Committee on International Relations

Chair
  • Paul Staniland

Professors
  • Michael Albertus, Political Science
  • Ralph A. Austen (Emeritus), History
  • Kathleen Belew, History
  • John W. Boyer, History
  • Austin Carson, Political Science
  • Dipesh Chakrabarty, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, History
  • Chiara Cordelli, Political Science
  • Terry Clark, Sociology
  • Bruce Cumings, History
  • Adom Getachew, Political Science
  • Tom Ginsberg, Political Science
  • Andreas Glaeser, Sociology
  • Robert Gzesh, Law
  • Gary B. Herrigel, Political Science
  • James Hevia, History
  • Kimberley Kay Hoang, Sociology
  • William Howell, Political Science
  • Benjamin Lessing, Political Science
  • Darryl Li, Anthropology
  • Charles Lipson, Political Science
  • Joseph P. Masco, Anthropology
  • John J. Mearsheimer, Political Science
  • Monika Nalepa, Political Science
  • Robert Pape, Political Science
  • Jennifer Pitts, Political Science
  • Paul Poast, Political Science
  • Eric Posner, Law
  • Paul Staniland, Political Science
  • Nathan Tarcov, Political Science, Social Thought
  • Jennifer Trinitapoli, Sociology
  • Lisa Wedeen, Political Science
  • Dali Yang, Political Science
  • Dingxin Zhao, Sociology
  • Marvin Zonis, Business

Senior Lecturers
  • Michael Reese, International Relations
  • Matthias Staisch, International Relations

General Information

The Committee on International Relations (CIR) offers a one year program of graduate studies leading to the A.M. (Master of Arts) degree; admitted students may apply for a one-year extension during their first year of study to allow for further specialization. CIR makes the resources of a great university available to students seeking a firm grounding in the theory and practice of international relations. An A.M. from CIR will prepare students for a wide range of careers for which the masters is increasingly the entry level degree, as well as for further academic or professional training in political science, law, and business administration. Students interested in combining a CIR A.M. with an M.B.A. can apply to a joint degree program with the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. A dual A.M./M.A. degree with the Harris School of Public Policy or an A.M./J.D. with the University of Chicago Law School is also available.
CIR provides students with a vibrant intellectual community and core course training in international relations theory. CIR's interdisciplinary faculty and curriculum encourage students to explore a wide range of topics spanning the economic, political, security and social factors shaping international life. Students will learn to craft critical and creative responses to the challenges of the present, including globalization, terrorism, and human rights. Throughout the academic year, each student works closely with an assigned preceptor on all aspects of the program, from selecting courses to designing and writing the master's paper.

CIR offers dedicated counseling and application support to students pursuing further academic study in doctoral or professional school programs. CIR graduates have received and presently pursue doctorates in Political Science as well as degrees in the various professional schools, including law and business administration, at both the University of Chicago and other major research institutions in the U.S. and abroad. An international network of CIR alumni, in concert with the University's office of Career Counseling and Placement Services, assists current students in identifying career possibilities and applying for positions.

Preceptors

Students work closely with one of the preceptors in the CIR. Preceptors guide students in defining their areas of academic specialization as well as in choosing courses. Preceptors also assist students in selecting faculty sponsors for their A.M. papers and take an active role in guiding and evaluating the research and writing of these papers.

Programs and Requirements

Students pursuing the Committee on International Relations' Master of Arts degree are expected to complete nine graduate level courses with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and a thirty-five to fifty page master's thesis that must be approved by both a faculty sponsor and a CIR preceptor. In addition, students must successfully complete the introductory seminar Perspectives in International Relations (offered in the Autumn Quarter) and participate in the master's thesis workshop throughout the academic year. Master's workshops are led by CIR preceptors and give students the opportunity to present and discuss their research projects as they develop from proposal to final draft.

Students may apply for a second year of study A.M. with specialization. This second year requires an additional three quarters of residence during which the student takes an additional nine courses. Students apply for the second year with specialization during their first year in residence.

The joint degree program with the Chicago Booth School of Business is administered through the Division of the Social Sciences. Students pursuing a joint degree must fulfill all the requirements of the CIR degree in addition to the requirements of the respective professional degree, though there are some exceptions. Students enrolled in the dual J.D./A.M. program with the Law School take nine courses in their fourth year of study, three of which are typically law-school courses and the remaining six from the CIR list of approved courses. Students enrolled in the joint M.B.A./A.M. take a reduced course load of 14 courses in the Booth School of Business and the full nine courses in CIR. Students interested in the dual A.M./M.A. degree program should contact the Harris School of Public Policy for more information.

