

17.914

International Politics in the New Century - via Simulation, Interactive Gaming, and 'Edutainment'

SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR:

Prof. Nazli Choucri

COURSE MEETING TIMES

Lectures: 3 day workshop, 3 hours / day

OBJECTIVE

This workshop is designed to introduce students to different perspectives on politics and the state of the world through new visualization techniques and approaches to interactive political gaming (and selective 'edutainment.'). Specifically, we shall explore applications of interactive tools (such as video and web-based games, blogs or simulations) to examine critical challenges in international politics of the 21C century focusing specifically on general insights and specific understandings generated by operational uses of core concepts in political science.

DAY 1: GLOBAL GAMING AND GLOBAL AGENDA

Focus

Introduction and in-depth look at the new challenges of the global system through immersion in a cyber-narrative and on designing a computer game of crisis and decision in International Relations.

DAY 2: VISUALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Focus

Introduction to different visualization tools in the social sciences, with special emphasis on the contributions of visualization to the logic of scientific inquiry. Particular focus on relevant

scholarship and research via a survey of recent projects and advances in scientific visualization. Students will also be introduced to Geographic Information Systems as a specific tool for managing geographically referenced data. (During Day 3 students will also participate in a hands-on ArcGIS tutorial, including how to retrieve data, create simple map representations, and interpret the results from visual renditions produced.)

DAY 3: ENHANCING GLOBAL AGENDA AND VISUALIZATION STRATEGIES: EXPLORING PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Focus

Illustrate the interactions of, or convergence between, insights obtained via interactive gaming and visualization techniques. Reflect on the representation and learning process. Review concepts and implications for international relations. Review implications of assignments and hands-on efforts so far.

GRADING

Grading for the homework assignments and final project for this course are weighted equally.

CALENDAR

DAY/TIME	TOPICS	KEY DATES
Day 1: Global Gaming and Global Agenda		
10:00 - 10:20	Introduction <i>Challenges, Concepts, Theories, Outcomes</i> <i>General Workshop Logic</i>	
	What, Why, How and When? What this Course is about -	
10:20 - 10:30	Day 1: (a) Understanding How Games can Help Teach Many Important Concepts in Political Science (b) Making the Game Forces you to Think out all the Possible Actions and Consequences	

DAY/TIME	TOPICS	KEY DATES
	<p>Day 2:</p> <p>(a) Looking at a Situation From Different Perspectives can Bring Different Insights - so Visualization Becomes Very Important</p> <p>(b) Hands on Work Plotting out IR Storylines with Philip Tan</p> <p>Day 3:</p> <p>(a) Hands on ArcGIS</p> <p>Homeworks and Expectations</p> <p>(a) Required Readings</p> <p>(b) Class Participation</p> <p>(c) In class Workshops</p> <p>(d) 2 Short Papers, due the following day</p> <p>(e) 1 Final Project, due after the class is over</p> <p>(f) Grade Based on all of the Above</p> <p><i>Political Edutainment, Simulation and Gaming</i></p>	
10:30 - 11:00	<p>(a) Edutainment in Historical Perspective</p> <p>(b) Politics and Gaming</p> <p>Related Games: Strategy, IR, Power, World Exploration</p> <p><i>Hot Spots and Game Logic</i></p>	
11:00 - 11:30	<p>Highlights, Templates and Visualization for Integrative Cyber-narratives and Data Barometers and Political Consequences in Global Agenda!</p> <p>Creation and Display of Hot Spots</p>	
11:30 - 11:45	<p>Brief Break</p> <p><i>Creative Workshop on Global Agenda</i></p>	
11:45 - 1:00	<p>Building Case-Based Story Lines, User Interfaces</p> <p>Discussion of Group Projects</p> <p>Visualizing the Gameplay Through User Interfaces</p>	
Day 2: Visualization and International Relations		

DAY/TIME	TOPICS	KEY DATES
10:00- 11:00	<i>Continuation of Edutainment and Gaming</i> <i>Discussion of First Day and Homework</i> (a) Serious Fun: Play, Simulation and Educational Technologies	Homework 1 due
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Introduction</i> Overview and Connections to Day 1 <i>Visualization of Hot Spots</i>	
11:15 -11:30	Review Hot Spots From a Visualization Perspective	
11:30 - 11:45	Brief Break <i>Global Agenda Workshop</i>	
11:45 - 1:00	Making Sense of IR Using Gaming, Visualization and Cyber-narratives Game Project Brainstorming and Design: Guest - Speaker Phillip Tan	
Day 3: Enhancing Global Agenda and Visualization Strategies: Exploring Problems in International Relations		
	<i>Demonstration and Illustration</i>	
10:00 - 10:30	Examples Drawn From Existing Visualization Research, Highlighting Key Features of Sample Visualization Tools and Techniques that Contributed to their Respective Research	Homework 2 due
	In-class Exercises <i>Introduction to Geographic Information Systems</i>	
10.30 - 11:30	ArcGIS as a Specific Tool for Managing Geographically Referenced Data Tutorial Drawn From the U.S. 2004 Elections Data	
11:30 - 11:45	Brief Break	

DAY/TIME	TOPICS	KEY DATES
11:45 - 1:00	Final Project Discussion and Course Wrap-up	Final project due one week after the end of class