International Relations/Political Science

Academic year 2021-2022

Diplomatic Encounters: international politics as social interaction.

RI-SP116 - Autumn - 3 ECTS

> **PROFESSOR**

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Course Description

Diplomacy is a large and complex social event where international politics manifest in concrete practices. Multi- and bilateral diplomacy involves myriads of interactions among individuals (e.g., diplomats, international bureaucrats, experts, and private actors). These interactions are further mediated through technologies (e.g., ICT), artefacts (e.g., documents, architecture), the physical limitations of human bodies, social concepts that frame individuals in general and diplomats in particular (such as gender), and many more. This course sheds light on the various interactions among these elements in order to better understand diplomacy and international politics. Questions include: who is involved in diplomatic interactions? (How) do national capacities, technologies, artefacts, and the social and physical attributes of the diplomat's body shape diplomatic interactions? How do these interactions sum up to produce international treaties? And, most importantly: what mechanisms of power run through these interactions?

Syllabus

The purpose of this course is to broaden our understanding of channels, sources, and applications of power in international relations by unpacking the social and material interactions involved in diplomacy. A particular emphasis will be placed on potential avenues for further research: together, we will explore possible research questions, methods, and empirical material that can increase our understanding of international politics through an analysis of its underlying social interactions, namely in the field of diplomacy, and the dynamics of power therein.

In part 1 of the course, we look at the actors and sites of diplomacy. We first aim for a better understanding of diplomacy and diplomats as specific cultural practices and social roles that shape how international politics are done. We then study different sites where diplomacy is practiced: virtually or face-to-face, hidden or in public. Each session of part 1 contains a lecture part on the history of diplomacy and an interactive part building on contemporary IR scholarship. In part 2, we explore different dimensions of social interaction in diplomacy and their mechanisms of power, asking how state power actually manifests through diplomatic rituals. In part 3, we look at the material, bodily and gendered dimensions of such interactions and their influence on diplomatic procedures. By now we will have learned how diplomacy has always been a child of its time: a peculiar profession whose characteristics have evolved over time along with profound social changes; in parts, however, its characteristics have also proven stubborn and resistant to reforms. We will build on these insights to address the gendering of diplomacy and the diplomatic profession in session 6 and the influence of technological developments on diplomacy in session 7.

Graded contributions:

Research repository: In groups, students are asked to contribute to a shared research repository on diplomacy. Each group will focus on a pertinent issue in diplomacy, drawing on existing scholarship, news articles, and other sources to produce a research repository providing:
- An introduction to the topic, incl. its relevance, existing scholarship, and research gaps.
- Possible research questions, including explanations why they are pertinent.
- Possible case studies, including justifications why they are relevant and/or insightful.
- Methodological possibilities and challenges, including an extensive assessment of possible data sources.
- Contributions should provide ample illustration through real diplomatic scenarios and events and demonstrate extensive knowledge and understanding of the literature treated in class and outlined in this syllabus, elaborating on ways how to establish connections between these two elements.
- Purpose of the contributions is to provide guidance and entry points for future research, e.g., in final papers or MA theses. All contributions will therefore be shared with the class.

Deadline: to be submitted on **November 11 2021, before midnight.**

In-class participation: We will try to achieve the course objectives collaboratively through in-class discussions and other collaborative activities.

Final paper: In the final paper, students can elaborate on a topic of diplomacy that is of particular interest to them. Students can choose to focus on a theoretical, methodological, or empirical question, but are asked to pay some attention to all three of these elements and to root their paper in the course literature.
Ca. 7-9 pages, 1.5 spacing.
Deadline: **December 3, 2021.**

Grading weights:
- Research repository: 25%
- Participation 25%
- Final Paper 50%

<div align="center">**Course Content**</div>

<div align="center">**Part 1: Setting the stage – actors and sites of diplomacy**</div>

