

## Using hybrid simulations to enhance student learning of international relations theories

Luis da Vinha

Flinders University, Australia

The theoretical frameworks explicitly or implicitly employed by diplomatic historians and international relations scholars can lead to significantly different explanations for the same historical events. Therefore, a sound understanding of the basic international relations theories is required for a more comprehensive understanding of international politics. However, students tend to shun theoretical topics and debates, considering them irrelevant to practical issues and problems that they face in their daily lives. This paper argues for employing simulations as a way of enhancing student learning of international relations theories. It provides a justification and outline for the organisation and development of a hybrid simulation using the Council on Foreign Relations' *Model Diplomacy* interactive platform. Hybrid simulations integrate components of both face-to-face and cyber simulations, with students physically interacting during the more formal simulation procedures (e.g., making formal policy statements and voting) and using the cyber environments for informal activities (e.g., as negotiations). Ultimately, hybrid simulations transform the learning environment by restructuring the interaction process between instructors and students and can contribute to enhancing student learning and their understanding of the main theories underscoring international relations theories. The use of hybrid simulations becomes more relevant as universities continue to promote more online educational opportunities for students and as unanticipated disruptions require them to have more options available to continue providing students with the best educational experiences possible.

### Introduction

Many historical events, particularly international conflicts, evade consensual explanations. For example, for several scholars, America's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was essentially due to the Bush administration succumbing to resource-based special-interest groups and the need to re-affirm U.S. imperial dominance in the Middle East region (Hinnebusch, 2007). In contrast, some academics emphasised the role that ideational factors played in leading the U.S. into war, namely the quasi-utopian ideals underpinning the neocon's worldview, (Boyle, 2004). Yet, for others, the source of the conflict lies in the aggressive logic of the U.S. as a hegemonic power and the American public's acceptance of an increasingly expansive foreign policy (Yordan, 2006). A similar discussion can be found regarding the great wars of the twentieth century. Despite the abundance of studies that have come to light over the last seven decades, we may still find scholars who confidently assert that the origins of these conflagrations are fundamentally due to the inevitable clash among the Great Powers as they compete for survival in an anarchic international system (Waltz, 1988). Still, others highlight how domestic politics, i.e., *Innenpolitik*, have pushed the states towards military conflict (Levy, 1988).

Inevitably, both diplomatic historians and international relations scholars have struggled to provide undisputed accounts for explaining the world's most important conflicts. If

such trepidation afflicts accomplished academics, one may easily imagine how students must feel when trying to grapple with such conflicting assessments. Underscoring many of these diverging historical analyses are complex theoretical frameworks. To the surprise of most students, the study and interpretation of key international events is highly contingent on the theoretical assumptions espoused, explicitly or implicitly, by each respective researcher. While theories in the social sciences are not reliable for predicting events, trends, or systemic transformations, they are important in helping us organise our thoughts about the past and to serve as a starting point for reconstructing and interpreting events (Bernstein et al., 2000).

However, as illustrated above, researchers embracing divergent theoretical frameworks can come to significantly different explanations for the same historical events. This challenge is shared by international relations scholars and diplomatic historians alike (Stephanson, 2001). As George Modelski (1970, p. 114) noted over five decades ago, “the ‘realities’ we perceive in international relations depend in part upon the theories we use in data gathering and in empirical observation.” In other words, historical “facts” are not categorical objects that are on display for all of us to see, but rather the theoretical frameworks we espouse guide us to certain “facts” over others (Rosenau & Durfee, 2000). Therefore, students of international politics need to have a sound understanding of the basic international relations theories in order to know where to begin their analysis and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts and complex dynamics involved in shaping the political world.

As instructors, it is incumbent upon us to help students gain a better appreciation for and understanding of these theoretical frameworks. Accordingly, this paper argues for employing simulations as a way of enhancing student learning of international relations theories. Drawing on the author’s experience in organising simulations in higher education in three different continents, this paper details the application of a hybrid simulation using the *Model Diplomacy* platform in courses focused on international politics. The use of hybrid simulations becomes more relevant as universities continue to promote more online educational opportunities for students. Moreover, as the Covid-19 pandemic confirms, universities are vulnerable to disruptions, requiring them to have more options available to continue providing students with the best educational experiences possible. Thus, the current paper begins by highlighting the concept of active learning and the role of simulations as a strategy for fostering active learning in the field of international relations theory. Subsequently, the paper provides an outline of the organisation and development of the simulation as a guide for instructors looking to implement similar projects in their courses.

## **Active learning in higher education**

Considering the growing challenge in maintaining students’ attention on political issues (see Majstorovic, 2001), teachers have increasingly tried to employ active learning strategies in their classroom in order to foster greater student engagement with the specific course content and enhance learning outcomes. Active learning is a very broad concept associated with a multitude of different learning strategies and, therefore, defies a

straightforward definition. In a recent attempt to establish the appropriate metrics for measuring its use, Carr, Palmer and Hagel (2015, p. 174) identified some of the main elements currently understood to be associated with active learning:

- active, student-centred, participatory learning;
- experiential learning, learning by doing and service learning, peer tutoring, laboratory work, role-playing, and the use of case studies;
- learning activities involving technology, including simulations or games and the use of mobile or classroom-based devices;
- learning by actively challenging and critiquing concepts developed through students' own experiences or the experiences of others;
- learning involving interpersonal interaction between students and others;
- student control, autonomy, self-regulation and power relationships as important learning activities (in contrast with "student-directed learning").

Therefore, students take centre stage in the classroom and are encouraged to actively engage with each other, their instructors and the content, with the goal of enhancing their learning experience.

Despite some criticism (see Rochester, 2003), research has consistently demonstrated that active learning strategies are more effective in promoting student engagement and learning than traditional passive approaches (Wieman, 2017). Pedagogical studies highlight that students in active learning classrooms tend to outperform peers in traditional classrooms, exceed standardised grade expectations, learn more than in traditional lecture-based formats, and also have the opportunity to compensate for the loss of face-to-face time in the physical classroom (Baeppler et al., 2016; Freeman et al., 2014).

