SPIR516 POLITICAL GAMING & SIMULATIONS

BA POLITICS LEVEL 5 OPTIONAL MODULE

MODULE HANDBOOK 13th JANUARY – 3rd APRIL 2014

CONTENTS

1) MODULE SUMMARY

Full Module Title: Political Simulations & Gaming
Module Code: SPIR516
Module Level: Three
Academic Credit Weighting: 15 Credits
School: SSHL
Department: Politics and International Relations
Length: 1 semester (2nd semester)
Module Leader: Dr. Richard Barbrook
Extension: x2313
Email: R.Barbrook@westminster.ac.uk
Site: Wells Street
Host Course: BA Politics
Status: BA Politics Optional Module
Relevant Course Titles/Pathways: BA Politics
Subject Board: Politics and International Relations
Pre-requisites: None
Co-requisites: None
Assessment: 100% Coursework
Special Features: This module contains practical study activities which will take place inside the classroom.
Summary of Module Content: This is a module which combines the theoretical analysis of political gaming with the critical analysis of playing political simulations.
Time and Place: Monday 16.00–19.00, RS152.

2) MODULE AIMS

This module aims to:
- ☐ introduce students to the techniques of political gaming and simulation;
- ☐ examine the history of games and simulations for political modelling;
- ☐ critically analyse the technical mechanisms and ideological assumptions of political games and simulations;
- ☐ critically analyse the cultural and political theories of gaming and simulation.

3) LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the module students will be able to:
understand the history of political games and simulations;
- ☐ apply a variety of theoretical approaches to analyse political games and simulations;
- ☐ assess the effectiveness and credibility of different types of games and simulations to model historical and contemporary political struggles and international conflicts;
- ☐ use both written and oral skills to analyse the theories and practices of political games and simulation;
- ☐ create a prototype of a game or simulation to model political struggles and international conflicts.

4) INDICATIVE SYLLABUS CONTENT

This module critically analyses political gaming and simulations from both a theoretical and practical perspective. It involves lectures, game playing, workshops and tutorials.

- ☐ The lectures provide an overview of the historical development of political gaming and the different theoretical approaches which can be used to critically investigate these simulations. These insights will be used by the students to write a reflective practice analysis about the political games featured in this module.

- ☐ The seminars in Weeks 1 to 9 consist of the group playing of different political games under the supervision of the module leader. Each session will begin with a short talk about the subject and mechanics of the game. The students will be expected not only

to participate in the playing of the game itself, but also to contribute to the group analysis of its specific strengths and weakness. In particular, these in-class discussions will focus on the credibility and effectiveness of the modelling of its intended subject by the game.

- ? In Week 8, Fabian Tompsett from Class Wargames will host a workshop on games design which will include playing a simulation designed by students from Berlin.

- ? In Week 9, James Moulding and Kateryna Onyililogwu from the 2013 class will talk about and host a playing of their Prototype Political Simulation: *Imperialism in Space.*

- ? Students will be able use the insights gained from the hands-on experience and in-class discussions during Weeks 1-9 for writing a Reflective Practical Analysis.

- ? In Weeks 10 and 11, the module leader will be available for tutorials and play-testing to help the students create a Prototype Political Simulation.

5) TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

This module employs a range of teaching and learning methods including lectures, game playing, workshops, presentations and group discussions.

The lectures are used to introduce basic theoretical debates and historical background for an understanding of political gaming and simulation. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion immediately after each lecture. From this part of the course, students will acquire the theoretical and historical knowledge needed not only to write a reflective practice analysis, but also to fulfil the practical requirements of the module.