1) *Introduction (08.10.2021)*

2) *Actors (1): Diplomats in Society (15.10.2021)*

> In this session, we will discuss some of the broader social dynamics around diplomacy, starting from a look at the main protagonists of this class – diplomats – and the history of diplomacy. First, read the outtake from Spies' book: you can focus on those parts that interest you most and skim the others. Reflect on how social and political dynamics have influenced the nature of diplomacy over time. Then, read Neumann's piece for a look behind the scenes of a contemporary foreign ministry.
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> The further resources list scholarship addressing diplomacy and diplomats in their social context. At the example of French nuclear politics, Pouponneau and Florent (2017) demonstrate how domestic and international struggles between different domains of politics, bureaucracy, and science shape diplomacy. Biersteker (2019) shows that diplomacy is not just done by diplomats but by networks that include a range of other actors, such as academics and advocates. Both Neumann (2012) and Nair (2020) address the role of social class in diplomacy. Dezalay and Garth (2002) trace how ideological shifts in US academia have influenced US-trained Latin American elite and thus changed Latin American (foreign) politics. In sum, the readings suggest that diplomacy, like all human activity, does not happen in an empty space but is embedded within society. If this is true, it opens avenues for a wide array of studies into the broader network of involved actors and ideas, as well as into the underlying social dynamics (e.g., class, race, gender). To what extent, and how, does such research actually allow us to better understand international politics at large?

Readings:

Neumann, Iver B. 2007. "'A Speech That the Entire Ministry May Stand for,' or: Why Diplomats Never Produce Anything New." *International Political Sociology* 1 (2): 183–200. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-5687.2007.00012.x.

Spies, Yolanda Kemp. 2019. *Global Diplomacy and International Society*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95525-4, pp. 62-99.

Further resources:

Biersteker, Thomas J. 2019. "The Role of Transnational Policy Networks in Informal Governance."

Dezalay, Yves, and Bryant G. Garth. 2002. *The Internationalization of Palace Wars: Lawyers, Economists, and the Contest to Transform Latin American States*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Hamilton, Keith, and Richard Langhorne. 2011. *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Mitzen, Jennifer. 2015. "From representation to governing: diplomacy and the constitution of international public power" In: Sending, Ole Jacob, Vincent Pouliot, and Iver B. Neumann (eds.). *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 111-139.

Nair, Deepak. 2020. "Emotional Labor and the Power of International Bureaucrats." *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (3): 573–87. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaa030.

Neumann, Iver B. 2012. *At Home with the Diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry*. Cornell University Press.

Pouponneau, Florent, and Frédéric Mérand. 2017. "Diplomatic Practices, Domestic Fields, and the International System: Explaining France's Shift on Nuclear Nonproliferation." *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (1): 123–135.

Sharp, Paul. 1999. "For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations." *International Studies Review* 1 (1): 33–57. https://doi.org/10.1111/1521-9488.00140

Sharp, Paul. 2009. *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge University Press.

3) *Diplomatic Sites: From diplomacy behind closed doors to diplomacy on Twitter (22.10.2021)*

Where is diplomacy done? The sites of diplomacy have been changing over time. Overall, there has been a strong trend towards more public diplomacy in the post-War era, which has found its current climax in "Twitter diplomacy." Constance (2017) analyzes twitter diplomacy between Iran and the US. Holmes (2013), in turn, stressed the importance of face-to-face diplomacy even in the digital age. Hofius (2016) studies diplomats in the "field" in Ukraine, contrasting with our earlier readings that concerned mostly the headquarters (i.e., the foreign ministries in the capitals). Malex (2016) and Sharp (2016) address different modes of secret, quiet, and hidden diplomacy. The "sites" of diplomacy therefore refer to both the spaces in which diplomats move and the space in and through which information circulates. Each site comes with its own requirements and challenges to research: while backroom diplomacy is by definition difficult to study, public speeches and Twitter diplomacy constitute accessible study fields, but their impact is sometimes hard to discern.

Choose a focus area in preparation of in-class group work:

Frontline diplomacy: Hofius, Maren. 2016. "Community at the Border or the Boundaries of Community? The Case of EU Field Diplomats." *Review of International Studies* 42 (5): 939–67. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210516000085.

Digital diplomacy: Duncombe, Constance. 2017. "Twitter and Transformative Diplomacy: Social Media and Iran–US Relations." *International Affairs* 93 (3): 545–62. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix048.

Hidden diplomacy:
- Malex, William. 2016. "Quiet and secret diplomacy." In: Constantinou, Costas M., Pauline Kerr, and Paul Sharp (eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy,* pp. 451-461. SAGE.

- Sharp, Paul. 2016. "Making Sense of Secret Diplomacy from the Late Moderns to the Present." In *Secret Diplomacy: Concepts, Contexts, and Cases.*, edited by Corneliu Bjola and Stuart Murray, 30–45. Routledge.

Face-to-Face diplomacy: Holmes, Marcus. 2013. "The Force of Face-to-Face Diplomacy: Mirror Neurons and the Problem of Intentions." *International Organization* 67 (4): 829–61. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000234.