However, as a survey carried out by Archer and Miller (2011) illustrated, political science courses do not tend to devote a significant proportion of their assessments to active learning. While international relations courses score higher than the other subfields of political science, the overall percentage is relatively low, scoring less than 15 percent. Therefore, rather than allocating the bulk of their time to preparing and delivering lectures, instructors should increasingly devote their resources to developing curriculums and lesson plans that maximise student learning through the inclusion of activities that foster greater student engagement with the content, and encourage critical and analytical thinking (Boyer, 2003). A broad array of active learning strategies are identified in the scholarly literature. However, not all are suitable to university-level courses in international relations. While not in any way exhaustive, Table 1 provides examples of active learning activities commonly used in undergraduate and graduate international relations courses.

Over the years, numerous instructors have embraced the logic of the "gamification" of education by employing a host of role-playing games such as board games (e.g., *Diplomacy*, *New Amsterdam*, *Settlers of Catan*), video games (e.g., *Age of Empires*, *Call of Duty*, *Medal of Honor*), and other custom-built games (see Hoy, 2018; Meinerz, 2018; Mugueta et al., 2015). However, these games tend to focus on fabricated contexts and events. Many are also lacking the broader political dynamics that are generally involved in real-world

Table 1: Examples of active learning activities

Individual activities	Collective activities	
Case studies	Case studies	Panel discussions
Daily / weekly journal	Collective peer review	Problem solving
In-class writing	Debates	Review sessions
Note comparison / sharing	Discussions	Role-play
One-minute paper	Enhanced lectures	Simulations
Peer review	Games (board / video games)	Video production
Problem solving	In-class writing	
Video production	In-class peer mentoring	
Source: Bromley (2013); Faust and Paulson (1998); Florez-Morris and Tafur (2010); Srole, Endy and Pflieger (2017).		

decision-making. Therefore, they do not provide the most constructive opportunity for students to apply and develop their conceptual and theoretical knowledge to authentic international problems. In contrast, simulations using historical cases or current events provide a more appropriate means for engaging students. As research demonstrates, political science students tend to be attracted more to activities that explain “how the world works” and to current events than to activities directed at merely developing skills (Bunte, 2019).

### **Simulations and international relations theory**

Simulations epitomise active learning in the realm of political science and international relations. Over the years we have witnessed a growing use of simulations to help improve student engagement and learning. Researchers have identified several advantages of employing them in the curriculum (Asal, Raymond & Usherwood, 2015; Frederking, 2005; Lightcap, 2009; Shaw & Switky, 2018). To begin with, simulations allow for a better understanding of issues by providing an opportunity to integrate a broad array of information and materials into a comprehensive, structured analysis and discussion. In other words, students have an opportunity to apply the different theoretical concepts they have learned to specific historical problems. Secondly, simulations help develop critical and analytical thinking skills by collaboratively engaging students in problem-solving activities. Thirdly, simulations permit students to reflect on the specific dynamics underlying institutions. For instance, certain institutions have unique rules and norms that determine negotiations and policy outcomes which can be best appreciated by being immersed in their specific institutional context (even if only in a simulated form). Finally, though not their primary purpose, simulations also provide an opportunity for fostering greater socialisation among students and generating a group identity. In other words, “simulations offer excellent ice-breaking functions, through their requirement of purposive interaction, just as they offer a means to introduce problem-solving techniques to students who might not have encountered them before” (Asal, Raymond & Usherwood, 2015, p. 306).

According to Raymond and Usherwood (2013), simulations foster student learning in three distinct ways. Firstly, simulations increase student motivation to participate and learn the content by being personally immersed in the experience. The relationship between motivation and learning is well documented and attests to the direct link between student motivation and engagement (Wigfield et al., 2019). Secondly, simulations alter the learning environment and place students at the forefront of the learning process. In other words, rather than passively receiving content from their instructors, students are actively involved in assimilating knowledge through their personal experience. From this perspective, simulations conform fully with Kolb's experiential learning framework (Figure 1). According to this educational theorist, learning – i.e., “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” – results from two dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world: action/reflection and experience/abstraction (Kolb, 2015, p. 51). In other words, individuals generate knowledge by acquiring information, either by lived experience or through abstract conceptualisation, and transforming it through reflective observation or active experimentation. Finally, simulations also contribute to enhancing learning by providing different types of learning experiences for students. More precisely, by employing role-play, visual representations, and other non-traditional classroom experiences, the simulations can engage students with different “learning styles” or “multiple intelligences” (Gardner, 1999).

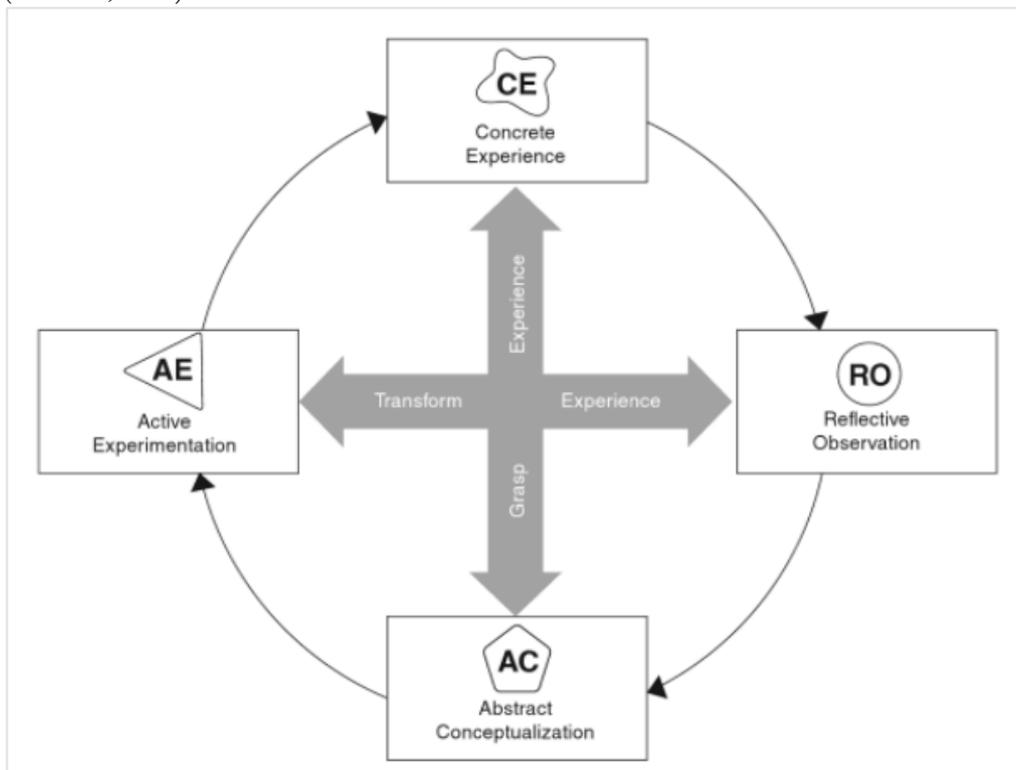


Figure 1: Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 2015: p. 51)