The seminars will employ a variety of teaching and learning methods. In Weeks 1-9, students will play a specified game while carrying out a group analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. In Week 8, Fabian Tompsett will lead the playing of simulations designed by students at other higher educational institutions. In Week 9, James Moulding and Kateryna Onyililogwu from the 2013 class will talk about how they made their Prototype Political Simulation. From critical reflection on this hands-on experience, students will acquire the knowledge to build the prototype of a political game. Since the mechanisms of a simulation are essentially

abstract, this attempt at modelling a political struggle can take the form of a board game, a card game or a role-playing exercise. Each student must research the history, participants and background of their chosen subject, study existing simulations of the same or related political conflicts, and choosing game mechanisms which come together to create a realistic but playable representation of the actual events. Students are required to make their simulations as short and simple as possible, which adds to the challenge of capturing the essentials of the conflict itself. Just as published games go through extensive development and play-testing, so these student prototypes will be played and commented on in draft form by other class members and by the module leader during the tutorials in Weeks 10–11.

6) ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

Two methods of assessment are used in this module: a Reflective Practical Analysis and a Prototype Political Simulation with an oral presentation.

The Reflective Practical Analysis allows the student to undertake and present a detailed analysis of four or more political simulations, and to demonstrate the capacity to understand the effectiveness of these simulations with appropriate critical insight, showing how the playing of these games has helped the student to clarify his/her own understanding of debates, methodologies and perspectives in political simulations (*learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4*).

The Prototype Political Simulation requires the student to demonstrate his/her ability to put the theoretical insights acquired on the module into practice, to implement the best techniques in political modelling, and to explain the workings of a political simulation to an audience (*learning outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5*).

7) ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment checks the development and application of the theoretical and practical skills associated with the understanding and analysis of political gaming and simulation. It does this by providing both presentation (written and oral) and game design opportunities to test different aspects of the module learning outcomes. Students are specifically required to develop and combine both theoretical and practical skills to complete this module. All elements of the assessment

criteria must be attempted.

In marking the Reflective Practice Analyses, lecturers will consider:
- ☑ extent to which the remit of the assignment has been met;
- ☑ technical accuracy with which relevant theoretical arguments and historical analysis are met;
- ☑ degree to which theories and concepts discussed are integrated, contextualised and evaluated;
- ☑ range of source material used;
- ☑ coherence of the structure and argument;
- ☑ clarity (clear and grammatically correct use of English, including proper spelling and punctuation) with which ideas are expressed;
- ☑ the selection and correct attribution of sources in support of an argument.

In marking the Prototype Political Simulations, lecturers will consider:
- ☑ understanding of the subject of the political simulation;
- ☑ comprehensibility of the rules of the prototype game;
- ☑ effectiveness and credibility of the modelling of the chosen political conflict;
- ☑ design and usability of the game mechanics (board, pieces, cards, etc.);
- ☑ clarity and coherence of the overall presentation of the prototype to the class;
- ☑ clarity of delivery (pace, audibility, etc.) when making the group presentation;
- ☑ organisation of the play–testing of the prototype simulation;
- ☑ observation of time limits;
- ☑ effectiveness of responses to oral questions and discussions.

8) ASSESSMENT METHODS AND WEIGHTINGS

Reflective Practice Analysis: 40% of final marks

Each student will be required to keep a reflective practice analysis that identifies and assesses the experience of playing **at least 4** out of the political games and simulations during the course of the semester. The conclusions drawn in this analysis must be accompanied by appropriate investigation and justification. It must contain an assessment of the positive and negative features of each game with a special emphasis on its credibility and effectiveness as a model of its intended subject. This analysis should compare and contrast the different strengths and

weaknesses of each of the games examined. The analysis is NOT a move-by-move record of the playing of a specific game. Instead it is a reflection on the theoretical debates and socio-historical context within which the 4 or more different games are situated. The reflective practice analysis should be at least *2,500 words long.*

Prototype Political Simulation: 60% of final marks

This takes the form of a 15-20 minutes in-class presentation of the rationale for a prototype of a political simulation by an individual student or a group of students to the entire class which must include leading a play-testing of this game during the rest of the session. A 500 word background paper, submitted with the Reflective Practice Analysis, will accompany it.

9) ASSESSMENTS – DETAILS AND DEADLINES

Reflective Practice Analysis: 40% of final marks

This must be completed and submitted via the TurnItIn website by 11.59pm on **Thursday 3rd April 2014**. See Submission of Coursework on page 19 below for details on how to accomplish this task. Further guidance on the format, length and nature of what is required in a Reflective Practice Analysis can be found in section 10 below.

