

**Seton Hall University**  
**eRepository @ Seton Hall**

---

Diplomacy Syllabi

School of Diplomacy and International Relations

---

Fall 2003

# Games of International Relations

Anthony Wanis-St. John Dr.  
*Seton Hall University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/diplomacy-syllabi>

---

## Recommended Citation

Wanis-St. John, Anthony Dr., "Games of International Relations" (2003). *Diplomacy Syllabi*. 336.  
<https://scholarship.shu.edu/diplomacy-syllabi/336>

# GAMES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JOHN C. WHITEHEAD SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY  
FALL SEMESTER 2003  
DIPL 1001

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again  
-Old wisdom

If at first you don't succeed, change the strategy  
-New wisdom

Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently  
-Henry Ford

A successful man is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him  
-David Brinkley

Instructor: Dr. Anthony Wanis-St. John  
Office: McQuaid Hall 135  
Extension: 2979

## *Note:*

This is a special, one time course which will be offered to incoming freshmen in order to give them a preview of advanced, graduate-level concepts of international relations. Each section of the class will rotate among the professors involved. My section of the course will experience six total sessions with me as primary instructor; five initial sessions and one concluding session. The other two sections will each have four sessions each Prof. Wanis-St. John, corresponding to sessions two through five on this syllabus (see below). This syllabus covers the portion of the class you will take with Prof. Wanis-St. John only. It details the concepts we will cover, the learning goals and the expectations of students.

## **OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

In this concentrated module, you will

1. become aware of concepts from game theory and
2. learn how to apply them to historical and current events in international relations, including international conflicts and international negotiations
3. gain knowledge of this complex topic in a way that is enjoyable, retainable and useful for your further study at the Whitehead School.

Class discussion will be emphasized, as well as historical knowledge and analytical thinking. A significant, but short writing assignment will be used to assess your learning. There will be a series of critical readings, but no single textbook. The level of the reading is advanced, but you are expected to 'stretch' in order to grasp what is being discussed, and in-class discussions will be used to clarify and apply these concepts.

Failures to do the readings, turn in assignments on time or to properly cite sources (plagiarism) are grounds for a grade of F, and possible expulsion from the Whitehead School.

## GRADE BASIS

Your overall grade for this course will be a combination of the three separate grades you earn in the three sections. Each professor will grade you separately, but your final grade will be based on all three.

For *Games in International Relations*, your grade will be based on the following:

1. complete two papers asking you to use concepts from the class discussions to analyze several international phenomena
2. participate actively and intelligently in seminar discussion and activities

**PARTICIPATION 25%** Knowledgeable, informed participation in both class discussion and online, Blackboard-based discussion fora will be a key element to attain a high grade in this course. Students who don't participate (or who participate without concern for quality). To participate, you must: do the readings, submit a journal on Blackboard for each reading you do, (not summarizing the reading, but rather analyzing them, the course content and applying these to real life situations in international politics).

### **PAPERS 25%, 50%**

Two short papers of between 5 and 7 pages, will be assigned. Both will be take-home style, in which the instructor poses the questions and a limited turn-around time is given for completing the paper.

## PURPOSE OF THE MODULE

This course module will help students master the dynamics of international, social and interpersonal conflict using the insight of game theory and behavioral decision theory. By using simple paradigms (games) we will explore the 'experience' of these patterns of global behavior, discuss historical cases that illustrate them, successful and unsuccessful strategies for addressing them.

The module prepares you not only for recognizing the patterns of global behavior, but also for deeper analysis of current and historical events. You will also emerge from the module with powerful lens for focusing on some of the major streams of IR topics:

- Game theory and decisionmaking
- International crisis management and security
- International trade
- International negotiation
- International organizations

## DESCRIPTION OF CLASS SESSIONS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

*n.b. All readings are available at no cost from the SHU Library's eReserve module for this course, except for my introductory note, entitled Stark Choices, which is posted on the Blackboard site for the course.*

### Session One: Introduction to Game Theory and International Relations

Readings: Anthony Wanis-St. John, *Stark Choices*, Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Ch. 1 "The Problem of Cooperation"

### Session Two: Stag and Chicken

Raising the stakes and behaving in a risky way might (or might not) lead to a greater reward. *Internal Conflicts, Arms Races, Crisis Diplomacy*  
Axelrod, Ch. 4, "The Live-and-Let-Live System in Trench Warfare in World War I"

### Session Three: Prisoner's Dilemma & Complex PD

*Ceasefires, Peacemaking, Post Conflict Peacebuilding*

Reading: Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Ch. 6, "How to Choose Effectively" and Douglas Hofstadter, *Metamagical Themas*, Ch. 29, "Prisoner's Dilemma Computer Tournaments and the Evolution of Cooperation"

### Session Four: Auction

*Crisis Diplomacy, Conflict Escalation and War, Arms Races*

Reading: Avinash Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff, *Thinking Strategically*, Ch. 1, "Ten Tales of Strategy," and Ch. 2 "Brinkmanship"

### Session Five: Coalitions and Community Dilemma

*International Clubs, Alliances, Coalitions*, the "tragedy of the commons,"  
*International Negotiations, Conventions, Regimes, and Organizations*

Reading: Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, Ch. 9, "The Robustness of Reciprocity"