The pedagogical value of simulations is further amplified by the flexibility that they offer instructors. Depending on the learning goals established by the instructor, simulations can be “content-oriented” and/or “process-oriented” (Shaw & Switky, 2018). The former seeks to emphasise the interests of the different parties in the negotiation or the content of the final agreement. In other words, the goal of the simulation is to answer “who, what, where, when” questions regarding a particular political situation or event (Shaw & Switky, 2018, p. 526). In contrast, the latter seeks to help students to achieve a better understanding of the main dynamics involved in the negotiation; i.e., answer the “how” and “why” questions.

The learning outcomes of the course can also influence the topic of the simulation. Simulations can focus on issues dealing with security, trade, environment, pandemics, and theoretical considerations, among others. The simulation can be based on historical cases or hypothetical situations directly associated with current international issues and challenges. Therefore, the simulations can be based on specific decision-making bodies such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), U.S. National Security Council (NSC), etc. Moreover, simulations can vary in their length, ranging from a single class period to several weeks. In some cases, simulations are the central feature of the entire semester (Shaw & Switky, 2018). Simulations can also accommodate a variety of class sizes by allowing instructors to organise students individually or collectively.

There are also variations in the types of simulations available (Table 2) (see Ben-Yehuda, 2020). Face-to-face simulations are the traditional format and consist of students interacting directly with each other in a physical class environment on campus or other physical venue. Cyber simulations seek to take advantage of modern technology and allow students to interact by using a virtual environment such as a social network, online platform, or other virtual environments. Cyber simulations are a preferred option for online courses and can be carried out synchronously or asynchronously. Hybrid simulations, for their part, integrate components of both face-to-face and cyber simulations, with students physically interacting during the more formal simulation procedures (such as making formal policy statements and voting) and using the cyber environments for informal activities (such as negotiations).

Table 2: Types of simulations

Type	Main characteristics
Face-to-face simulations	Students interact directly with each other in a physical environment on campus or other physical venue.
Cyber simulations	Students interact by using a virtual environment such as a social network, online platform, or other virtual environment.
Hybrid simulations	Integrate face-to-face and cyber simulations, with students physically interacting during the more formal procedures and using the cyber environments for informal activities such as negotiations.

Source: Adapted from Ben-Yehuda (2020)

Using hybrid simulations seeks to take full advantage of the innovations available to students and instructors alike. The benefits of using hybrid simulations were neatly summarised by Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik and Naveh, who highlighted that:

The virtual environment extends the physical campus location and drastically changes the meaning of time and space. If the academic calendar demarcates the learning slot on campus and its duration, the virtual milieu redefines it. You and your students can meet as often as needed on cyber forums. Each student can extend the learning process to interactions with peers. Many of the sources are always available, and the use of texts, photos, and video clips allows students to move in time to other periods that are central to the topics they study. (...) Even more so, the web forums and social networks make it possible to run simulations with participants from across the globe to create a genuine intercultural process among peers in faraway countries. This greatly helps students grasp the complexities of world politics with different cultures, worldviews, and attitudes. (Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik & Naveh, 2015, p. 5, 7)

Moreover, hybrid simulations also transform the learning environment by restructuring the interaction process between instructors and students. Rather than the traditional “top-down”, vertical interaction process in which instructors “transfer” knowledge to students, hybrid simulations provide an opportunity to strengthen horizontal interactions among students. In this situation, students assume a more active part of the knowledge-creating process. More precisely, by increasing engagement inside and outside the classroom, hybrid simulations offer “more room for a progressive dialogue and the gradual development of critical thinking” (Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik & Naveh, 2015, p. 8).

However, research demonstrates that scholars focused on teaching political theory have been fairly reluctant to embrace many of the teaching innovations that have been associated with active learning over the past few decades. In fact, in a survey of over 1,000 political theory instructors, nearly two-thirds of the respondents stated they never used simulations or dramatic enactments in their courses (Moore, 2011). Courses on political theory tend to follow a “standard model” of teaching that emphasises abstract concepts through lecture-intensive teaching which limits student engagement (Gorton & Havercroft, 2012; Johnson, 2008). As a result, students find theoretical issues to be irrelevant to the practical issues and problems that they face in their daily lives. However, as mentioned above, understanding international politics requires knowledge of the theoretical frameworks underscoring international relations. Only by understanding the different theories can students appreciate why the same political phenomena can many times result in conflicting descriptions and explanations.

In the recent past, several studies have been carried out employing historical simulations to teach political theory. The results are encouraging as post-simulation surveys report that academic performance and students’ engagement with and understanding of the course content is improved by participating in these activities (Gorton & Havercroft, 2012; Weidenfeld & Fernandez; 2017). As one study noted, “the merit of the simulation from a political theory perspective is that it shows students how key political ideas shaped the values and interests of people in historically significant events and how these individuals in turn shaped history” (Gorton & Havercroft, 2012. p. 58).

Active learning strategies have also been employed to teach international relations' core theoretical assumptions for some time. For instance, researchers have highlighted how board games (Bridge & Radford, 2014), films (Simpson & Kaussler, 2009), and "two-level game" simulations of territorial disputes between fictitious states (Enterline & Jepsen, 2009) can be used to try to enhance students' knowledge of the main theoretical concepts and tenets in international relations. However, international relations theory courses have only gradually employed historical and/or "real world" simulations in the classroom to bridge the gap between theory and practice. As Sears (2018, p. 225) has pointed out, "If simulations are to be effective methods for teaching students about IR theory, then theory should be a core element of simulation design." Accordingly, our course was designed and organised with this objective in mind.

