

Advanced International Relations (MP-EIP-1801; MP-EIP-2501; EO-C1) Bargaining & Negotiations

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1 Course Description and Goals

This course introduces students to foreign policy negotiations. Negotiations are a prominent feature in all areas of international politics. The module investigates both theoretical and practical aspects of negotiations with the aim to understand how international outcomes come about and how they can be improved. We will focus on the analytical tools needed to understand international negotiations within the theory of International Relations, and in particular the role of bargaining in resolving international conflict. However, we will also consider the practical issues of international negotiations, such as the effect of different negotiation styles, including negotiation strategies and tactics, and the influence of uncertainty.

The goals of this module are to:

1. demonstrate the role of negotiation in international politics;
2. introduce analytical tools (game theory) to understand international negotiations;
3. allow students to practice the tools they learn within an international negotiation simulation.

2 Expectations & Course Organization

This is an M.A./graduate-level seminar. Students should have attended *Politics II: Introductory International Relations* (MP-CBa-1804).

This is an M.A./graduate-level seminar. This class does not have weekly readings. General literature on negotiations and game theory is listed below. Instead the course will feature two homework assignments and one simulation that lasts several weeks.

In-class participation is encouraged and will likely improve the final grade. To pass this course, you will write a short individual and a longer group-based essay.

The seminar sessions take place on Wednesday from 16:00 to 17:30 in room E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021). For exceptions check your personal calendar on UWE or the syllabus.

My office hours are on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 13:00 to 13:45. Please register for an appointment at <https://calendly.com/ncbormann/office-hours>.

3 Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

In order to obtain the credits for this course you need to submit three pieces of work:

1. Homework 1 is due on Sunday, May 31st, 2026 at 23:59 Central European Summer Time.
2. Homework 2 is due on Sunday, June 28th, 2026 at 23:59 Central European Summer Time.
3. A group-based 4,500 words simulation report due on Sunday, July 26th 2026 at 23:59 Central European Summer Time.

Upload your work to moodle.

Each group can at most encompass three members. Detailed instructions for both assignments will be posted on Moodle.

4 Missing and Late Work

University rules apply.

5 Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

The following readings can be helpful in understanding the course, but they are not mandatory. Some of them can be found on Moodle, some of them can be borrowed from me directly, and some might be available versus inter-library loan.

James D. Fearon. Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–379, 1995

Robert Gibbons. An introduction to applicable game theory. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 11(1):127–149, 1997

Abhinay Muthoo et al. A non-technical introduction to bargaining theory. *World Economics*, 1(2):145–166, 2000

Joel Watson. *Strategy: An Introduction to Game Theory*. Norton, New York, NY, 2nd edition, 2008. 45

Kydd, Andrew H. (2015), *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Princeton University Press.

Macartan Humphreys. *Political Games*. W. W. Norton, New York, NY, 2017

Week 1: What is a Negotiation?

April 22nd, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Starkey, Brigid et al. (2009), *Negotiating a Complex World*. Chapter 1-2.

Kydd, Andrew H. (2015), *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Chapters 1-2.

Week 2: Intro to Game Theory – Preferences, Normal-form Game, and Nash Equilibrium

April 29th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Kydd, Andrew H. (2015), *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Chapters 2-3.

Starkey, Brigid et al. *Negotiating a Complex World*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 5.

Week 3: Threats in Bargaining – Credibility, Backward Induction, and Subgame-Perfection

May 6th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Hovi, Jon, *Games, Threats, and Treaties. Understanding Commitments in International Relations*. Chapter 2, pp. 11-30, and Chapter 3, pp. 31-54.

Week 4: Uncertainty in Bargaining – Expected Utility and Mixed Strategies

May 13th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Kydd, Andrew H. (2015), *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Chapter 4.

Week 5: Uncertainty in Bargaining II – Incomplete and Imperfect Information Games

May 20th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Starkey, Brigid et al., *Negotiating a Complex World*. Chapter 6

Week 6: No class

May 27th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

No readings.

Week 7: The Psychology of Negotiations

June 3rd, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Kahnemann & Tversky (1983) "Choices and Value Frames."

Christopher K Butler. Prospect theory and coercive bargaining. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51(2):227–250, 2007

Week 8: Bargaining – Solving a Conflict by Reaching an Agreement

June 10th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Muthoo “A non-technical introduction to bargaining.”

Kydd, Andrew H. (2015), *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Chapters 5.

Week 9: Bargaining and the Puzzle of War & Start Simulation

June 17th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

James D. Fearon. Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3):379–379, 1995

Kydd, Andrew H. (2015), *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach*. Chapters 6.

Week 10: Reading Week

June 24th, 2026

No Seminar Session

Revision and catch-up

Week 11: Simulation

July 1st, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Week 12: Simulation

July 8th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Week 13: Simulation

July 15th, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)

Week 14: Simulation

July 22nd, 2026

E.021 - Seminarraum (NB-BEGE.021)
