

McGill University
Department of Political Science
POLI678—RESEARCH SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Professor Vincent Pouliot

Fall 2017 (revised version, August 23rd)

Fridays, 11:35am-2:25pm, Leacock 429

OBJECTIVES

This course is meant as a complement to POLI671—International Relations Theory. While 671 covers the substance of IR theories and paradigms, 678 addresses the subfield’s politics and practice. In that sense, the course may be construed as a kind of sociology of the discipline of IR. The broad objective is to understand how IR works as an academic community. More specifically, students are expected: (1) to get a foothold in the key debates and cleavages that structure the field today; and (2) to develop a professional skillset in terms of publishing, reviewing, discussing and presenting scholarly work. Reaching both goals will be facilitated through a term-long speaker series hosted by the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies (CIPSS).

FORMAT

The class meets once a week for three hours. The exact structure of sessions varies: discussions led by the instructor, students’ presentations, skill-development workshops and guest talks. The course is imbricated with the CIPSS speaker series, which is held on several Fridays throughout the term (exact schedule below). On these dates, the class will follow a different schedule—an open session, i.e. the guest talk (12-1:30pm), followed with a restricted discussion (1:45-3pm).

REQUIREMENTS

A key goal of this course is to have students submit a piece of work to a scholarly journal at the end of the term (i.e., moving from paper to publication). To this purpose, it is mandatory for each student to have a 6-12k words draft paper assembled by the beginning of the term. Ideally, the piece should contain both a theoretical framework and empirics. The piece will be put out for (mock) anonymous review on Sept. 22nd, revised throughout the term (based on reviewers’ comments, a one-on-one meeting with the instructor, and feedback from the oral presentation).

- 1) Peer-review evaluation** (15 percent, due on Oct. 6th): each student will produce a review of an article submitted by a peer. Reviews will be passed on to students anonymously, together with a “letter from the editor” written by the instructor, by Oct. 13th.
- 2) Discussant, speaker series** (15 percent, variable date): each student will be assigned a guest speaker to kick-off the Q&A period with a few critical comments. A written version of the comments must be produced in class on the same day as the talk. Comments should be internal to the paper’s argument, clearly formulated and logically sequenced, and focused on “big important things” in the paper;
- 3) Final paper with revisions memo** (40 percent, Dec. 1st): a revised version of the paper addressing the comments made as part of the review process. The paper will be evaluated for its inherent qualities (structure and logic of the argument, positioning in the literature, conceptual

sophistication, empirical demonstration), but also in terms of the improvements made throughout the review process.

- 4) **In-class presentation** (15 percent, Nov. 17th and 24th): a (mock) conference presentation of the paper in the works, followed with a Q&A. Evaluates the clarity, structure and pedagogy of the presentation and the ability to respond to questions;
- 5) **Participation** (15 percent): evaluates preparedness and active involvement in discussions, including during guest talks.

Please note that for all written pieces of work submitted, the McGill rules apply:

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSIONS

Office hours are held weekly on Fridays, 10-11am. It is also possible to set an appointment via email. Assignments will not be accepted via email. The late penalty amounts to one percent of the final grade per day, including weekends. Extensions are not granted except in cases consistent with the Faculty of Arts’ guidelines.

One-on-one meetings will be organized in the last two weeks of October specifically to discuss revisions to the final paper. A schedule will be announced later into the term.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(1) September 8th: Introduction

Discussion: what is sociology of knowledge and how does it apply to IR?

- Ole Wæver (1998), “The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline,” *International Organization* 52(4): 687-727
- Christian Bueger (2012), “From Epistemology to Practice: A Sociology of Science for International Relations,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 15(1): 97-109
- Ido Oren (2016), “A Sociological Analysis of the Decline of American IR Theory,” *International Studies Review* (online first)
- Daniel Maliniak, Ryan Powers and Barbara F. Walters (2013), “The Gender Citation Gap in International Relations,” *International Organization* 67: 889-922

(2) September 15th – this class will be rescheduled due to the EISA conference

Discussion: where does IR come from?