## **Design and overview of the simulation**

Any simulation should be designed to best promote and achieve the course's learning outcomes. The simulation is employed as an active learning strategy in the *Debating International Relations* course at Flinders University (Adelaide, South Australia). The course serves as the intellectual, educational and, social hub for the Master of Arts (International Relations) degree. In other words, it is the foundational course of the masters program and provides students with the main theoretical and conceptual frameworks underscoring the degree. In terms of content, the course examines the key theoretical debates present in international relations and applies them to contemporary and historical issues within global politics. Its main educational outcomes are to provide an account of the key theoretical paradigms in the study of international relations, and to apply these paradigms to contemporary and historical events within global politics. The course is organised as a weekly three-hour seminar encompassing twelve sessions. The cohort is composed of 15-25 students, the majority of whom have no prior academic experience in international relations. In this section, we offer a step-by-step account of the development and implementation of the simulation (Figure 2).

## **Building the foundations for the simulation**

The simulation is conducted at the end of the semester, taking up three of the final four sessions. The decision to organise the activity at this time is predicated on the assumption that it allows students to take advantage of the knowledge and skills developed over the semester and thus, to better contextualise, synthesise, and apply the content learned to the simulation (Shaw & Switky, 2018). Therefore, prior to running the simulation, students prepare for the role-play throughout the first half of the course. More specifically, the course is organised in a way that provides students with an opportunity to develop their understanding of the main theoretical frameworks in international relations, as well as develop their capacity to apply the frameworks to specific historical case studies.

Throughout the first five class sessions of the semester, students read and discuss several primary texts for each of the following theoretical frameworks: realism/neorealism, liberalism/neoliberalism, constructivism, and post-positivism (critical theory, post-



Figure 2: Overview of the simulation development and implementation

structuralism, post-colonialism, and feminism).<sup>1</sup> The main objective is to introduce students to the main concepts and assumptions underlying the theories. In assessing the texts on the different theories, students are provided with a set of broad scaffolding questions which help in guiding the readings and their analyses. The provision of guiding questions, outlines, and other instructional supplements is grounded on the existing research that suggests that they contribute to improving student performance in the simulation (Raymond & Usherwood, 2013). More precisely, in order to assess the theories, the questions are:

1. What is the historical background of the theory?
2. What are the major tenets of the theory?
  - a. Who are the main actors in international relations according to the theory?
  - b. What are the principal relationships and dynamics in international relations according to the theory?
  - c. What are the principal assumptions of the theory?
3. Who does the theory benefit or seek to benefit?
4. How was the theory valid, useful, or correct in its time?
5. Which tenets of the theory are challenged (provide examples)?
6. Which tenets of the theory became lasting contributions?

---

<sup>1</sup> When we refer to constructivism in this article, we are referring to the theoretical framework used in international relations and not as a theory for teaching and learning.

The set of standardised questions also helps students find common issues and themes across the readings, allowing for a comparison of the similarities and differences within and among the different theoretical frameworks.

Once the students have covered the main theoretical frameworks, gaining an understanding of the main tenets underscoring each theory, they use the next three class sessions to develop their critical and analytical skills by analysing a series of case studies from different theoretical perspectives. The cases studied focus on three instances of international conflict: (1) origins of World War II; (2) sources of the U.S. invasion of Iraq; and (3) sources of the rising geopolitical confrontation between the U.S. and China. The readings for each week provide different theoretical explanations for each of the respective events under analysis. The main objective of the case studies is to move beyond the mere conceptual theoretical issues and help students understand how each theoretical framework emphasises different issues and provides different explanations. For instance, when considering the growing geopolitical tension between the U.S. and China, the readings highlight both realists' arguments that war is inevitable (Allison, 2017) and liberal theorists' more optimistic prospect for cooperation (Ikenberry, 2018), as well as constructivists' more nuanced emphases on the threat narratives in each country (Ambrosio, Schram & Heopfner, 2020).

In conformity with the primary readings on the theories, students are provided with a set of broad scaffolding questions that seek to assist them in their analysis and application of the theoretical frameworks to the case studies. The questions are:

1. What is the phenomenon/event covered in the readings?
2. What are the major causes/driving forces of the phenomenon/event identified in each of the readings?
  - a. How do the explanations differ in the readings?
  - b. What common assumptions do the readings offer?
3. What is the theoretical framework used to explain the phenomenon/event identified in each of the readings?
  - a. Identify and explain the theoretical framework underlying the explanations – i.e., identify and explain which elements of a particular theory are present?
4. Which elements of the theoretical framework are absent and/or contradict the explanation of the phenomenon/event in each of the readings?
5. What are the shortcomings of each of the explanations of the phenomenon/event identified in each of the readings?

### **Running the simulation**

Currently, there are several online simulation platforms and packages commonly used in university classrooms dealing with international affairs. We use the Council on Foreign Relations' *Model Diplomacy* (<https://modeldiplomacy.cfr.org/>) for the simulation. *Model Diplomacy* is an online interactive international politics simulation platform. While instructors and students must register online, it is currently available free of charge. At the time of this writing, *Model Diplomacy's* case library contained 29 contemporary and

historical cases covering issues as diverse as interstate conflict, humanitarian intervention, civil unrest, cyber warfare, climate change, migrations, and infectious disease outbreaks, among others (some examples in Figure 3). The platform also offers several pop-up cases with short, one-page scenarios based on more contemporary policy issues. Both the contemporary and historical cases and the pop-up cases are regularly updated, and students are able to run simulations as members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) or the NSC depending on the type of case selected. In our simulation, we use the UNSC as the deliberating body and use a case focusing on an impending military threat to the international community. Therefore, the main objective of the role-play is for students to discuss an international response to this challenge.

The screenshot shows the 'Model Diplomacy' Case Library webpage. The navigation bar includes 'CASE LIBRARY', 'POP-UP CASES', 'RESOURCES', 'ABOUT', and 'TESTIMONIALS'. The main heading is 'Case Library'. Below this is a filter menu with 'All', 'NSC', and 'UNSC' (selected), along with 'Region' and 'Topic' dropdowns. Three case cards are visible:

- Boko Haram in Nigeria**: A massive Boko Haram attack in Lagos threatens the stability of Nigeria, a major oil producer and Africa's most populous country. Last updated: 11/04/2020.
- Collapse in Venezuela**: Venezuela's government defaults on foreign loans, and the ensuing financial panic precipitates a true economic and political collapse. Last updated: 09/02/2020.
- Cyber Clash with China**: Tensions escalate between the United States and China as the Nasdaq Stock Market faces a devastating cyberattack from an underground hacker collective possibly supported by the Chinese government. Last updated: 06/01/2020.