Further resources:

Berridge, G. R. 2015. Diplomacy: Theory and Practice. Springer. Chapters: "The Foreign Ministry" and "Embassies", pp. 5-18 and 115-132.

Bjola, Corneliu, and Marcus Holmes. 2015. *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. Routledge.

Bjola, Corneliu. 2016. "Digital Diplomacy – the State of the Art." *Global Affairs* 2 (3): 297–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2016.1239372. (Note: this is an introduction to a special issue containing further articles on this topic.)

Cornut, Jérémie. 2015. "To Be a Diplomat Abroad: Diplomatic Practice at Embassies." *Cooperation and Conflict* 50 (3): 385–401. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836715574912.

Kaufmann, Johan. 1996. *Conference Diplomacy: An Introductory Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24913-8.

Kinzelbach, Katrin. 2014. *The EU's Human Rights Dialogue with China: Quiet Diplomacy and Its Limits*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315749884.

Manor, Ilan. 2019. *The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy*. Palgrave Macmillan Series in Global Public Diplomacy. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04405-3.

Neumann, Iver. 2013. *Diplomatic Sites: A Critical Enquiry*. Oxford University Press. [In particular Chapter 5 "Out of Site: Sublime Diplomacy".]

Part 2: Interaction dynamics and power in multilateral diplomacy

4) *Rituals of Diplomacy: hidden and explicit manifestations of power. (29.10.2021)*

Diplomacy is known for its ritualistic character. Is it more ritualistic than other areas of social life? If so, what are the reasons for – and the purposes of – these rituals? Are these rituals hypocritical in that they mask inequalities between states, or are they also a channel through which to express power inequalities? The two main readings for this session focus on conflictive bilateral relations as their case studies. Ji-Young (2013) analyses the role of rituals in managing the relation between China and Korea. Banks (2019) analyses the importance of "saving face" in the US-Iran hostage crisis. Among the further resources, Aalberts et al. (2019) provide an analysis of a wide range of rituals in world politics, and how rituals not only serve to keep conflict at bay, but potentially, also to disrupt relations. Rousseau and Baele (2020) offer a timely piece on the use of insults as a calculated (indeed also ritualistic) departure from diplomatic standards.

Banks, David E. 2019. "The Diplomatic Presentation of the State in International Crises: Diplomatic Collaboration during the US-Iran Hostage Crisis." *International Studies Quarterly* 63 (4): 1163–74. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz055.

Lee, Ji-Young. 2013. "Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource: The Politics of Asymmetry in Early Modern Chinese-Korean Relations." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13 (2): 309–36. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1598240800003957.

Further resources:

Aalberts, Tanja, Xymena Kurowska, Anna Leander, Maria Mälksoo, Charlotte Heath-Kelly, Luisa Lobato, and Ted Svensson. 2020. "Rituals of World Politics: On (Visual) Practices Disordering Things." *Critical Studies on Security* 0 (0): 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2020.1792734.

Balzacq, Thierry. 2020. "Rituals and Diplomacy." In *Global Diplomacy: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, Frédéric Charillon, and Frédéric Ramel, 111–22. The Sciences Po Series in International Relations and Political Economy. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28786-3_8.

Gifkins, Jess. 2021. "Beyond the Veto: Roles in UN Security Council Decision-Making." *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 27 (1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02701003.

Ringmar, Erik. 2013. "The Ritual/Performance Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis: European Diplomats at the Chinese Court." In *Rethinking Foreign Policy*, edited by Fredrik Bynander and Stefano Guzzini. Routledge.

Rousseau, Elise, and Stephane J. Baele. n.d. "'Filthy Lapdogs,' 'Jerks,' and 'Hitler': Making Sense of Insults in International Relations." *International Studies Review*. Accessed September 28, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viaa047.

Spies, Yolanda Kemp. 2019. *Global Diplomacy and International Society*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95525-4, Chapter 6: "Diplomatic Culture," pp. 197-246.

5) *National power and individual skills in diplomatic negotiations. (05.11.2020)*

When we zoom in on diplomats and their daily work, do we lose the big picture out of sight? To explain international phenomena such as the outcomes of negotiation processes, is it worth to focus on the practices and skills of diplomats, or should we rather focus on the economic and military power of their countries, as most classic IR theories would tell us to do? These questions weigh heavily on many of the approaches that we see in this syllabus. In one of the central readings of this class, Adler-Nissen and Pouliot (2014) try to provide a solution with a framework that does justice to both individual diplomatic skills and national power. This is a difficult attempt to reconcile two very different forces in one theory.
(Focus on the article by Adler-Nissen and Pouliot. Then, have a (shorter) look at the article by Jason and Gifkins.)

