- David R. Mares. 1996/7. Deterrence Bargaining In the Ecuador-Peru Enduring Rivalry: Designing Strategies Around Military Weakness. *Security Studies* 6, 2 (Winter): 91-123.
- R. Harrison Wagner. 1989. Uncertainty, Rational Learning, and Bargaining in the Cuban Missile Crisis. In Peter C. Ordeshook, ed. *Models of Strategic Choice in Politics*. University of Michigan Press. (pp. 177–205).

### **April 7 (M)**

#### **TEST 2**

### **April 10–April 14 (TH, M)**

#### **Political Economy of Trade**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 13.

### **April 17 (TH)**

#### **Looking Inside “The State”**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 6

### **April 21 (M)**

#### **Domestic Politics, Transparency, and International “Bargaining Leverage”**

- Robert D. Putnam. 1988. Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games. *International Organization* 42, 3 (Summer): 427–460.
- Kenneth A. Schultz. 2000. Domestic Political Competition and Transparency in International Crises: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. In Bernard I. Finel and Kristin M. Lord, eds. *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency*. Palgrave. (pp. 56–82).
- Ahmer Tarar. 2001. International Bargaining with Two-Sided Domestic Constraints. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, 3 (June): 320–340.

**April 24 (TH)**

**Domestic Politics: Principals, Agents, and Incentives**

- Diana Richards, T. Clifton Morgan, Rick K. Wilson, Valerie L. Schwebach, and Garry D. Young. 1993. Good Times, Bad Times, and the Diversionary Use of Force: A Tale of Some Not-So-Free Agents. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37, 3 (September): 504–535.
- Ahmer Tarar. 2006. Diversionary Incentives and the Bargaining Approach to War. *International Studies Quarterly* 50: 169–188.

**April 28 (M)**

**Domestic Politics and International Behavior**

- Bueno de Mesquita, *PIP*, chapter 12.

**May 1 (TH)**

**The Big Picture**

- Robert Powell. 2002. Game Theory, International Relations Theory, and the Hobbesian Stylization. In Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline III*. New York: W.W. Norton (pp. 755–783).

**May 5 (M)**

**Catch-up Lecture/Final Exam Review Session**

**May 8 (TH)**

**Final Exam: 8 a.m.–11 a.m., in our normal classroom**

Please review your exam schedule using the matrix at <http://Scheduling.rutgers.edu/springfinals.htm> and check for conflicts early (as per the criteria given at the bottom of that page).