Prototype Political Simulation: 60% of final marks

The in-class assessments of these games will take place on **Monday 31st March 2014**. Further guidance on the structure and nature of a Prototype Political Simulation will be discussed in the Week 1 introduction to the module and the Weeks 10 & 11 tutorial and play-testing sessions. The 500 word background paper accompanying the Prototype Political Simulation must be completed and submitted via Blackboard by 11.59pm on **Thursday 3rd April 2014**.

Submission of Coursework

All coursework on this module is submitted via Blackboard only. It will automatically be scanned through the Turnitin Plagiarism Detection Service software.
   - You DO NOT need to attach a copy of the CA1 form;
   - You DO need to include your name and student ID on the first page of your assignment.

To submit your assignment:
- ☐ Log on to Blackboard at http://learning.westminster.ac.uk;
- ☐ Go to the relevant module Blackboard site;
- ☐ Click on the 'Assessments' link on the left-hand side;
- ☐ Click on the link to the relevant assignment;
- ☐ Follow the 'upload' and 'submit' instructions.

A two-minute video showing the submission process can be found by following this link:
- ☐ http://www.youtube.com/user/SSHLUniWestminster#p/u/0/I-ZQs4nSWL4

You will receive separate instructions about how and when you will receive feedback on your work.

10) GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE ANALYSIS

This analysis must be in essay format, typed and be at least 2,500 words long. The assessment of the games and simulations played during the module should include a discussion of the following questions:

- ☐ Is the design of the game's mechanics (board, pieces, cards, etc.) fit for purpose?
- ☐ Are the rules of the game easy to learn and follow?
- ☐ Is the game enjoyable and sociable to play?
- ☐ What techniques does the game use to model its chosen subject?
- ☐ How does the game combine abstraction and realism in its workings?
- ☐ How accurately does the game simulate the decision-making processes faced by the real-life protagonists of its chosen subject?
- ☐ What political lessons can people learn by playing the game?
- ☐ How would you improve the structure and mechanics of the game?

N.B. These questions are for guidance only and must NOT be used as headings for the Reflective Practice Analysis.

1) Brief description of the game;
2) The other games that inspired your game;
3) Identification of your game's mechanics:
http://www.boardgamegeek.com/browse/boardgamemechanic
4) How play-testing improved your game.

11) WEEK–TO–WEEK CALENDAR (JANUARY–APRIL 2014)

Week 1 (13th January)
> Lecture: Introduction to module.
> Game: Charles Darrow and Elizabeth Magie Phillips, *Monopoly.*

Week 2 (20th January)
> Lecture: Politics as a game.
> Game: Bertell Ollman, *Class Struggle*; and Drakes, Jarvis, Walsh, and Gluck, *Election*.

Week 3 (27th January)
> Lecture: Art as a game.
> Film: *Class Wargames Presents Guy Debord's The Game of War.*
> Game: Guy Debord, *The Game of War.*

Week 4 (3rd February)
> Lecture: Game theory and gaming.
> Game: Bryan van Slyke, *Co-opoly*; and Jim Dunnigan, *Origins of World War II.*

Week 5 (10th February)
> Lecture: Cultural theorists and gaming.
> Game: Brian Train, *Red Guard!*; and Anders Fager, *Comrade Koba.*

Week 6 (17th February)
> Lecture: Military historians and gaming.
> Game: Terence Donnelly, *Decline & Fall*; Richard Borg, *Commands & Colors Napoleonics*.

Week 7 (24th February)
> Game: Russell King, *Simulections.*
> The whole session will consist of this role–playing exercise.

Week 8 (3rd March)
> Lecture: Fabian Tompsett from Class Wargames on games design.
> Game: Turit Fröde, *Auf RUHR!*

Week 9 (10th March)
> Lecture: James Moulding and Kateryna Onyililogwu making a Prototype Political Simulation.

Game: *Imperialism in Space.*

Week 10 (17th March)
  Lecture: Game design principles: iteration, sociability & playability.
  Tutorials and play–testing of Prototype Political Simulations.