Figure 3: Extract of Model Diplomacy case library webpage  
(Source: Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; use PDF 'zoom in' function to read)

Before the simulation begins, students need to obtain background information on the case selected for the role-play. In many situations, it is incumbent on the instructors to provide students with the necessary materials for them to become acquainted with the situation. In other situations, students may need to carry out background research autonomously or with minimal guidance from the instructor. However, research demonstrates that unless this component is graded, students will not dedicate much effort to background research (Shaw & Switky, 2018). *Model Diplomacy* permits instructors to manage this issue by providing rigorous and engaging case notes (consisting of texts, videos, maps, timelines, historical documents, and other supplementary resources) that allow students to obtain the necessary information on the issue for each case (Figure 4). Afterwards, roles are assigned to each of the students. While there are several different ways of attributing roles

(see Shaw & Switky, 2018), in our simulation, students are allowed to select the respective country delegate they wanted to represent in the UNSC, and any disputes are resolved by the instructor.

## 2.2 Background

Historically, the region in and around South Sudan has struggled with harsh geography, an unforgiving climate, an underdeveloped economy, and dysfunctional, often feuding, governments. South Sudan's huge oil deposits have fallen under mismanagement and the threat of violence. **The oil wealth has not benefited** most of the South Sudanese people. Even in peacetime, the population of South Sudan lives on the brink of a humanitarian disaster.

The current crisis traces its roots to a decades-long civil war between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), among other, smaller rebel groups. The war ended in 2005, and in 2011 South Sudan seceded from Sudan in a **referendum** supported by 98.8 percent of the electorate. **Salva Kiir**, the head of the SPLM/A, became South Sudan's first president. He appointed a rival militia leader, **Riek Machar**, as his vice president. Machar represented the Nuer ethnic group (**16 percent** of the population), Kiir represented the Dinka (36 percent). These are South Sudan's largest ethnic groups and **are closely related**. They do not have a long history of tensions; indeed, their members have often intermarried. However, their relationship has deteriorated over decades of fighting among rival South Sudanese militias that claim different ethnic affiliations. Kiir believed that Machar's appointment would help unify the new country.

The two leaders disagreed over the allocation of oil profits, however. Kiir wanted the profits to flow to the central government, but Machar said they should go to South Sudan's individual states. (Machar's home state of Unity has some of the nation's richest oil fields.) Additionally, Kiir took steps to **bolster his executive powers**, whereas Machar argued for power to be less centralized.

In mid-2013, Kiir launched a series of investigations and suspensions that he portrayed as anticorruption measures but that were widely denounced as an attempt to consolidate his power. Claiming his rivals were plotting a coup, Kiir fired his entire **cabinet**, including Machar, who had declared that **he would challenge Kiir** in the next presidential election.



Figure 4: Extract of Model Diplomacy case background information  
Source: Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; use PDF 'zoom in' function to read)

Prior to the role-play, students are also asked to prepare a set of draft clauses for a potential UNSC resolution. These draft clauses form the basis of the discussions and negotiations in the role-play. Specifically, students are asked to bring:

- two to three preambular clauses that describe the issue at hand, consider the international context, and outline previous agreements and existing organisations; and
- three to four operative clauses that present responses to the situation.

Each operative clause should present a complete proposal, making sure that the proposed solutions are within the powers of the UNSC and are practical. In developing the operative clauses, students are reminded that they might be designed to work in concert (e.g., economic sanctions, mediation, peacekeeping operation) or might be a set of alternatives from which they hoped one would be adopted (perhaps three peacekeeping proposals that differ in their details). Students are also advised to use subsidiary clauses if their operative clauses drift afield. In order to help develop their preambular and operative clauses, students are directed to the *Model Diplomacy's* UN Security Council Draft Clauses Rubric (Table 3), as well as to the UNSC resolutions webpage and other institutional sources (American Model United Nations, n.d.; Best Delegate, 2011; Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; United Nations Security Council, n.d.).

Table 3: UN Security Council draft clauses rubric

CONCERNS What needs improvement	CRITERIA What is expected	ADVANCED What is excellent
	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are two to three preambular and three to four operative clauses;</li> <li>• Clauses are properly formatted and styled.</li> </ul>	
	Preambular clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately identify relevant prior agreements and existing organizations.</li> </ul>	
	Operative clauses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are practical and within the UN Security Council's powers;</li> <li>• Address who;</li> <li>• Address what;</li> <li>• Address when;</li> <li>• Address where;</li> <li>• Address why;</li> <li>• Address how;</li> <li>• Address funding.</li> </ul>	

Source: Council on Foreign Relations (n.d.).

The simulation is carried out throughout the course of two class sessions, involving three rounds. While our simulation follows a hybrid format, *Model Diplomacy* allows instructors to organise the role-play as a cyber simulation where all the stages and interactions are done online/virtually. Student interactions during the simulation need to be structured so they are aware of what is expected of them and how they can successfully participate in the role-play. By providing a series of well-established rules and procedures for running the simulation, students are prohibited from “engaging in actions that are impossible in the real world” (Raymond & Usherwood, 2013, p. 157). In addition, role-specific

instructions are provided to students for the role-play. *Model Diplomacy* facilitates this process by providing information on the case roles, namely a description of each role, issues for consideration, and research leads. *Model Diplomacy* also provides a detailed guide for the simulation, with instructions on how the role-play is carried out (Table 4).

Table 4: Guide to UNSC simulation role play

Round	Timing	Objectives	Procedural notes
One: Public meeting	2 mins per participant	Receive a five-minute briefing from the secretary-general on the issue to be discussed; Present opening statements; Crystallise the central questions of debate.	During opening statements, the president of the UNSC will recognise country representatives in the order in which they request to speak, and no representative may speak again if others have not yet spoken. Following opening statements, country representatives are free to openly debate the statements made, evaluating the various positions on their merits.
Two: Informal meeting	30 to 60 per participant	Debate each participant's proposed clauses; Edit, add, or drop proposed clauses and combine them into one or more draft resolutions; Draft a presidential statement using proposed clauses and/or new material if no draft resolution appears acceptable to the group.	The president will recognise country representatives in the order in which they request to speak. Representatives should limit their statements to one minute each, but if time allows the president may permit them to speak longer. The president may also invite any participant to speak as he or she deems it appropriate. Any participant may motion for a ten- to fifteen-minute break, during which representatives can move freely and work on their draft resolutions individually or in small groups.
Three: Public meeting	1 to 2 mins per participant	Hear summaries of any draft resolutions as well as arguments for and against adoption; Vote on draft resolutions in order of submission; Attempt to adopt a presidential statement by consensus if no resolutions are proposed or passed.	The president will call first on the draft resolution's main author(s) and then on other countries that wish to make arguments for or against the resolution. To be adopted, Security Council resolutions must receive at least nine votes in favour and no dissenting votes (vetoes) from any of the five permanent members. A state may abstain, often to indicate ambivalence or mild disapproval (in contrast to strong opposition). According to the charter, abstentions are mandatory if the state is a party to the dispute in question. Abstentions by permanent members do not count as vetoes; the resolution will pass if it receives the necessary nine votes.

