Intervention in World Politics

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Description

Stanley Hoffman once famously remarked that the subject of intervention “is practically the same as that of international politics in general from the beginning of time to the present” (Bull 1984, 7). This seminar investigates intervention in world politics, broadly conceived. Intervention, or the coercive interference by a party (or parties) in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, has long been an important tool used by states and international organizations to accomplish a wide range of objectives. In broaching this topic, we will examine various forms of intervention, ranging from regime change to military occupations, counterinsurgency, humanitarian interventions, and peacekeeping. We will also touch on some of the most important questions in the study of international relations, e.g. What is the relationship between intervention and sovereignty? How do ideology, psychology, geopolitics, and individual-level beliefs influence a state’s decision to threaten or use force abroad? The final part of the course will investigate the relationship between intervention and technology of various kinds, including strategic airpower, cyber warfare, drones, and nuclear weapons.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Discuss the multiple definitions and conceptions of intervention in the literature;
2. Critically analyze and evaluate the primary causes and consequences of interventions;
3. Speak to the wide variety of types of intervention undertaken by states;
4. Better understand the relationship between technology and the intervention behavior of states.
General Requirements

1. *Attend Class.* This class will be held from 10:30 AM to 12:45 PM, Monday through Friday, from June 16th to July 12th. Given the truncated format of summer sessions, it is absolutely critical that you attend every session.

2. *Complete the Readings.* In order to succeed in this course, it is imperative that you come to class each and every day having done all of the required reading. Our discussions will be detailed, rigorous, and analytical—it is crucial that you are well-prepared in advance. It is not expected that you fully grasp all of the readings the first time you go through them, but it is expected that you show up prepared to discuss them in detail.

3. *Participate in Discussion.* Although I will do some “scene setting” to introduce the various topics at the top of each class, the vast majority of our sessions will be based on discussion. It is essential that you contribute to the best of your abilities on a consistent basis.

Assignments and Evaluation

There are four main components to the final grade.

- Participation: 25%
- Critical Response Paper: 15%
- Research Design: 25%
- Final Examination: 35%

Participation

For each of our sessions, a set of readings covering a specific topic will be assigned. It is imperative that you show up to each class period ready to engage in a substantive discussion of the material. Failure to consistently participate will be taken as a sign of inadequate preparation. Each class session should be seen as an opportunity to sharpen and refine your oratory and critical thinking skills.

Critical Response Paper

Every student is required to submit one critical response paper, worth 15%. The response paper should grapple with the entire set of readings for a particular week (each student will receive their assignment by the end of class of the second day). The responses will be due by the start of the class on which you are writing. Given space limitations, I am less interested in summaries and more interested in your critical
evaluation of the readings. I will hand out a more detailed document outlining my expectations for the critical response paper the first week of class.

**Research Design**

Every student is required to submit an exploratory research design of no more than 5 double-spaced pages (excluding references). These research designs will be written on a topic of your choosing and should be directly related to the theme of intervention. In your designs, you will be expected to: (1) identify a substantively important puzzle relating to intervention, (2) provide key background information, (3) bring to bear any relevant theoretical concepts that we have studied in this course, and (4) propose a research strategy for examining your puzzle and testing the relevant theories.

**Final Examination**

At the end of our term, there will be a comprehensive final examination that will test you on your understanding of the big themes and questions examined in this course. The examination will be held on the final day of class. Make-up exams will only be held in the case of a serious emergency.

**Professionalism, Ethics, and Other Policies**

1. *In-Class Distractions.* Please remember to turn off or silence your phones prior to the beginning of class. If there is an emergency which requires you to keep your ringer on, please inform me before class begins. The use of laptops, iPads, and other electronic devices of this sort should be used only to take notes and refer to the readings for a given day.

2. *Academic Integrity.* You are expected to fully uphold the Honor Code on each and every assignment you complete throughout the term. Please see www.virginia.edu/honor or e-mail me if you have any questions.

3. *Grade Appeals.* If you have a substantive disagreement on any grades that you receive, you must wait 48 hours and write a brief paragraph detailing why you believe your grade is incorrect. Be aware, however, that this may result in a lowering of the original grade if further mistakes are found on a second reading.

4. *Late Assignments.* Under most circumstances, late assignments will not be accepted; only in the case of a serious emergency (brought to my attention in advance) will they be considered. Computer failures are not an excuse; I highly recommend that all files be backed up through some form of cloud-based services, such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Box, etc.
Books and Readings

There are two required books for this course which I have ordered to the bookstore. All other readings will be made available through Collab.


Please remember to bring all of the day’s readings to class, as we will be making extensive and specific references to the text throughout.

Schedule of Readings and Discussion

*Part I: Defining Intervention*

**Week 1: What is Intervention?**

**Week 2: Sovereignty and Intervention**

*Part II: Understanding Intervention*

**Week 3: The Major Causes of Intervention**
Week 4: How Has Intervention Changed Over Time?

Week 5: Democracy, Democratization, and Intervention

Part III: Varieties of Intervention

Week 6: Military Occupation and Civil Wars

Week 7: A Closer Look at Counterinsurgency


Week 9: Foreign-Imposed Regime Change


Week 10: Covert Action and The Hidden Hand of Intervention


Part IV: Technology and Intervention

Week 11: Intervening From the Sky


Week 12: Intervening in Cyberspace


**Week 13: Intervention in the Age of Drones**


**Week 14: Are Nuclear Weapons Useful for Coercion?**