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca, and Vincent Pouliot. 2014. "Power in Practice: Negotiating the International Intervention in Libya." *European Journal of International Relations* 20 (4): 889–911. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066113512702.

Ralph, Jason, and Jess Gifkins. 2017. "The Purpose of United Nations Security Council Practice: Contesting Competence Claims in the Normative Context Created by the Responsibility to Protect." *European Journal of International Relations* 23 (3): 630–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066116669652.

Further resources:

Pouliot, Vincent. 2016. *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy*. Cambridge University Press.

Part 3: Socio-material dimensions of diplomacy: Gender, bodies, technology.

6) Gendered diplomats (12.11.2021)

> The gendering of diplomats is a prime example of diplomacy's social embedding: different societies reproduce different notions of gender, which, in turn, shape diplomacy. The participation of women in diplomacy has varied over the course of history, with recent efforts aiming to render the male-dominated profession more egalitarian. As a milestone, UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) called for the inclusion of women and of gender-sensitive views in peace negotiations. However, women were not always excluded from diplomacy: for instance, aristocratic women participated in European diplomacy before they were formally banned with the advent of modern and supposedly meritocratic bureaucracy in the 19th century (see Sluga and James 2015). Gender-studies of diplomacy address important issues of equality and, at the same time, shed light on diplomacy's interdependency with social and historical dynamics.

Aggestam, Karin, and Ann Towns. 2019. "The Gender Turn in Diplomacy: A New Research Agenda." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 21 (1): 9–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2018.1483206.

Enloe, Cynthia. 2001. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics.* University of California Press. Chapter 5: "Diplomatic and Undiplomatic Wives" (pp. 174-210).

Further resources:

Beteta, Hanny Cueva, Colleen Russo, and Stephanie Ziebell. 2010. *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence*. New York: UN Women.

Daybell, James. 2011. "Gender, Politics and Diplomacy: Women, News and Intelligence Networks in Elizabethan England." In *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, edited by Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox, 101–19. Early Modern Literature in History. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

McCarthy, Helen. 2014. "Women, Marriage and Work in the British Diplomatic Service." *Women's History Review* 23 (6): 853–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2014.906844.

Sluga, Glenda, and Carolyn James. 2015. *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500*. Routledge.

Towns, Ann E., and Karin Aggestam (eds.). 2018. *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*. Springer.

7) *Technology and diplomatic interaction. / Course conclusions. (19.11.2021)*

> In our main reading for this session, Adler-Nissen and Drieschova show how the track-change feature (a function in word processing software that lets multiple persons co-write a text) shapes the production of diplomatic texts. By doing so, this also influences the broader social dynamics of negotiation processes. For instance, this tool affects "how negotiators define national positions (as edits to the text more than as substantive positions originating from capital cities)," (p. 543) how diplomats achieve agreements, and what kinds of skills diplomats need to master in order to push a draft in the desired direction. This means an alternative – "emergent" – dynamic of power in diplomacy that contrasts with the bureaucratic ideal of centralized power; it also implies different sources of power than the traditional state-owned power sources. With that, the reading ties in with our earlier lecture of Adler-Nissen and Pouliot (2014). Read also the brief piece on telecommunications, which illustrates how technological inventions have been shaping diplomacy long before computers and the internet became our main tools of work.

Readings:

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca, and Alena Drieschova. 2019. "Track-Change Diplomacy: Technology, Affordances, and the Practice of International Negotiations." *International Studies Quarterly* 63 (3): 531–45. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz030.

Berridge, G. R. 2015. *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. Springer. Chapter: "Telecommunications", pp. 101-111.

Further resources:

Al Jazeera. 27 April 2020. *UN holds virtual meetings, technical problems ensue: UN Security Council virtual meetings are not going to plan.* https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/newsfeed/2020/04/holds-virtual-meetings-technical-problems-ensue-200427125224842.html

Dittmer, Jason. 2017. *Diplomatic Material*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Security Council Report. 2020. *In Hindsight: Security Council Working Methods in the Time of COVID-19.* May 2020 Monthly Forecast. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2020-05/in-hindsight-security-council-working-methods-in-the-time-of-covid-19.php

Seib, P. 2012. *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era*. Palgrave Macmillan US. *[For this session's topic, mainly chapters 3-5.]*