Week 11 (24th March)
  Lecture: Game design principles: iteration, sociability & playability.
  Tutorials and play–testing of Prototype Political Simulations.

Week 12 (31st March)
  Final assessment of Prototype Political Simulations.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ASSESSMENT WILL TAKE PLACE ON <u>MONDAY 31st MARCH</u> IN RS152 BETWEEN 4.00–7.00pm.

The Reflective Practice Analysis and Prototype Political Simulation background paper must be completed and submitted via Blackboard by 11.59pm on **Thursday 3rd April.**

12) SOURCES

Course Texts

Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (eds), *The Game Design Reader: a Rules of Play anthology*, MIT Press, Boston Mass 2006.

Selinker, M. (ed.), *The Kobold Guide to Board Game Design*, Open Design, Kirkland 2011.

Suggested Reading

Allen, T., *War Games: inside the secret world of the men who play at World War III*, Mandarin, London 1987.

Becker–Ho, A. & Debord, G., *A Game of War*, Atlas Press, London 2007.

Dunnigan, J., *The Complete Wargames Handbook: how to play, design find them*, Quill, New York 1992.

Flanagan, M., *Critical Play: radical game design*, MIT Press, Boston Mass 2009.

Huizinga, J., *Homo Ludens: a study of the play–element in culture*, Beacon Press, Boston Mass 1950.

Laver, M., *Playing Politics: seven games that bring out the politician in all of us!*, Penguin, London 1979.

McGonigal, J., *Reality is Broken: why games make us happy and how they can change the world*, Penguin, London 2011.

Orbanes, P., *Monopoly: the world's most famous game and how it got that way*, Da Capo, Philadelphia 2006.

Perla, P., *The Art of Wargaming*, United States Naval Institute, Annapolis 1990.

Rapaport, A., *Fights, Games and Debates*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1960.

Sabin, P., *Lost Battles: reconstructing the great clashes of the ancient world*, Hambleton Continuum, London 2007.

Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (eds), *Rules of Play: game design*

fundamentals, MIT Press, Boston Mass 2004.

Wilson, A., *The Bomb and the Computer*, Barrie & Rockliff, London 1968. 2nd hand copies of these books are usually available on Abe Books: <http://www.abebooks.co.uk>.

Periodical References:

Games Studies

Games Journal

International Journal of Game Theory

Net Resources:

2011 Political Simulations & Gaming module, <http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/SPIR608_Political_Simulation_and_Gamin g/2011>

2012 Political Simulations & Gaming module, <http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/SPIR608_Political_Simulation_and_Gamin g/2012>

2013 Political Simulations & Gaming module, <http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/SPIR608_Political_Simulation_and_Gamin g/2013>

BoardGameGeek , <http://www.boardgamegeek.com>.

Brian Train, 'Little Wars',
 <http://www.islandnet.com/~ltmurnau/lilwars.htm>

Class Wargames, <www.classwargames.net>.

Ludic Society, <http://www.ludic-society.net>.

Megagame Makers, <http://www.megagame-makers.org.uk>.

Philip Sabin, 'Conflict Simulation', <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/ws/people/academic/professors/sa bin/conflictsimulation.html>.

Radical Software Group, 'Kriegspiel', <http://r-s-g.org/kriegspiel>.

War Times Journal, 'Gaming', <http://www.wtj.com/games>.

13) ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

If carried out knowingly, cheating and plagiarism have the objectives of deceiving examiners and gaining an unfair advantage over other students. This is unethical. It also threatens the integrity of the assessment procedures and the value of the University's academic awards.

While you are studying here your academic performance will be assessed on the basis of your own work. Anyone caught cheating in exams/in-class tests or through coursework assignments will be subject to formal investigation in accordance with Section 10 of the University Academic Regulations.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are not vulnerable to any allegation that you have breached the assessment regulations. Serious penalties are imposed on those who cheat. These may include failure in a module or an element of a module, suspension or exclusion from your course and withdrawal of academic credits awarded previously for modules which have been passed.

