1 Course Description

This is a graduate course on psychological approaches to International Relations (IR). This course does not require a background in psychology or political psychology, though those that have it are, of course, welcome. The course is designed around substantive topic areas (e.g. trust, reputation, personality, emotions) which we will focus on each week. Though this is not a “History of...” course, through the readings you will likely pick up on the broad patterns of scholarship in political psychology over the last 50 years. The larger methodological issues around political psychology and IR (how do you study this? what tradeoffs do the various approaches entail?) will form a backdrop to most of our discussions.

The ultimate goal of the course is end the semester with a paper that is of publishable quality (or well on its way, at least). The paper must bear in some way on psychological approaches, but this gives you quite a bit of latitude and we can work together to pick paper topics that make the most sense for you. If you are considering an experiment, but can’t actually run the experiment during the semester, you may turn in a paper minus the results section.

Responsibility for helping to guide discussions will rotate among students each class, and at the end of the semester, students will turn in their own papers, as well as a peer review of another student’s paper. The last class of the semester will consist of presentations made by students (something between a 10 minute conference presentation and a full fledged “talk.”)

2 Guidelines and Grading

- Grading is A-F (i.e., not pass/fail), and is based on a combination of class participation, and your written work (your paper as well as your manuscript review).

- “Additional Readings” are not required, but are listed in case you would like to delve more deeply into a topic.
• The goal for this course is to come out of it with something useful: a chapter of your dissertation, a draft of an article, etc. Feel free to meet with me as soon as you begin to have an idea of what you’d like to work on for your written project.

• If you have a question, or want to know if a reading is available, please check my website for any announcements and download the latest copy of the syllabus before emailing.

• If you ever have any questions, or are confused about something, please do not hesitate to come to office hours and meet with me. Office hours are Thursday between 1-3pm, and you can make an appointment at the following website: [https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/jSWjsloX.html](https://calendar.wisc.edu/scheduling-assistant/public/profiles/jSWjsloX.html) If you are unavailable at that time, you can email me to schedule an appointment.

3 Assignments

1. Keep up with the readings and participate in discussion

2. Presentation of your research

3. Final paper

4. Manuscript Review

4 Required Books

All the books should be available in the library, though of course, you may wish to purchase some (time to start thinking about building up your library!). All of the journal articles should be available online through the UW library website.
Schedule

1. Introduction [September 5]

2. Experimental Methods [September 12]

**Background/Overview:**

**Applications:**

**Additional Readings:**


• Renshon, J. (2013a). Power and escalation: Experimental evidence on the judgment of political and military leaders


3. Content Analysis [September 19]

(A) Operational Codes


(B) Integrative Complexity


**Additional Readings:**


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**4. Psychodynamic Approaches/Personality/Character [September 26]**


Additional Readings:


5. Emotions [October 3]


6. Prospect Theory [October 10]

Background/Overview:


Applications:


Additional Readings:


7. Framing the Situation [October 17]


8. Evolutionary Approaches [October 24]


Additional Readings:

9. Biological & Neuro-scientific Approaches [October 31]


11. Reputation & Resolve [November 14]
• Sechser, T. S. (2013). Reputations and coercion

**Additional Readings:**


12. Status & Hierarchy [**November 21**]


• Renshon, J. (2013b). Status deficits and international conflict

**Additional Readings:**


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13. **New Directions in Psychology and IR** [December 5]

• Readings TBD

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14. **Presentations** [December 12]