Creating Agreement: Theory and Praxis in Multilateral Negotiations

Course Description:
Successful multilateral agreements are as complex as they are difficult to create. This course explores the connection between negotiation theory and praxis in such a way that gives students a greater level of understanding as to how successful multilateral agreements are reached. The history of such negotiations is one of both successes and failures and our purpose is to learn as much as possible from both – with the goal being the development of a series of criteria necessary for a successful multilateral outcome. To that end we will explore negotiations in the issue areas of finance, climate, and trade and look at them using a range of both theoretical and practical approaches.

In short – the course is one of both theory and praxis in the creation of multilateral agreements.

Framework for Investigation: Theoretical Foundations
- Negotiation Theory
- Multilateral Negotiation Theory

Framework for Investigation: Empirical Evidence
- Notable Success
- Notable Failures
- Theory and Praxis in the Creation of Successful Agreement
- Externalities and Alternative Impacts

Course Requirements:
There are two types of written assignments for the course. First, every week students are expected to critically review the literature for that week in a 2-3page literature review. Second, students are expected to write a negotiation brief analyzing either a successful or unsuccessful multilateral negotiation in terms of the course materials. The class participation grade will consist primarily of the student’s participation in class discussions (the quality of comments carries greater weight than quantity).

The final grade for the course will be determined by the following formula:

Literature Reviews (4): 60%
Negotiation Brief: 30%
Participation: 10%

Participation. Attendance in class is required. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings and materials in the week they are assigned. Excessive unexcused absences are grounds for dismissal from the course. The weekly reading load is significant.
Course Materials: Texts — available on reserve or as eBooks — articles available through Penrose online.


Peter Berton, et al. eds. International Negotiation: Actors, structure/process, values

October 17: Introduction to Negotiation Theory


Howard Raifa, “Some Organizing Questions,” from The Art and Science of Negotiation

Fen Osler Hampson, “Introduction & Multilateral Negotiations” in Multilateral Negotiations: lessons from arms control, trade, and the environment

October 24: Developing a Framework for Analysis

• Organization Theory
• Coalitional Theory
• Leadership Theory
• Actors, Roles, and Organizational Limitations.


Gunnar Sjostedt, Leadership in Multilateral Negotiations: Crisis or Transition in International Negotiation: Actors, structure/process, values

Arild Underdal, “Leadership Theory: Rediscovering the Art of Management” in International Multilateral Negotiation: Approaches to the Management of Complexity

Christophe DuPont, “Coalition Theory: Using Power to Build Cooperation.” International Multilateral Negotiation: Approaches to the Management of Complexity
October 31: Multilateral Success

- GATT – Uruguay Round
- Single Europe Act
- Kyoto Protocols


Juliet Lodge, “Negotiating the Single European Act in the European Community,” in International Multilateral Negotiation: Approaches to the Management of Complexity

Gunnar Sjostedt, Negotiating Climate Change: The Search for Joint Risk Management

Hampson – Climate Change and Global Warming.

November 7: Multilateral Failure

- International Trade Organization
- Multilateral Agreement on Investment
- Doha Round of the WTO
- Copenhagen Climate Summit


Alasdair Young, Transatlantic Intransigence in the Doha Round in Amrita Narlikar, ed. Deadlocks in Multilateral Negotiations: Causes and Solutions

Copenhagen to be announced.

November 14: Negotiation Planning – Lessons Learned

Hampson – Understanding Multilateral Negotiations: Lessons and Conclusions

Winfried Lang, Lessons Drawn from Practice: Open Covenenants, Openly Arrived at. In International Multilateral Negotiation: Approaches to the Management of Complexity

William Zartman, The Elephant and the Holograph: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and a Paradigm in International Multilateral Negotiation: Approaches to the Management of Complexity