Plagiarism

When you submit work for individual assessment, the work **must** be your own. If you have included sections of text from other sources without referencing them correctly, then you may be accused of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined as submission for assessment of material (written, visual or oral) originally produced by another person or persons, without acknowledgement, in such a way that the work could be assumed to be the student's own.

Plagiarism may involve the unattributed use of another person's work, including: ideas, opinions, theory, facts, statistics, graphs, models, paintings, performance, computer code, drawings, quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words, or paraphrases of another person's spoken or written words.

Plagiarism covers both direct copying and copying or paraphrasing with only minor adjustments. You must keep a careful record of all the sources you use, including all internet material. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand correct referencing practices.

If you use text or data or drawings or designs or artefacts without properly acknowledging who produced the material, then you are likely to be accused of plagiarism.

Here are some simple dos and don'ts, to help you avoid plagiarism:

Do	Do not!
Include references to all sources at the point where they appear in your text, either via a direct reference or foot note	Rely on citing sources in your bibliography without making clear where they appear in your text
Always use quotation marks to indicate someone else's ideas	Take parts of other people's sentences and incorporate them into your own writing without making clear that they are not your own words
Reference diagrams, tables and other forms of data Ensure the work you submit for the module has not been previously submitted for other modules or assessments on your course.	Assume that plagiarism only refers to written words in prose narrative Recycle assessments or text from previous assessments. This will also count as plagiarism and may result in you being referred for an academic offence.
Include full website references which make clear exactly which page you referenced and the date you accessed the website. http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/apr/18/university-life-academic-cheating Date accessed: 23/12/13	Simply cite the top-level page and expect your tutors to search for your source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/

Students are also not permitted to re-present any assessment already submitted for one module as if for the first time assessment in another module. Double counting of assessed work is not normally allowed. If submitting work previously included in another assessment the student should attribute the section of text from the earlier work. This may be taken into account by the markers.

Always check with your Module Leader or Course Leader if you are unsure about subject-specific conventions concerning referencing and attribution (e.g. in design-based and creative subjects where there may be particular expectations about referencing and/or copyright).

You can access a helpful tutorial about plagiarism in Blackboard. After signing in the tutorial can be accessed from any page in Blackboard by clicking on the 'Skills Resources' tab. Please consult the relevant Module Leader or your Course Leader if you need any further advice.

Plagiarism Detection

To help eradicate plagiarism and thereby protect the value of your qualification all modules include the requirement that your coursework must be submitted electronically and checked by text-matching software. All coursework must be submitted via Blackboard.

Online feedback via GradeMark

The Department of Politics and International Relations offers online feedback on written coursework via GradeMark (accessed via Blackboard). Failure to submit your essay via Blackboard will mean that your coursework will not be graded and subsequently will not count towards your assessment for this module.

GradeMark gives academic staff a full-featured digital environment for grading and commenting on student work. After grades are posted by the instructor, students can access GradeMark to review comments and print or save a copy of the graded files.

Further information about GradeMark can be found online:
http://www.submit.ac.uk/resources/documentation/turnitin/sales/GradeMark_Overview.pdf

Mitigating Circumstances

If illness or other unforeseen circumstances unavoidably prevent you from completing your assessed work, or submitting it on time, you can submit an application for Mitigating Circumstances (MCs) to be taken into consideration. If your MC claim is accepted it will result in one of the following outcomes;
- Your original mark will be reinstated (for late work submitted up to 10 working days after the published deadlines);
- You will be offered an opportunity to sit the assessment without penalty at the next available opportunity as a Deferral (in cases

where you have missed an assessment entirely).

The University operates a fit-to-sit policy for assessment. This means that if you submit a piece of coursework or attend an exam or other time-limited assessment, you are deemed to have declared yourself fit to attempt the assessment and must accept the result of the assessment.

If you have missed a significant part of your studies due to ill health or other personal problems, you must speak to your Course Leader and Personal Tutor, to discuss whether you should suspend studies or request deferrals either for the individual assessments, or entire modules.

If you are taken ill during an examination, you must notify the invigilator of the reason for leaving the examination and you must go to your doctor, or an A&E unit (in more serious cases), to obtain a diagnosis, which you will need when you submit your MC claim.