Source: Council on Foreign Relations (n.d.)

The initial two rounds are carried out in the first class session devoted to the role-play. In this session, the UNSC president provides an initial briefing of the topic under discussion and students present their opening statements, providing the main ideas underscoring their draft clauses. A period of debate is then open for general statements from the delegates. In the second round, students debate each other's proposed clauses and make an initial attempt to work on draft resolutions individually or in small groups.

Afterwards, the students have the entire week to carry out negotiations outside the classroom. This component is an essential feature of the hybrid simulation model. While many hybrid simulations use social network platforms such as *Facebook*, *Skype*, and *Dropbox*, in our simulation we employ as many of the tools available in the University's learning management system (LMS) as possible to keep students from feeling overwhelmed by having to engage with multiple external resources. Flinders University uses *Moodle* as its LMS and complements it with other technology support products to form the basis of the *Flinders Learning Online* (FLO) platform. Besides all the necessary information and instructions available in the course FLO webpage, several activity modules are created and added to facilitate student interactions. The chat activity module allows students to have text-based, real-time synchronous discussions and negotiations, whereas the forum activity module allows them to have asynchronous discussions over the week. In order to aid and promote the negotiation of the resolutions, the instructor allows files, such as draft resolution proposals, to be attached to forum posts. The latter has the advantage of permitting students to subscribe to a forum and receive notifications of new forum posts. In order to facilitate virtual face-to-face interactions, students have access to a *Collaborate* virtual classroom which is always available to them during the entire simulation. Students also use their institutional emails (which were posted on a general simulation forum) in order to contact specific individuals.

In the following class session, the students meet once again in the physical classroom and carry out round three of the simulation. This session begins with the president calling first on the draft resolutions main authors to present their resolution proposals and then on other delegates that wish to make the case for or against the resolutions. When no other delegates want to intervene (and there should be some good judgement to try not to prolong the discussion too much), students vote on the draft resolutions in order of submission. To be adopted, UNSC resolutions must receive at least nine votes in favour (i.e., 60% of the votes in the affirmative) and no dissenting votes (vetoes) from any of the five permanent members (i.e., China, France, Russia, U.K., and the U.S.).<sup>2</sup> A country may abstain in order to indicate uncertainty or mild disapproval (in contrast to strong opposition). Abstentions by permanent members do not count as vetoes and the resolution passes if it receives the necessary 60% of the votes.

If no resolutions are proposed or passed, delegates can attempt to adopt a presidential statement by consensus. A presidential statement is made by the president of the UNSC

---

<sup>2</sup> In order to allow all the students to have an equal opportunity to fully participate in the simulation, all the students can be allowed to vote as long as the percentages and veto rules are maintained.

on behalf of the council. No formal vote is taken on a presidential statement. Rather, it is adopted by consensus among all the delegates (although some may abstain). Delegates have the option of voicing their opposition to the statement, which is then recorded in the document. While presidential statements are similar in content and tone to resolutions, they are generally less specific and are not legally binding.

All presidential statements generally follow a similar structure, which tends to be more flexible and informal than a UNSC resolution:

1. Overview: an overview of the meeting or informal session that gave rise to the statement in question.
2. Body: five to fifteen paragraphs, each beginning with “The Security Council,” reflecting the consensus opinion of council members and sometimes providing an overview of past actions on the subject. A presidential statement is often used to reaffirm the council’s support for ongoing UN missions and initiatives or to provide progress reports on these initiatives.
3. Signature: the signature of the president of the Security Council.

In order to help students write the presidential statement, they are provided with examples from the UNSC Presidential Statements website (United Nations Security Council, n.d.).

### **Debriefing and assessment**

After the role-play is concluded, students participate in a debriefing session. The main objective of the session is to review and examine the results of the learning objectives associated with the simulation. Students are encouraged to discuss the main elements of the simulation, highlighting the processes and outcomes and provide a preliminary theoretical explanation for them. This provides students with an initial opportunity to think about their final assessment in the simulation. While there are several forms of grading student involvement, the learning goals of the course are again essential when considering the final output of the simulation. Therefore, students must write a simulation reflection paper (worth 40% of the final grade), consisting of a theoretical analysis of the role-play. The goal of the final paper is to use the different theoretical frameworks studied in the first half of the semester and analyse the simulation process and outcome according to each. To write their final reflection paper, students are provided with a simulation paper reflection guide which helps assemble and organise their final paper. The guide is structured as follows:

I. UNSC Resolution	Present the final UNSC Resolution approved in the simulation (or Presidential Statement)
II. Resolution context (app. 250-500 words)	State the main event dealt with in the simulation; Explain the approved Resolution (or Presidential Statement) – i.e., explain what actions were approved and why;
III. Theoretical analysis of the phenomenon/event in the simulation (app. 3,000 words)	Analyse the event of the simulation (particularly the decision that informed the Resolution) from the different theoretical perspectives – i.e., how would each theory explain the decision taken by the UNSC: *

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realism/neorealism;</li> <li>• Liberalism/neoliberalism;</li> <li>• Constructivism;</li> <li>• Post-positivism.</li> </ul> <p>* Keep in mind the main assumptions underlying each theoretical framework (e.g., view of the international system, main actors, main relationships, main dynamics, etc.). Highlight the theoretical analyses main similarities and differences.</p>
IV. Conclusion (app. 250-500 words)	<p>Personal reflection on how you are influenced by theoretical assumptions.</p> <p>Discuss the broader implications of these analyses for the debates on international relations theory.</p>
V. References (does not count for word total)	<p>Make sure you use references (in-text referencing) to support your claims and arguments – use the readings from this semester.</p>

It is important to highlight that failure to reach an agreement in the role-play does not imply that the simulation was unsuccessful. Rather, as Shaw and Switky (2018, p. 527) clarified, “it may be very realistic that a definitive conclusion to negotiations is not achieved.” After submitting the paper, students are provided with detailed feedback in order to consolidate the course learning goals.

