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**Political Science 270**  
**Mechanisms of International Relations**

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Harkness 320  
Office Hours: Wed. 1{2 PM  
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**Course Information:**  
Fall 2012  
3:25{6:05 Thursday  
Harkness 115

The last ten years or so have seen a major revolution in the social sciences. Instead of trying to discover and test grand "covering laws" that have universal validity and tremendous scope| think Newton's gravity or Einstein's relativity| the social sciences are in the process of switching to more narrow and middle-range theories and explanations, often referred to as causal mechanisms.

In the bulk of this course students will be introduced to a range of such causal mechanisms with applications in international relations. Although these causal mechanisms can loosely be

The research proposal must clearly state the *central question*, the proposed *central answer*, and potential *competing explanations*.

### ***Academic Integrity***

Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (<http://www.rochester.edu/living/urhere/handbook/discipline2.html#XI1>). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer, and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty, on which I serve.

Teaching Assistant:

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### ***Texts***

I will provide a hand-out with the typed up lecture notes, currently about 90 pages two weeks before the Mid-term, and two weeks before the Final.

The following books are required reading:

1. Jon Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* New Td [(Hng)-3.7

## Course Outline

Thursday August 30

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Thursday September 6

### 2. Thinking Strategically

Michael Suk-Young Chwe, *Jane Austen, Game Theorist*; unpublished book manuscript, will be emailed as a pdf.

or:

Marek Kaminski, *Games Prisoners Play; the Tragicomic Worlds of Polish Prison*; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Thursday September 13

### 3. Causal Mechanisms

Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, Parts 1{3, pp. 3{171.

Charles Tilly, "Mechanisms in Political Processes," in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol.4, June 2001, 21{41. Available at <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.21>

Thursday September 20

### 4. The Prisoner's Dilemma

Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, (January 1978), pp.167{214

Robert Axelrod, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7 in *The Evolution of Cooperation*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984.

Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 1968, Vol. 162: 1243{1248.

Elinor Ostrom, "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms," in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* Vol. 14, No. 3, (Summer 2000), 137{158

Thursday September 27

## 5. Coordination

Russell Hardin, *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995; Chapter 1{4.

Randall Calvert, "Leadership and Its Basis in Problems of Social Coordination." *International Political Science Review* 13 (1992), pp. 7{24.

Thursday October 4

## 6. Coordination; Tipping Models

Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," in *World Politics*, Vol.44, No.1 (October 1991), pp.7{48.

Duncan Snidal, "Coordination versus Prisoners' Dilemma: Implications for International Cooperation and Regimes," *American Political Science Review*, 79 (4): 923{942 (December 1985).

Gerry Mackie, "Ending Footbinding and Inbulation: A Convention Account," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 6 (December 1996), 999{1017

Barry R. Weingast, "The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (June 1997), 245{263.

Thomas Schelling, "Thermostats, Lemons, and Other Families of Models," Chapter 3 in Thomas Schelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*, New York: Norton, 1978.

### Optional

Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Back Bay Books; (January 2002)

Thursday October 11

## 7. Commitment Problems

John C. Harsanyi, "Advances in Understanding Rational Behavior," Chapter 3 in Jon Elster, (ed.) *Rational Choice*, New York: NYU Press, 1986, 82{108.

Thomas Schelling, Chapter 2, "The art of commitment," in *Arms and Influence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966; 35{91

Barbara F. Walter, "The critical barrier to civil war settlement," *International Organization*, 51 (3): 335{364 Summer 1997

James D. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the spread of Ethnic Conflict," Chapter 5 in David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, (eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: fear diffusion, and escalation*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998, 107{126.

Barry Weingast and Rui de Figueiredo, "Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in Jack Snyder and Barbara Walter (eds.), *Civil wars, insecurity, and intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Thursday October 18

8. Mid Term Exam

Thursday October 25

Students who are writing a paper for this class must hand in their one page proposal on this day.

9. **Bargaining**

Abhinay Muthoo. 2000. "A Non-Technical Introduction to Bargaining Theory." *World Economics* 1(2): 145-166

Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics, The Logic of Two-Level Games," in *International Organization* 42 (Summer 1988): 427-460

Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960/1980. Chapters 2 & 3, 21-80. "

James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," in *International Organization*, Vol.49 (3) (Summer 1995), pp.379-414.

Amartya Sen. 1990. "Gender & Cooperative Conflict," Chapter 8 in Irene Tinker, ed. *Persistent Inequalities*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Thursday November 1

10. **Signalling (Tying Hands, Sinking Costs)**

James D. Fearon, "Signaling foreign policy interests | Tying hands versus sinking costs," in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41 (1): 68-90 February 1997.

Kenneth Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, Chapters 2-4.

Barry R. Weingast, "The Role of Credible Commitments in State Finance," *Public Choice* 66 (1): 89-97 July 1990.

Thursday November 8

11. **Principal-Agent Models**

H. E. Goemans, *War and Punishment*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000; Chapters 1-3.

James D. Fearon, "Domestic political audiences and the escalation of international disputes," *American Political Science Review*, 88 (3): 577-592. September 1994.

Thursday November 15

## 12. Reputation

Barbara F. Walter, *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts are so Violent*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009

Reinhard Selten, "The Chain Store Paradox," *Theory and Decision*, 9 (2): 127-159

Thursday November 22

## 13. Institutions in International Relations

Ronald Rogowski, "Institutions as Constraints on Strategic Choice," Chapter 4 in David A. Lake and Robert Powell (eds.), *Strategic Choice in International Relations*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Lisa L. Martin & Beth A. Simmons, "Theories and Empirical Studies of International Institutions," in *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Autumn 1998, pp.729-757.

Kenneth W. Abbott & Duncan Snidal, "Hard and Soft Law in International Governance." *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 3, Summer 2000, pp. 421-456.

Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson & Duncan Snidal, "The Rational Design of International Institutions," in *International Organizations*, Vol. 55, No. 4, Autumn 2001, pp. 761-799.

Barbara Koremenos, "Contracting around international uncertainty," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol.99, Issue 4, November 2005, pp.549-565.

Thursday November 29

## 14. Psychological Mechanisms

Jack S. Levy, "Loss Aversion, Framing Effects, and International Conflict, Perspectives from Prospect Theory," in Manus Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies II*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000: 193-221.

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," Chapter 5 in Jon Elster (ed.), *Rational Choice*, New York, NYU Press, 1986.

Thursday December 6: Last Day of Class

## 15. Psychological Mechanisms

John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, "The Psychological Foundations of Culture." Chapter 1 in Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby (eds.), *The Adapted Mind, Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press 1992. Pp. 19-136.

Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, "Cognitive Adaptations for Social Exchange," Chapter 3 in Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby (eds.), *The Adapted Mind, Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press 1992. Pp. 163-228.

## Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research

### 1. *What is the central question?*

Why is it important (theoretically, substantively)?

What is being explained (what is the relationship between variables)?

### *What is the central*

What is the relationship between variables (what is the relationship between variables)?