If you miss an assessment or submit work late, you should submit an application in writing using a Mitigating Circumstances claim form to your School Office, supported by original documentary evidence (eg a medical certificate), at the earliest available opportunity.

Mitigating Circumstances Boards meet throughout the year and it is in your best interests to submit your claim as quickly as possible, normally within one month of the circumstances occurring, as you will receive a decision on your claim much earlier and will be in a better position to plan your studies for the remainder of the year. **Information about the final deadlines for claims is available via the Mitigating Circumstances website:** http://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/your-studies/forms-and-procedures/mitigating-circumstances**.** Please note that retrospective claims will not normally be considered, especially in cases where the claim is being made after the release of the results for the assessment in question.
If you do submit an MC claim, you should not assume that it is necessarily going to be accepted; it is your responsibility to make sure that you complete all assessment requirements in a module as far as possible.

It is very important that you read Section 11 of the *Handbook of Academic Regulations*, on Mitigating Circumstances, to find out what to do if you miss the deadline for any piece of work; in most cases it is crucial that you submit the work or participate in the assessment as soon as you possibly can. Late work will not normally be accepted if it is received more than ten working days after the original coursework

deadline. If other students have already had their marked work returned, the same assignment cannot be marked once submitted late.

Your MC claim will be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Board. The Mitigating Circumstances Board makes a decision on your claim that is later communicated to the Assessment Board which meets at the end of the year to formally ratify all of the results for your course.

The Mitigating Circumstances Board's decision will be communicated to you by email within 5 working days of the Board meeting and you will also be able to check SRSWeb to see which deferrals you have been granted.

The University-wide criteria by which claims will be judged are standardised for reasons of fairness and these are published in detail in Section 11 of the *Handbook of Academic Regulations*, which you should read before submitting any claim. The criteria for acceptance or rejection of an MC claim reflect work-based standards of conduct and performance, and only those circumstances which are demonstrably serious and likely to have affected your academic performance will be considered.

Penalties for late submission of coursework

The University operates a two-tier penalty system for late submission of coursework and in-module assessment. This regulation applies to all students registered for an award irrespective of their level of study. All University coursework deadlines are scheduled between Monday and Thursday inclusive. Where possible, the submission day will coincide with the day the module classes are normally taught. However, the University does not allow submission deadlines to be set for Fridays.

If you submit your coursework late but within 24 hours or one working day of the specified deadline, 10% of the overall marks available for that element of assessment (i.e. 10%) will be deducted, as a penalty for late submission, except for work which obtains a mark in the range 40 – 49%, in which case the mark will be capped at the pass mark (40%).

If you submit your coursework more than 24 hours or more than one working day after the specified deadline you will be given a mark of zero for the work in question.

Late work and any claim of Mitigating Circumstances relating to coursework must be submitted at the earliest opportunity to ensure as far as possible that the work can still be marked. You will normally have the

right to submit coursework 10 working days after the original deadline. Once the work of other students has been marked and returned, late submissions of that same piece of work cannot be assessed.

Referral Opportunities

A referral in an item of assessment gives you the opportunity to resubmit coursework for the module. A referral opportunity (or resit) may be awarded to those students who have an overall module mark of between 30–39%. If you have been given the opportunity to resubmit coursework and/or re-sit an examination the work will normally be due to take place in July 2014.

NB: It is your responsibility to contact the Module Leader to obtain details of the referral coursework deadlines and requirements

Your Academic Progression

In order to progress from Level 5 to 6 you are required to have passed at least 165 credits, including 75 credits at Level 5. In order to meet award regulations students must pass 120 credits at both Level 5 and Level 6.

If you think you are in danger of failing a module, then it is important that you speak to your module leader and/or personal tutor in advance of any coursework deadline. If you fail to submit the required coursework then you are at risk of failing to achieve the required credit to progress to Level 6 studies and could also be excluded from your course.

Please note that in order to have an opportunity to retake an element of assessment you have failed then you must undertake the assessment or coursework at the first sitting.