

**Detlef Sprinz, Ph.D.**

**Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences  
University of Potsdam**

## ***“Methods for Studying International Relations”***

**(Seminar, 12 ECTS points)**

**International Relations, University of Potsdam &  
Joint M.A. Program in International Relations of the Free University Berlin,  
Humboldt University Berlin, and the University of Potsdam**

**Winter Term 2004-2005**

### **Goals**

The purpose of this methods course is to provide students with an overview of the main methods used in international relations research, incl. case study, quantitative, and formal models. Participants will have to cope with a demanding reading load and application of the material covered in a variety of assignments. Students who have successfully taken this course will be prepared to make methodology-related decisions involved in preparing their M.A. thesis.

### **Logistics**

Time: Inaugural Meeting: 30 Nov. 2004, 16:00 – 18:00 h, every Friday: 10 Dec. 2004 – 28 Jan. 2005, 12:30 h – 16:00 h.  
Location: 30 Nov. 2004: B-E 2 / HPI [Griebnitzsee]; afterwards, please check page 2.  
Remark: All reading materials can be found in the “Semesterapparat” at the Bereichsbibliothek Babelsberg.

### **Prerequisites**

Students should have taken introductory courses in Social Science Methodology (e.g., an introductory statistics course during their B.A. education) and enjoy thinking about social science phenomena from a methodological perspective. Students also must have active e-mail accounts, be able to use the World Wide Web (WWW). The course will be taught in English.

### **Course Requirements**

This course combines

- (i) intensive readings *in advance* of the sessions,
- (ii) a series of exercises and short assignments (see below for details), and
- (iii) oral participation.

Please advise the instructor during the first session if you do not need the standard course certificate (“Leistungsschein”).

### **Office Hours**

After the seminar and by appointment (see contact address below).

### **Contact Address**

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Phone: (0331) 288-2555/-2532; Home Office: see personal webpage

Course Webpage: <http://www.sprinz.org> or <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/sprinz>.

**Overview**

Part	“Week”	Date, Time, & Location	Topic	Assignment
<b>1. Intro-duction</b>	1	30 Nov. 2004, 16:00–18:00 h, B-E 2, HPI	Course Overview	
	2	10 Dec. 2004, 12:30-16:00 h, 3.01.261	Epistemological Foundations (Part 1 of 2)	
	3		Epistemological Foundations (Part 2 of 2)	Investment dashboard paper
<b>2. Case Study Methods</b>	4	17 Dec. 2004, 12:30-16:00 h, B-E 2, HPI	Case Study Methods (Part 1 of 2)	
	5		Case Study Methods (Part 2 of 2)	Case study paper critique
<b>3. Quantitative Methods</b>	6	07 Jan. 2005, 12:30-16:00 h, B-E 2, HPI	Empirical-Quantitative Methods (Part 1 of 2)	
	7		Empirical-Quantitative Methods (Part 2 of 2)	Systematic abstract of empirical-quantitative journal article
<b>4. Formal Modeling</b>	8	14 Jan. 2005, 12:30-16:00 h, 3.01.261	Formal Modeling: Game Theory (Part 1 of 3)	
	9		Formal Modeling: Game Theory (Part 2 of 3)	Prisoner’s dilemma paper; in-class (roundtable) simulation
	10	21 Jan. 2005, 12:30-16:00 h, 3.01.261	Formal Modeling: Simulation (Part 3 of 3)	
<b>5. Review</b>	11	28 Jan. 2005, 12:30-14:00 h, B-E 2, HPI	What Have We Learnt ? – A Review & Outlook	Computer simulation

**Course Requirements**

1. Five Two-Page Paper Assignments      The papers will be written according to the weekly schedule. Papers must be written in English. British and American English are equally permissible.
- 1.1 Remark:      The short papers shall *not* review the material presented in the assigned readings, it is assumed that you have read it! Instead, focus on the assignment (read the instructions carefully!) and innovate on it in a way not found in the assigned readings. Leave the reader with the impression that your ideas have been carefully chosen and could be expanded upon in a longer seminar paper. Recall: It is harder to write a convincing two-page paper than a long term-paper!
- 1.2 Format:      At minimum, leave one inch margins from all four edges of A-4 sheets. Footnotes are strongly discouraged. All text is 1.5-spaced, 10-12 point font. Papers exceeding the format requirements will not be accepted  
Papers should start with the first and last name of the author, student identification number, name of university, week (see this syllabus), and topic (short).