Admission

Applicants to the Committee on International Relations are expected to meet the graduate admissions requirements of the division. Submission of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores is required, except for the joint CIR and Booth School of Business degree program, where the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) is accepted. Applicants from non-English speaking countries must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

CIR is designed to be completed in one academic year (three or four quarters on a full time basis). All financial aid is merit based, and the CIR program offers partial tuition scholarships on a highly competitive basis.

How to Apply

The application process for admission and financial aid for all Social Sciences graduate programs is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online at: https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/. Most required supplemental material can be uploaded into the application.

Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to ssd-admissions@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-8415.

Applicants interested in the dual J.D./A.M. program must apply separately to both the Law School (1111 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637) and the Committee on International Relations. Applicants interested in the joint M.B.A./A.M. program must submit their application to The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, which then refers the application to CIR. Please contact the Harris School of Public Policy regarding the application procedure for the dual A.M./M.A. degree.

Further Information

Additional program information may be found at the Committee's website, http://cir.uchicago.edu/. You can contact the CIR preceptors at (773) 702-8073, and E.G. Enbar, Student Affairs Administrator, at (773) 702-8312 or egenbar@uchicago.edu.
International Relations Courses

INRE 30000. Perspectives on International Relations. 000 Units.
This required, non-credit course is designed to introduce students to the craft of research in International Relations. For the first half of Autumn quarter, the full cohort will meet for lectures on two central themes: (i) the fundamental aspects of conducting research in the social sciences, and, specifically, in International Relations; and (ii) preparation of the MA thesis proposal. Then, the three preceptor student groups will meet for workshops over the latter half of the quarter. The purpose of the workshops is to give each student the opportunity to present his or her proposal draft.
Instructor(s): Paul Staniland Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Open only to CIR students.

INRE 30600. Constructing a Society of Human Rights: A Psychological Framework. 100 Units.
This course is designed to discuss the ways that cultural and social psychology contribute to understandings about human rights conceptually, and how human rights issues emerge from social dynamics. Over the course of the quarter, students will learn about theories on intergroup conflict and prejudice, how an individual’s beliefs emerge from social contexts and shape their relationships with others, how obedience to authority is created and abused, and how social positioning and narratives influence conceptions of self and other. We will also discuss the relevance and impact of psychological study and data on human rights issues.
Equivalent Course(s): CHDV 25220, PBPL 25220, HMRT 25220

INRE 31602. Human Rights: Philosophical Foundations. 100 Units.
Human rights are claims of justice that hold merely in virtue of our shared humanity. In this course we will explore philosophical theories of this elementary and crucial form of justice. Among topics to be considered are the role that dignity and humanity play in grounding such rights, their relation to political and economic institutions, and the distinction between duties of justice and claims of charity or humanitarian aid. Finally we will consider the application of such theories to concrete, problematic and pressing problems, such as global poverty, torture and genocide. (A) (I)
Instructor(s): B. Laurence Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 21002, HMRT 21002, HIST 39319, PHIL 31002, HIST 29319, HMRT 31002, MAPH 42002, PHIL 21002

INRE 31700. Human Rights II: History and Theory. 100 Units.
This course is concerned with the theory and the historical evolution of the modern human rights regime. It discusses the emergence of a modern “human rights” culture as a product of the formation and expansion of the system of nation-states and the concurrent rise of value-driven social mobilizations. It proceeds to discuss human rights in two prevailing modalities. First, it explores rights as protection of the body and personhood and the modern, Western notion of individualism. Second, it inquires into rights as they affect groups (e.g., ethnicities and, potentially, transnational corporations) or states.
Instructor(s): TBA Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 30200, HIST 29302, LLSO 27100, HIST 39302, CRES 29302, HMRT 20200

INRE 32100. Civil-Military Relations and the Politics of Militaries. 100 Units.
How do we define a military? What is a military’s purpose? How have militaries around the world embedded themselves into the social and institutional fabric of the state? How do military leaders act compared to their civilian counterparts when placed in similar political roles? This seminar will help students answer the aforementioned questions by introducing them to the literature on civil-military relations. The general structure of the class readings will focus on two primary themes. The first half of the course will introduce students to long-standing debates over the role of politicization in military organizations and whether such trends are desirable or not. The latter half of the class will focus on research that analyzes the militarization of politics and how such trends might subvert traditional notions of the military profession. This course is intended for CIR students and all course assignments will be structured around helping students complete the writing of their MA theses. Non-CIR students should contact the instructor directly about taking the class.
Instructor(s): Kevin Weng Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): CIR students only.

