

**Department of Political Science**  
**International Relations Field Statement**

Scott Sagan  
International Relations Field Convenor  
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Students interested in taking International Relations (IR) as one of their two major fields will typically:

1. Take the PS 310A-C course sequence

The course sequence has three main objectives:

- To give students a brief introduction to the large academic literature on international politics, with a view to helping them to prepare for the synthesis and analysis they will be required to carry out in the IR field exam. This is done in PS 310A and B. Depending on the faculty teaching the courses that year, in some years the literature on international security will be stressed in 310a and international political economy in 310B, or vice versa.
- To introduce students to a variety of frontier research problems that animate current work in the field, so that they can see and evaluate examples of how empirical research is actually conducted rather than just commenting on “the classics” or reading pure theory. Thus course syllabi typically mix “classics” and recent articles and books that illustrate the concerns, problems, and potentials of current research in IR.
- To help students initiate one or more of their own empirical research projects, to gain practical experience in elaborating a theoretical argument, drawing out testable implications, assembling and analyzing relevant evidence, and presenting the work in stages before colleagues. In PS 310A and B, students typically write two or three 5-10 page research notes, in which they propose and begin to sketch out a research project. In PS 310C, the IR research colloquium held in all three quarters, students and faculty present work on IR related field papers, research ideas, dissertation chapters, and collaborative work with other faculty or other students. Students taking the PS 310A and B sequence are expected to attend PS 310C throughout the year, and to present a more developed version of one of their research proposals (or a new idea) in the Spring Quarter of PS 310C.

The research-related goals of PS 310A and B constrain the instructors’ ability to provide a really thorough survey of IR literature over the three quarters of PS 310A, B, and C. We expect that students taking the IR field exam will have read extensively in the literatures of IR theory, security studies, and international political economy beyond the specific

materials assigned for these classes. To assist with this task the syllabi for these courses will provide suggestions of recommended extra reading that IR students should most likely be familiar with prior to taking the exam.

## 2. Take the IR field exam

This is given on or around the third week of Autumn quarter and on or around the seventh week of Spring Quarter each year. We recommend that students do not take the IR exam in the Spring quarter of the year they take the PS 310A-C sequence, but wait until the following Autumn, to give yourself the opportunity to read, think, and assimilate over the Summer. Copies of past exams are available from the Graduate Program Administrator. We recommend that students planning to take the exam meet with the Field Convenor to ask for advice about how to prepare and what a strong exam looks like.

## 3. (Possibly) write a field paper

Field papers are due in students' sixth Quarter, and some will want to write a paper on a question that might be considered "IR." As noted above, the PS 310A-C sequence and colloquium provide structure, guidance, and multiple sources of feedback for students writing IR field papers. Field papers are assessed by two faculty readers, usually in one of the student's major fields. In Winter quarter of the student's 2nd year, the student consults with the field convenor to determine which two faculty will read the paper. The two readers will be reported to the Graduate Administrator by the end of Winter quarter using the Field Paper Readers and Approval Form. By the end of Spring quarter the faculty readers must indicate their approval of the paper by again signing the Field Paper Readers and Approval Form. Students then return the signed approval form and a copy of the approved paper to the Graduate Administrator.

## 4. Avail themselves of numerous other IR learning and research opportunities

Beyond the core PS 310A-C sequence, the department offers a variety of more specialized seminars on selected topics in international relations. And beyond PS 310C, there are numerous opportunities in a range of workshops for students to present their own research and to hear presentations by outside speakers. PS 310C features presentations by students, Stanford faculty, and faculty from other leading institutions. The *Workshop in International Relations* (PS 311A) is also an important forum for students to engage with new and exciting IR research. The workshop offers students an opportunity to further integrate themselves into a professional community comprised of Stanford faculty, scholars from other institutions, and most importantly, of student peers at all stages of doctoral work. IR students are strongly encouraged to enroll and attend the IR Workshop regularly. In addition, there are many interdisciplinary workshops and seminars at research centers at Stanford (including CISAC and CDDRL) that IR students are encouraged to attend.