- 1.3 Submission: Papers have to be submitted no later than the due date listed in the weekly schedule. Send the paper as attachment, formatted in Rich Text Format (RTF) to [dsprinz@rz.uni-potsdam.de](mailto:dsprinz@rz.uni-potsdam.de). Deadline is the Thursday immediately preceding the seminar session, 16:00 h (see weekly schedule for details). Students are responsible for checking their submissions for virus problems and for spell-checking the document prior to submission. Timely submission will be rewarded by a bonus (see below). In enforcing this submission policy, this instructor accepts delays caused by the University of Potsdam internet facilities. All University of Potsdam students are entitled to free [Internet Technology facilities](#) as well as relevant training in how to use them. Students from outside the University of Potsdam are encouraged to check with their home institution. Problems caused by outside internet technology providers are at the risk of the student (e.g., server is down, problems with file attachments, etc.).
- 1.4 Late Submission: Students have to submit potentially missing papers no later than 04 February 2005 (end of lecture period) via e-mail *and* by postal mail (see address on page 1). Submissions following this deadline will not be accepted.
2. Oral Participation The colloquium style of the course provides you with the opportunity to discuss the readings and relevant current developments as relevant to the topics covered in this course.

**Grading**

1. Short Papers: *Four* best (out of five) short papers, each weighting 17.5%. Total=70%.
2. Oral Participation: 30%. This also includes performance in class exercises.

Note: Papers submitted by the due date and time will be given a *bonus* of one third of a grade point. Verification is by the timestamp embossed in the e-mail by the (receiving) University of Potsdam server. Even if you submit late, you will be able to get the maximum grade, however, having a bonus enhances the likelihood of receiving a good course grade.

**Textbooks**

The following textbooks are used throughout this course:

Sprinz, Detlef F., and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias (eds, 2004): *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press [henceforth abbreviated: *MNC*; MK 1100 MOD].

Details of the book, incl. ways to buy it, can be found at [http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/sprinz/mnc\\_parent.html](http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/sprinz/mnc_parent.html).

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier (eds., 2004): *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield [henceforth abbreviated: *RSI*; ordered by the University of Potsdam, Bereichsbibliothek Babelsberg].

**Week 1: 30 Nov. 2004**

**Course Overview**

Overview of the Course & Requirements

Recommended Readings:

MNC, ch. 1

**Week 2: 10 Dec. 2004**

**Epistemological Foundations (Part 1 of 2)**

Introductory Lecture

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Lakatos, Imre (1986): Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes, in: Lakatos, Imre and Alan Musgrave (ed.): Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 91-138 & 173-196.

Wendt, Alexander (1999): Social Theory of International Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-44 [MK 1100 WEN, Semesterapparat Prof. Kleger].

Additional Readings:

King, Gary et al. (1994): Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3-33 [UB: MR 2000; MR 2200].

Mitchell, Ronald and Thomas Bernauer (1998): Empirical Research on International Environmental Policy: Designing Qualitative Case Studies, in: Journal of Environment & Development, vol. 7 (1), 4-31.

**Week 3: 10 Dec. 2004**

**Epistemological Foundations (Part 2 of 2)**

*First Paper Due on Thursday, 09 Dec. 2004, 16:00 h, via e-mail (for details, see below).*

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Cook, Thomas D. and Donald T. Campbell (1979): Quasi-Experimentation: Design & Analysis Issues for Field Settings, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1-94 [UB: MR 2300].

King, Gary et al. (1994): Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 75-150 [UB: MR 2000; MR 2200].

Paper: The reference below refers to a stock market competition between three major groups (Investment Dartboard). Please review the history of all completed and the “current” competitions. Subsequently analyze and summarize the findings and evaluate them from a methodological perspective (see readings for Weeks 2 & 3). The

relevant files will be supplied to you by the instructor via e-mail. Please make sure your e-mail account is ready to receive up to 0.5 MB in attachments.

**Week 4: 17 Dec. 2004**

**Case Study Methods (Part 1 of 2)**

Introductory Lecture  
Colloquium

Required Readings:

MNC, chs. 2-5.