- Brian C. Schmidt (2002), “On the History and Historiography of International Relations,” in Walter Carlnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Naeem Inayatullah and David L. Blaney (2004), “Introduction,” in *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1-16

- Robert Vitalis (2015), "Introduction: A Mongrel Social Science," in *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1-19
- David A. Lake (2016), "White Man's IR: An Intellectual Confession," *Perspectives on Politics* 14(4): 1112-1122

(3) September 22nd

Speaker: Kathryn Sikkink (Harvard)—special location (Thomson House ballroom)

Workshop: How to peer-review

- Beth Miller et al. (2013), "How To Be a Peer Reviewer: A Guide for Recent and Soon-to-be PhDs," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 46 (1): 120-123

(4) September 29th

Discussion: what is IR today?

- Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson and Michael J. Tierney (2011), "International Relations in the US Academy," *International Studies Quarterly* 55: 437-464
- Wiebke Wemheuer-Vogelaar, Nicholas J. Bell, Mariana Navarrete Morales and Michael J. Tierney (2016), "The IR of the Beholder: Examining Global IR Using the 2014 TRIP Survey," *International Studies Review* (advance access)
- Stephen M. Saideman (2016), "Canadian Scholarship on International Relations: Unified, Divided or Diverse?" *International Journal* 71 (2): 193-213
- Peter M. Kristensen (2012), "Dividing Discipline: Structures of Communication in International Relations," *International Studies Review* 14: 32-50

Workshop: How to be a discussant

(5) October 6

Discussion: have we reached the end for IR theory?

- Several authors (2013), special issue on "The End of IR Theory?" *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3): 405-665

(6) October 13

Speaker: Wayne Sandholtz (USC)

Workshop: how to identify gaps in knowledge and sell your contribution (aka the lit review)

- Jeffrey W. Knopf (2006), "Doing a Literature Review," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39 (1): 127-132
- Stephen Van Evera (1997), *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 97-116)

(7) October 20th

Discussion: has epistemology become a dreaded word in IR?

- Nuno P. Monteiro and Kevin G. Ruby (2009), "IR and the False Promise of Philosophical Foundations," *International Theory* 1(1): 15-48; and read the reply by Patrick Thaddeus Jackson in *IT* 1 (3): 455-465
- Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein (2010), "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions," *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2): 411-431
- Jeffrey T. Checkel (2012), "Theoretical Pluralism in IR: Possibilities and Limits," in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage (e-version available)
- Ayse Zarakol (2017), "TRIPping Constructivism"; and Jelena Subotic (2017), "Constructivism as Professional Practice in the US Academy," both in *PS: Political Science and Politics* 50 (1): 75-78 and 84-88

Workshop: The essentials of article-writing

- David Thunder (2004), "Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37 (3): 493-495
- Donna Lee Van Cott (2005), "A Graduate Student's Guide to Publishing Scholarly Journal Articles," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38 (4): 741-743
- Stephen Van Evera (1997), *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, appendix (pp. 123-128)

(8) October 27th

Speaker: Ron Krebs (Minnesota)

Workshop: how to present an academic paper

(9) November 3rd

Speaker: Catherine Weaver (Texas-Austin)

Workshop: how to write a book review / review essay

(10) November 10th

Speaker: Erin Graham (Drexel)

Workshop: revising a paper and the memo to the editor; moving from dissertation to book

- Peter A. Hall (1990), "Helpful Hints for Writing Dissertations in Comparative Politics," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23 (4): 596-598
- Charles T. Myers (2004), "A Short Tour of Book Publishing for Political Scientists," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37 (4): 489-491

(11) November 17th: Student presentations—this class will be rescheduled due to a conference

(12) November 24th: Student presentations

(13) December 1st: Wrap-up

Discussion: where is IR headed as a discipline?

- Jonas Hagmann and Thomas J. Biersteker (2014), "Beyond the Published Discipline: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of International Studies," *European Journal of International Relations* 20 (2): 291-315
- Jeffrey D. Colgan (2016), "Where Is International Relations Going? Evidence from Graduate Training," *International Studies Quarterly* (online first)
- Justin Rosenberg (2016), "International Relations in the Prison of Political Science," *International Relations* 30(2): 127-153
- Amitav Acharya (2014), "Global International Relations and Regional Worlds," *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (4): 647-659

Note: in order to foster professional development, students will be encouraged to attend an academic conference organized on December 1st on the theme of "Power and Institutions." Details will be announced later into the term.