INRE 34600. Case Study Methods. 100 Units.
How do social scientists utilize case studies as a method for identifying causal relationships? What are the epistemological assumptions that underlie the use of case studies? How similar or different are these assumptions from those of large-N and other quantitative methodologies? This seminar will help students address the aforementioned questions by introducing them to ongoing methodological debates within the social sciences surrounding the use of case studies. Students will be exposed to readings and discussions on case selection, selection bias, conceptualization and measurement issues, historical process tracing, data transparency, and external validity. This course is intended for CIR students and all course assignments will be structured around helping students complete the writing of their MA theses. Non-CIR students should contact the instructor directly about taking the class.
Instructor(s): Kevin Weng Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): CIR students only!
INRE 34700. Academic Presentation in International Relations & Thesis Preparation. 100 Units.
This class will provide instruction in the norms of publicly presenting one's research in front of an academic audience. Using examples drawn from the literature on International Relations and Comparative Politics, students will learn about the typical practices of structuring a research project for academic consumption. Specific topics will include: addressing alternative hypotheses, formulating a literature review, addressing missing data issues and selection bias, formulating an empirical puzzle, tenets of constructive criticism, etc. In the latter half of the course, students will present their own work-in-progress research to the class body where they will be expected to utilize the lessons from previous sessions. CIR & MAPSS students who wish to complete their MA theses by Spring or Summer deadlines are particularly encouraged to apply.
Instructor(s): K. Weng Terms Offered: Spring

INRE 34800. Historical Processes of State Formation. 100 Units.
How did states come into being? How do we assess “state-ness” or the “strength” of state institutions? Why did nation-states become the primary actor in the international system instead of alternative forms of political organization such as empires, city-states, or city-leagues? What explains variations in the institutional makeup of states? This course helps students formulate an initial set of answers to the previous set of questions by providing an overview of the state-formation literature. Specifically, the class will cover theories that address how states come into being, organize their societies, extract resources, and structure their political institutions. Course readings will initially start with an introduction to varying conceptualizations of the state before moving onto a discussion of how to operationalize and measure degrees of “state-ness”. The remaining course readings will explore themes surrounding war, colonialism, civil society, taxation, economic development, & (ultimately) state breakdown.
Instructor(s): K. Weng Terms Offered: Winter

INRE 36001. Society, Politics and Security in Israel. 100 Units.
This graduate course examines Israel's unique DNA through a thorough examination of its history, society, politics and security challenges. We shall explore these traits as manifested in the defining chapters of Israel's history, since the early stages of the Zionist driven immigration of Jews to the Holy Land, through the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948, until present time. Students will work with primary sources, diverse theoretical perspectives, and rich historiographical material to better understand the Israeli experience, through domestic, regional and international perspectives. Particular attention will be given to the emergence of the Israeli vibrant society and functioning democracy in the background of continuous conflict and wars. The course will explore topics such as: How Israel reconciles between the imperatives and narratives of democracy and Jewishness, between collective ethos and heterogeneous tribalism, and between protracted security challenges and resilience. We will also discuss the multifaceted aspects of the changing Israeli security doctrine and practice, in light of regional threats and international involvement.
Instructor(s): M. Elran Terms Offered: Autumn Equivalent Course(s): PBPL 28139, JWSC 28139

INRE 36002. Security, Counter Terrorism and Resilience, The Israeli Case. 100 Units.
This course will examine how Western liberal democracies respond to the threat of terrorism and sub-conventional “hybrid” warfare, with a specific focus on the case of Israel. The goal of the course is to develop a critical perspective on the nature of the contemporary security challenges facing democracies, how these threats are understood by domestic audiences, and the role of internal politics in shaping responses at the national and community levels. Empirically, the course covers the developments of Israeli security strategy and practice from the period before the establishment of the state in 1948 to the present – with particular attention given to the role of evolving conventional, sub-conventional and non-conventional threats. The course will broadly address complex topics such as protracted terrorism of diverse kinds, counter terrorism by different means, and the emerging role of the doctrine of resilience as an alternative paradigm for defending against contemporary hybrid security risks. Throughout the course, students will critically engage with primary sources, diverse theoretical views, and rich historical material representing a wide variety of scholarly, intellectual, and policy perspectives.
Instructor(s): Meir Elran Terms Offered: Winter Equivalent Course(s): PBPL 26020