Additional Readings:

Collier, David (1993): The Comparative Method, in: Finifter, Ada W. (ed.): Political Science: The State of the Discipline II, Washington, D.C.: The American Political Science Association, 105-119 [UB: MB 1100].

**Week 5: 17 Dec. 2004**

**Case Study Methods (Part 2 of 2)**

*Second Paper Due on Thursday, 16 Dec. 2004, 16:00 h, via e-mail (for details, see below).*

Colloquium

Required Readings:

RSI, chs. 7 & 8.

King, Gary et al. (1994): Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 34-74 & 150-230 [UB: MR 2000; MR 2200].

Homer-Dixon, Thomas (1996): Strategies for Studying Causation in Complex Ecological-Political Systems, in: Journal of Environment and Development, vol. 5 (2), 132-148.

Additional Readings:

Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune (1970): The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry, New York, N.Y.: Wiley-Interscience.

Schwartz, Daniel M., Tom Deligiannis, and Thomas F. Homer-Dixon (2000): The Environment and Violent Conflict: A Response to Gleditsch's Critique and Some Suggestions for Future Research, in: Environmental Change & Security Project Report, Issue 6.

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier (eds., 2004): *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield

Paper: Homer-Dixon (1996) presents a comparative case research strategy for the investigation of environmental security problems. Which are the main advantages and disadvantages of his approach in view of the readings for Weeks 4 & 5?

**Week 6: 07 Jan. 2005:****Empirical-Quantitative Methods  
(Part 1 of 2)**

Introductory Lecture  
Colloquium

Required Readings:

MNC, chs. 6-9.

**Week 7: 07 Jan. 2005****Empirical-Quantitative Methods  
(Part 2 of 2)**

*Third Paper Due on Thursday, 06 Jan. 2005, 16:00 h, via e-mail (for details, see below).*

Colloquium

Required Readings:

Esty, Daniel C. et al. (1999): State Failure Task Force: Phase II Findings, in: Environmental Change & Security Project Report, Issue 5, 49-72.  
<http://wwics.si.edu/topics/pubs/ACF26A.pdf>.

King, Gary, and Langche Zeng (2001): Improving Forecasts of State Failure, in: World Politics, vol. 53, 623-658, <http://gking.harvard.edu/files/civil.pdf>.

Additional Readings:

RSI, chs. 10 & 11.

Greene, William H. (2002): *Econometric Analysis*. fifth edition ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Hauge, Wenche and Tanja Ellingsen (1998): Beyond Environmental Scarcity: Causal Pathways to Conflict, in: Journal of Peace Research, vol. 35 (3), 299-317.

Kennedy, Peter (2003): *A Guide to Econometrics*. 5th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Sprinz, Detlef F. (1998): Domestic Politics and European Acid Rain Regulation, in: Underdal, Arild (ed.): The Politics of International Environmental Management, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 41-66.

Paper: Abstract a quantitative article from the 2003 or 2004 volumes of a major journal (e.g., Journal of Conflict Resolution, International Studies Quarterly, Conflict and Cooperation, International Organization, etc.) using the [David Singer \(The University of Michigan\) tableau](#). The goal of this exercise is to abstract an article according to predefined categories and to focus on the interplay of theory and methodology.

Please add a copy of the journal article during paper submission (preferably an electronic version).

**Week 8: 14 Jan. 2005****Formal Modeling: Game Theory  
(Part 1 of 3)**

Introductory Lecture  
Colloquium

**Required Readings:**

MNC, chs. 10-14.

**Additional Readings:**

- Axelrod, Robert (1984): The Evolution of Cooperation, New York: Basic Books [QC 010 AXE].
- Helm, Carsten and Detlef Sprinz (1999): “Measuring the Effectiveness of International Environmental Regimes,” in: Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 45 (5), 630-652, [http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/sprinz/doc/Sprinz\\_Helm2000.pdf](http://www.uni-potsdam.de/u/sprinz/doc/Sprinz_Helm2000.pdf) .
- Olson, Mancur (1971): The Logic of Collective Action - Public Goods and the Theory of Groups, Cambridge: Harvard University Press [MR 5600 OLS].