## Conclusion

International politics is characterised, first and foremost, by complexity (Freire & da Vinha, 2015). When viewed through different theoretical lenses, this complexity can lead to divergent interpretations and explanations of important international events. Students of international politics and diplomatic history need to develop a sound understanding of the concepts and assumptions underscoring the different theories in international relations. However, as research demonstrates, students tend to shun theoretical topics and debates. Over the years, active learning strategies have been increasingly used to engage students with positive results. Simulations have been singled out as a particularly effective active learning strategy.

As Shaw and Switky (2018, p. 532) pointed out, “simulations are, by definition, simplified versions of reality.” However, simulations are particularly useful in helping students appreciate the complexity of international politics, by providing them with the opportunity to “live” events. More precisely, as Asal, Raymond and Usherwood clarified:

This “bringing to life” leads directly to the final assumption, namely that the world is complex, by which we understand that, despite such simple rules, the results are intrinsically uncertain and non-linear, because of the chaotic nature of human interaction. Put differently, when we run a simulation, then we do so in the knowledge that both the process and the outcome will vary from iteration to iteration, and indeed it is precisely that uncertainty that we wish to convey to students. (Asal, Raymond & Usherwood, 2015, p. 305)

Hybrid simulations are particularly useful in underscoring the complexity of international politics by fostering “parallel learning” as students are actively engaged in the learning process inside and outside the classroom, for extended periods. More precisely, by incorporating face-to-face and virtual interactions, hybrid simulations “accumulate to form a new way of teaching designed to develop an open-minded approach to theory and findings” (Ben-Yehuda, Levin-Banchik & Naveh, 2015, p. 10).

However, simulations are not a panacea. While they offer instructors an alternative means to engage students and actively involve them in their learning experience, they are a complement but not a substitute for other educational strategies (Shaw & Switky, 2018; Shellman & Turan, 2006). They need to be developed and framed by the course’s learning objectives. The simulation detailed in this paper offers a contribution to using simulations to help enhance students’ understanding of the main theoretical frameworks in international relations. It provides students with the thought laboratories which are so often missing in the social sciences and humanities and which allow them to actively experiment and apply their conceptual and theoretical knowledge to “real world” events. The simulation presented here serves as a template for employing active learning strategies inside and outside of the classroom and can be adapted and adjusted to meet other learning objectives.

## References

- Allison, G. (2017). China vs. America: Managing the next clash of civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, 96(5), 80-89. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44821871>
- Ambrosio, T., Schram, C. & Heopfner, P. (2020). The American securitization of China and Russia: US geopolitical culture and declining unipolarity. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 61(2), 162-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2019.1702566>
- American Model United Nations (n.d.). *United Nations Documents*. Oak Park: American Model United Nations. <https://www.amun.org/handbooks/2019/2019-handbook/united-nations-documents/>
- Archer, C. C. & Miller, M. K. (2011). Prioritizing active learning: An exploration of gateway courses in political science. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44(2), 429-434. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511000291>
- Asal, V., Chad, R. & Usherwood, S. (2015). War, peace and everything in between: Simulations in international relations. In J. Ishiyama, W. J. Miller & E. Simon (Eds.). *Handbook on teaching and learning in political science and international relations* (pp. 304-314). Northampton: Edward Elgar. <https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/handbook-on-teaching-and-learning-in-political-science-and-international-relations-9781782548478.html>
- Baepler, P., Walker, J. D., Brooks, D. C., Saichaie, K. & Petersen, C. (2016). *A guide to teaching in the active learning classroom: History, research, and practice*. Sterling: Stylus Publishing.
- Ben-Yehuda, H. (2021). *All the world’s a stage: The theater of political simulations*. New York: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/All-the-Worlds-a-Stage-The-Theater-of-Political-Simulations/Ben-Yehuda/p/book/9781138094055>
- Ben-Yehuda, H., Levin-Banchik, L. & Naveh, C. (2015). *World politics simulations in a global information age*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press. [https://www.press.umich.edu/5921881/world\\_politics\\_simulations\\_in\\_a\\_global\\_information\\_age](https://www.press.umich.edu/5921881/world_politics_simulations_in_a_global_information_age)

- Bernstein, S., Lebow, R. N., Stein, J. G. & Weber, S. (2000). God gave physics the easy problems: Adapting social science to an unpredictable world. *European Journal of International Relations*, 6(1), 43-76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066100006001003>
- Best Delegate (2011). *Model UN made easy: How to write a resolution*. New York: Best Delegate. <https://bestdelegate.com/model-un-made-easy-how-to-write-a-resolution/>
- Boyer, M. A. (2003). The potential perils of slack (not pack) pedagogy: A response to J. Martin Rochester's remarks about active learning strategies. *International Studies Perspectives*, 4(4), 432-435. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.404007>
- Boyle, M. (2004). Utopianism and the Bush foreign policy. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17(1), 81-103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000203669>
- Bridge, D. & Radford, S. (2014). Teaching diplomacy by other means: Using an outside-of-class simulation to teach international relations theory. *International Studies Perspectives*, 15(4), 423-437. <https://doi.org/10.1111/insp.12017>
- Bromley, P. (2013). Active learning strategies for diverse learning styles: Simulations are only one method. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 46(4), 818-822. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096513001145>
- Bunte, J. B. (2019). Why do students enroll in political science courses? *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 52(2), 353-360. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518002056>
- Carr, R., Palmer, S. & Hagel, P. (2015). Active learning: The importance of developing a comprehensive measure. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 16(3), 173-186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787415589529>
- Council on Foreign Relations (n.d.). *Model Diplomacy*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations. <https://modeldiplomacy.cfr.org/>
- Enterline, A. J. & Jepsen, E. M. (2009). Chinazambia and Boliviafranca: A simulation of domestic politics and foreign policy. *International Studies Perspectives*, 10(1), 49-59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2008.00357.x>
- Faust, J. & Paulson, D. (1998). Active learning in the college classroom. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 9(2), 3-24.
- Florez-Morris, M. & Tafur, I. (2010). Using video production in political science courses as an instructional strategy for engaging students in active learning. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 6(3), 315-319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2010.494472>
- Frederking, B. (2005). Simulations and student learning. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 1(3), 385-393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512160500261236>
- Freeman, S., Eddy, S., McDonough, M., Smith, M. K., Okoroafor, N., Jordt, H. & Wenderoth, M. P. (2014). Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(23), 8410-8415. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1319030111>
- Freire, M. & da Vinha, L. (2015). Política externa: Modelos, actores e dinâmicas. In Maria Raquel Freire (Ed.), *Política externa: As relações internacionais em mudança* (pp. 13-53). Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra. [https://eg.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/41496/1/Pol%C3%ADtica%20externa\\_as%20rela%C3%A7%C3%B5es%20internacionais%20em%20mudan%C3%A7a.pdf](https://eg.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/41496/1/Pol%C3%ADtica%20externa_as%20rela%C3%A7%C3%B5es%20internacionais%20em%20mudan%C3%A7a.pdf)
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gorton, W. & Havercroft, J. (2012). Using historical simulations to teach political theory. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 8(1), 50-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2012.641399>