INRE 40801. Seminar on the International Politics of Asia. 100 Units.
This seminar is a graduate-level survey of the contemporary cross-national politics of Asia. It centers the perspectives brought to bear on these issues by the state and society of modern India. The course covers four overarching areas of scholarship: (1) statebuilding and its associated practices of national identity construction; (2) civil-military relations; (3) intrastate conflict and contentious politics including human rights and the rule of law; (4) the political economy of development and environmental sustainability since liberalization; and (5) regional geopolitical and geoeconomic competition. This survey is offered distinctly from, but as a pre-requisite for, participation in CIR’s March 2020 Asian International Relations Seminar in Mumbai and Delhi. The course emphatically welcomes all students with a substantive interest in the region’s politics, regardless of their ability to join us for this subsequent trip.
Instructor(s): Michael Reese, Matthias Staisch Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Open to CIR students and all others with instructors’ consent
INRE 43000. Core Seminar: International Order and Security. 100 Units.
This seminar is a graduate-level survey of international order and security, covering two general areas of scholarship: (1) theories of international order and instability and (2) strategic interaction approaches to international security. The first half of the seminar is devoted to several current approaches to the problem of international (dis)order. Students will be introduced to the dominant theoretical perspectives -- realism, liberalism, and constructivism -- and their competing approaches to international order at various levels of analysis. The second half of the seminar explores theories of strategic interaction regarding the likelihood of war and the maintenance of peace. The concepts of coercion, deterrence, compellence, and reassurance will be discussed at the "general" strategic level; whereas crisis bargaining will be introduced at the "immediate" tactical level. The ultimate goal of the seminar is to provide students with a solid theoretical foundation for future explorations of academic and policy questions of special interest to them.
Instructor(s): M. Reese Terms Offered: Autumn, Winter
Note(s): Open only to CIR students

INRE 43800. Core Seminar: International Political Economy. 100 Units.
This seminar is a graduate-level survey of international political economy (IPE). It addresses three prominent questions: (1) How do governments coordinate to regulate the cross-border flow of goods, services, and capital? In particular, what are the relative merits of relying on decentralized, or market-based institutions, as opposed to centralized, or state-based ones, for doing so? (2) What are the distributional implications of these coordinating devices? Specifically, what kind of cleavages constitute the distributional struggles that characterize today's global economy? (3) Why are the systems of international exchange prone to periodic crisis, and how do governments seek to restore stability, and insure against future volatility? By the end of this part of the core sequence, students will be able to (1) critically evaluate competing (empirical) measurements of the key concepts which constitute theoretical propositions in IPE; and (2) craft a research design that adequately matches a theoretical claim in IPE with relevant empirical data.
Instructor(s): M. Staisch Terms Offered: Autumn, Winter
Note(s): Open only to CIR students

INRE 43801. Seminar on the International Politics of Asia. 100 Units.
This seminar is a graduate-level survey of the contemporary cross-national politics of Asia. It centers the perspectives brought to bear on these issues by the state and society of modern India. The course covers four overarching areas of scholarship: (1) statebuilding and its associated practices of national identity construction; (2) civil-military relations; (3) intrastate conflict and contentious politics including human rights and the rule of law; (4) the political economy of development and environmental sustainability since liberalization; and (5) regional geopolitical and geoeconomic competition. This survey is offered distinctly from, but as a pre-requisite for, participation in CIR's March 2020 Asian International Relations Seminar in Mumbai and Delhi. The course emphatically welcomes all students with a substantive interest in the region's politics, regardless of their ability to join us for this subsequent trip.
Instructor(s): M. Reese, M. Staisch Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Open to CIR students and all others with instructors' consent

INRE 44802. Network Theory for International Political Economy. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the ongoing network turn in international political economy (IPE). It has three goals. First, students will replace purely metaphorical (and vague) talk of networks with focused propositions about the network properties and dynamics of contemporary phenomena such as international hierarchy, regional fragmentation amidst global integration, and the fate of sovereign territoriality in an age of (violent) transnational activism. Second, students will ponder competing explanations of the network turn in IPE: have IPE scholars abandoned conventional analytical tools in favor of network theory, because the conventional toolkit already came with rudimentary network-theoretic devices that simply needed sharpening; or did some changes in the real international economy prompt the shift? Finally, students will critically assess the ability of SNT to be a vehicle for innovative social science. They will do this, in part, by devising a research proposal of their own that assesses the validity and utility of testing a single network-theoretic proposition against some conventional competitor.
Instructor(s): M. Staisch Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 44801

INRE 46500. MA Thesis Workshop. 000 Units.
This required, non-credit course is designed to continue the preceptor-group collaboration established in Autumn's Perspectives (INRE 30000). The purpose of the workshop is to give each student the opportunity to present his or her thesis research as it develops during their first year in the CIR program. Must be taken in each of Winter and Spring quarters.

INRE 49700. Reading/Research: International Relations. 100 Units.
This course allows students the opportunity to receive course-credit for their thesis research. It may only be taken once.
Instructor(s): P. Staniland Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Prerequisite(s): Open only to 1st year CIR students
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.