**Week 9: 14 Jan. 2005:****Formal Modeling: Game Theory  
(Part 2 of 3)**

*Fourth Paper Due on Thursday, 13 Jan. 2005, 16:00 h, via e-mail (for details, see below).*

Prisoners' Dilemma Game Played in Class

**Required Readings:**

- Weingast, Barry (2002): Rational Choice Institutionalism, in: Katznelson, Ira and Helen Milner (eds.): Political Science: The State of the Discipline, W W Norton, 660-692 [MB 2000 POL, Präsenzbestand].
- Powell, Robert (2002): Game Theory, International Relations Theory and the Hobbesian Stylization, in: Katznelson, Ira and Helen Milner (eds.): Political Science: The State of the Discipline, W W Norton, 755-783 [MB 2000 POL, Präsenzbestand].
- Cameron, Charles M. and Rebecca Morton (2002): Formal Theory Meets Data, in: Katznelson, Ira and Helen Milner (eds.): Political Science: The State of the Discipline, W W Norton, 784-804 [MB 2000 POL, Präsenzbestand].

**Additional Readings:**

- Allan, Pierre and Cederic Dupont (1999): International Relations Theory and Game Theory: Baroque Modeling Choices and Empirical Robustness, in: International Political Science Review, vol. 20, 23-47 [UB: Z03390].

Allan, Pierre and Christian Schmidt (eds., 1994): Game Theory and International Relations - Preferences, Information and Empirical Evidence, Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Course in Game Theory: <http://william-king.www.drexel.edu/top/eco/game/game.html>

Green, Donald P. and Ian Shapiro (1994): Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science, New Haven: Yale University Press, [MD 7000 GRE].

Morrow, James D. (1994): Game Theory for Political Scientists, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press [MB 2500 MOR].

Walt, Stephen M. (1999): Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies, in: International Security, vol. 23, 5-48 & discussion in vol. 24, issue 2 [Z03359].

Paper: Discuss the Prisoner's Dilemma (PD) game: For which types of problems in international relations is the PD game a good representation and for which types of problems is it inadequate?

**Week 10: 21 Jan. 2005****Formal Modeling: Simulation  
(Part 3 of 3)**

Simulation Exercise

Required Readings:

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2003. Principles of International Politics - People's Power, Preference, and Perceptions. second edition ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, ch. 18 (583-615); also consult the website <http://bdm.cqpress.com>.

Additional Readings:

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2003. Principles of International Politics - People's Power, Preference, and Perceptions. second edition ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce (1994): Political Forecasting: An Expected Utility Method, in: Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Frans N. Stokman (ed.): European Community Decision-Making: Models, Applications, and Comparisons, New Haven: Yale University Press, 71-104 [MK 5100 EUR].

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Frans N. Stokman (ed., 1994): European Community Decision-Making: Models, Applications, and Comparisons, New Haven: Yale University Press [MK 5100; MD 7300].

**Week 11: 28 Jan. 2005****What Have We Learnt ? – A Review & Outlook**

*Fifth Paper Due on Tuesday, 17 December 2002, 16:00 h, via e-mail (for details, see below).*

Review & Outlook  
Course Evaluation



Required Readings:

MNC, chs. 1 & 15.

RSI, chs. 1-2, 12 & 13.

Additional Readings:

Miles, E. L., A. Underdal, et al. (2002): Environmental Regime Effectiveness: Confronting Theory with Evidence, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, chs. 1, 2, 17 [QT 200 ENV].

Paper: You will construct a simple simulation exercise yourself using <http://bdm.cqpress.com>, describe the inputs used, as well as the main results.

Please choose a relevant political decision-making problem, preferably from international relations, and simplify it such that ideally between 4 and 6 actors (or aggregated groups) are involved. Research the issue using traditional and electronic sources. Simplify the problem and determine the crucial dimension to be used for coding the data for each group (position, resources, salience) (see Bueno de Mesquita (2003) and the web-based simulation software with the on-line tutorial -> <http://bdm.cqpress.com>).

Overall, I expect to receive a two-page paper, *plus* input and output files. In your paper, please describe the decision-making problem in compact form, describe the sources you used, and report the simulation results as well as possible sensitivity analyses. In addition, please sketch briefly an advanced research strategy that you would pursue if you were given more time.