- Hinnebusch, R. (2007). The U.S. invasion of Iraq: Explanations and implications. *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 16(3), 209-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10669920701616443>
- Hoy, B. (2018). Teaching history with custom-built board games. *Simulation & Gaming*, 49(2), 115-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878118763624>
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2018). Why the liberal world order will survive. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 32(1), 17-29. <https://ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2018/liberal-world-order-will-survive/>
- Johnson, J. A. (2008). On the advantage and disadvantage of history for teaching political theory to undergraduates. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 4(3), 341-356.
- Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education. <https://www.pearson.com.au/9780133892406>
- Levy, J. S. (1988). Domestic politics and war. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), 653-673. <https://doi.org/10.2307/204819>
- Lightcap, T. (2009). Creating political order: Maintaining student engagement through *Reacting to the Past*. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 42(1), 175-179. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20452395>
- Majstorovic, S. (2001). Short attention spans and glazed eyes: Teaching world politics in the university trenches. *International Studies Perspectives*, 2(4), page NP. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1528-3577.00071>
- Meinerz, C. B. (2018). Jogar com a História na Sala de Aula. In M. P. Giacomoni & N. M. Pereira (Eds.), *Jogos e Ensino de História* (pp. 73-86). Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS.
- Modelski, G. (1970). Simulations, "realities," and international relations theory. *Simulation & Games*, 1(2), 111-134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104687817000100201>
- Moore, M. J. (2011). How (and what) political theorists teach: Results of a national survey. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 7(1), 95-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2011.539921>
- Mugueta, Í., Manzano, A., Alonso, P. & Labiano, L. (2015). Videojuegos para aprender historia: Una experiencia con *Age of Empires*. *En Revista Didáctica, Innovación y Multimedia*, 11(32), 1-13. <https://historiayvideojuegos.com/wp-content/uploads/attachments/19.pdf>
- Raymond, C. & Usherwood, S. (2013). Assessment in simulations. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 9(2), 157-167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2013.770984>
- Rochester, J. M. (2003). The potential perils of pack pedagogy, or why international studies educators should be gun-shy of adopting active and cooperative learning strategies. *International Studies Perspectives*, 4(1). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44218251>
- Rosenau, J. & Durfee, M. (2000). *Thinking theory thoroughly: Coherent approaches to an incoherent world*. Boulder: Westview Press. <https://www.routledge.com/Thinking-Theory-Thoroughly-Coherent-Approaches-To-An-Incoherent-World/Rosenau-Durfee/p/book/9780813366760>
- Sears, N. A. (2018). War and peace in international relations theory: A classroom simulation. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(2), 222-239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2017.1403436>
- Shaw, C. M. & Switky, B. (2018). Designing and using simulations in the international relations classroom. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 14(4), 523-534. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2018.1433543>
- Shellman, S. M. & Turan, K. (2006). Do simulations enhance student learning? An empirical evaluation of an IR simulation. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2(1), 19-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512160500484168>

- Simpson, A. W. & Kaussler, B. (2009). IR teaching reloaded: Using films and simulations in the teaching of international relations. *International Studies Perspectives*, 10(4), 413-427. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2009.00386.x>
- Srole, C., Endy, C. & Pflieger, B. (2017). Active learning in history survey courses: The value of “in-class” peer mentoring. *The History Teacher*, 51(1), 89-102. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44504542>
- Stephanson, A. (2001). War and diplomatic history. *Diplomatic History*, 25(3), 393-403. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24914124>
- United Nations Security Council (n.d.). *Presidential statements*. New York: United Nations. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/presidential-statements>
- United Nations Security Council (n.d.). *Resolutions*. New York: United Nations. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions>
- Waltz, K. N. (1988). The origins of war in neorealist theory. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), 615-628. <https://doi.org/10.2307/204817>
- Weidenfeld, M. C. & Fernandez, K. E. (2017). Does *reacting to the past* increase student engagement? An empirical evaluation of the use of historical simulations in teaching political theory. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 13(1), 46-61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2016.1175948>
- Wieman, C. (2017). *Improving how universities teach science: Lessons from the Science Education Initiative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674972070>
- Wigfield, A., Faust, L., Cambria, J. & Eccles, J. S. (2019). Motivation in education. In Ryan, R. M. (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (2nd ed., pp. 443-461). Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190666453.013.24>
- Yordán, C. L. (2006). America's quest for global hegemony: "Offensive realism, the Bush doctrine, and the 2003 Iraq War". *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, 53(2), 125-157. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41802331>

**Luis da Vinha** *PhD* is a lecturer in international relations at Flinders University where he coordinates the Master of Arts degree in International Relations. His teaching and research interests are in international security, foreign policy analysis, and political geography. His research has been published with Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Comparative Strategy*, *Journal of Policy History*, and the *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, among others. He is the author of *Geographic mental maps and foreign policy change* and *Three approaches to Presidential foreign policy-making in the twenty-first century*. Luis was the recipient of the 2016 VSCU Teacher of the Year Award and the 2021 Vice-President and Executive Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching at Flinders University's College of Business, Government & Law.  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7222-5095>  
Email: [luis.davinha@flinders.edu.au](mailto:luis.davinha@flinders.edu.au)

**Please cite as:** Da Vinha, L. (2021). Using hybrid simulations to enhance student learning of international relations theories. *Issues in Educational Research*, 31(3), 739-759. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier31/da-vinha.pdf>