

# PSC/IR 106: Week 2 Recitation

William Spaniel

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# Agenda

- Introduction/Ice Breaker
- Section expectations
- How to read papers/books
- How to write essays that will not get bad grades

# Introduction/Icebreaker

- Name
- Where are you from?
- What makes you awesome
- One thing that you want to get out of this class/recitation

# Introduction/Icebreaker

- | • Name  | Example           |
|---|-------------------|
| • Where are you from?   | • William Spaniel |
| • What makes you awesome                                      |                   |
| • One thing that you want to get out of this class/recitation |                   |

# Introduction/Icebreaker

- | • Name  | Example           |
|---|-------------------|
| • Where are you from?   | • William Spaniel |
| • What makes you awesome                                      | • San Diego       |
| • One thing that you want to get out of this class/recitation |                   |

# Introduction/Icebreaker

- | • Name  | Example              |
|---|----------------------|
| • Where are you from?   | • William Spaniel    |
| • What makes you awesome                                      | • San Diego          |
| • One thing that you want to get out of this class/recitation | • I catch baseballs. |







# Introduction/Icebreaker

- | • Name  | Example                             |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • Where are you from?   | • William Spaniel                   |
| • What makes you awesome                                      | • San Diego<br>• I catch baseballs. |
| • One thing that you want to get out of this class/recitation | • I want to give everybody an A.    |



# Section Expectations

- Section is worth 30% of your grade.
- Some of the section material will be available on YouTube/embedded videos on my website.
  - But attendance is *mandatory*, so don't get any ideas.
    - I will excuse one absence.
- Quizzes?
  - Please don't make me.

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- How many of you are taking political science classes to avoid math?
  - It's okay, I was in the same boat seven years ago.
- For good or bad, most current political science research is highly technical.
  - We will be going over the hard parts (math) in recitation.

# Scheduling Office Hours

- Tuesdays 2:15-4:15, Harkness 309.
  - Assuming there is not substantial discontent.
- Or by appointment.

# Finding Readings Online

- Readings should mostly be on Blackboard.
- If not...
  - Google the article title. This usually works.
  - Try [library.rochester.edu](http://library.rochester.edu)
    - Godspeed.

# How to Read

- Read the title. (Seriously.)
- Read the abstract.
- Read the introduction and conclusion.
- Read the rest.



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Known Unknowns:  
Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War

Alexandre Debs and Nuno P. Monteiro

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## **Abstract**

Large and rapid power shifts resulting from exogenous economic growth are considered sufficient to cause preventive wars. Such power shifts are rare, however. Most large and rapid shifts result from endogenous military investments. In this case, preventive war requires uncertainty about a state's investment decision. When this decision is perfectly transparent, peace always prevails. A state's investment that would produce a large and rapid power shift would prompt its adversaries to launch a preventive war. Internalizing this, the state is deterred from investing. When investments may remain undetected, however, states may be tempted to introduce large and rapid shifts in military power as a *fait accompli*. Knowing this, their adversaries may strike preventively even without unambiguous evidence about militarization. In fact, the more effective preventive wars are, the more likely they will be launched against states that are not militarizing. Our argument restricts the role of commitment problems and emphasizes the role of imperfect information as causes of war. It also provides an account of why powerful states may attack weaker targets suspected of military investments even in the absence of conclusive information. We illustrate our theory through an account of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

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# I Wish I Knew This as a Freshman

- Interested in maximizing your long term goals at the University of Rochester? Talk to the professor.
  - He's more important than I am.
- Interested in maximizing your short term goals at the University of Rochester? Talk to me.
  - I'm grading your stuff.



# How Not to Write a Bad Essay

1. ATQ/ATFQ
2. Put your thesis in the top half of the first page.
3. Be direct. Don't hide your answer. Don't make it hard for us to find your answer.
4. Use paragraphs.
5. Cite the readings.

The purpose of this slide is to explain why you should use paragraphs. Note that there are no run on sentences in this paragraph. I am only using short sentences. Each sentence has a straightforward meaning. Yet you will probably have a hard time finishing this paragraph. Are you still with me? Good. I hope you are having a wonderful day. I am so far. I enjoy teaching. I also enjoy corrupting the youth with my teaching. I guess I should not have typed that last sentence. Oh well.

Anyway...where was I? Oh yes—the usefulness of paragraphs. While they are necessary organize your thoughts, they also have a more practical purpose. If you stopped reading this paragraph after the third sentence, you probably stopped reading this slide in general. That is normal. When a reader gets bored of a paragraph (or is skimming your paper), he skips to the next one. If the next paragraph is two pages away, your reader will miss a lot of information. Fortunately, I am A Good Teaching Assistant™, so I would not get bored or skim your material. But I heard you have an evil TA for psychology. So, to practice appeasing him, you might as well adopt this strategy in Introduction to International Relations as well.

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