

GET A DEAL: INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS IN PRACTICE

Professor: **Barthélémy Michalon**

Session: **July 2026**

Language of instruction: **English**

Number of hours of class: **12.5h**



Objective of the Course

This elective course aims at discovering, acquiring and practicing basic negotiating techniques, especially in an international context. Throughout the course, students face a wide variety of scenarios and challenges (ranging from everyday life situations to international issues), which they are expected to tackle by resorting to negotiation, with different degrees of complexity.



Summary

The sessions are structured to ensure that theoretical explanations provided at the start of each session are immediately applied through interactive exercises and negotiation models within the same class, enabling knowledge to be swiftly transformed into practical competence.

Twice during the course, students engage in extended role-playing scenarios. The first is a fictitious trade negotiation where students face successive dilemmas, with instant feedback on the consequences of their decisions. In the second setting, a diplomatic negotiation involves two fictitious countries vying for control over a group of islands. Students utilize available information, such as maps and historical context, alongside the practical skills developed throughout the course to reach an agreement.



Organization of the course

→ **Session 1: Introduction to negotiation**

- **What does negotiation mean and what does it imply?**

Students build a definition of negotiation in an original way: 1) each team must select words within a pre-defined pool of key concepts while 2) each member acts under their own individual constraints, as they are given specific and secret objectives to meet in relation to the common goal.

- **Truths and lies about negotiation**

Students use their own electronic device to indicate whether they agree or not with each of the suggested statements about negotiation. Then, we discuss each point in order to ponder what negotiation is (and what it is not) and what it implies from an operational perspective. Among other relevant issues, we will understand and reflect upon the duality between distributive and integrative negotiations.

Recommended readings: Jeong (2016), pp.144-150 and Mansbridge & Martin (2016), pp.93-95.

→ **Session 2: Trust in negotiations**

- **Simulation exercise: experiencing the importance of trust**

Students make decisions in the context of a fictitious international trade situation, where specific constraints reward certain choices and sanction others.

→ **Session 3: Phases in a negotiation process, with emphasis on preparation**

- **A series of crucial steps, beyond the talks themselves**

Presentation of the overall negotiation process, including the discussions but also extending to what is expected to happen *before* and *after* the talks themselves.

Recommended readings: Jeong (2016), pp.128-134, 145-150 and Odell & Tingley (2011), pp.235-238.

- **Research and training before negotiation**

Presentation of the basic but necessary steps that each side must follow *before* starting a negotiation process. The aim is to insist that negotiation, in its broader meaning, begins much before we face our counterpart(s).

Recommended reading: Mansbridge & Martin (2016), pp.97-109.

- **The Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)**

Often overlooked or even unknown, BATNA is a key parameter that participants to any negotiation process must identify and reflect upon before the talks. We reflect on how a BATNA can be strong or weak and how it can be strengthened. Then, the students individually select on their electronic device what option corresponds to their BATNA in different everyday life scenarios. A plenary discussion takes place on the answers.

Recommended reading: Mansbridge & Martin (2016), pp.253-254.

→ **Session 4: Acting purposefully in a negotiation context**

- **Introduction to key negotiation-related concepts**

A clarification is provided regarding both the differences and connections between strategy, tactics, and techniques. Likewise, Putnam's two-level game theory is explained, along with how it concretely unfolds in a negotiation process.

- **Negotiation tactics and techniques**

Various tactics and techniques are explained to the students, often with exercises that allow them to explore how to apply these methods in real-life situations (breaking a deadlock, leveraging time and sequencing, building a package deal, moving beyond positions to focus on interests, unlocking creative solutions...)

Recommended readings: Jeong (2016), pp.130-145 and Mansbridge & Martin (2016), pp.89-95, p.103-104.

- **Preliminary research and reflection within each team**

Before the class, students read a text that presents the key aspects of the case they will negotiate and answer a few preparatory questions.

In the classroom, they are organized into teams of four to five students, within which they prepare for the negotiation by collectively answering, in writing, a series of guiding questions.

Note: the reading-based individual homework has to be handed in through the Moodle platform before the start of the class.

→ **Session 5: Negotiation exercise: The moment of truth**

- **Bilateral discussions**

Teams of five students represent two fictitious states competing for islands near their coasts, informed by "briefing notes" that describe the situation from their own country's perspective. Separate negotiations take place between pairs of teams, with the students largely responsible for the overall conduct of the process.

- **Writing of the final agreement (if any)**

The negotiation process is expected to conclude with a written final agreement. If the teams fail to do it, they must separately produce a document in which they provide a diagnostic on its causes and identify for which reasons each side is to blame.



Bibliography

- Jeong Ho-Won. 2016. *International negotiation: Process and strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mansbridge Jane J. and Martin Cathie J. 2016. *Political negotiation: A handbook*. Washington (Wash.): Brookings Institution Press.
- Odell, J. and Tingley, "Chapter 7: Negotiating agreements in International Relation" in D. Lewicki, Roy J., David M. Saunders and Bruce Barry. 2011. *Essentials of Negotiation*. 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.



Requirements for validation

Students will be assessed on their participation in class throughout the program (20% of the grade), a short assignment between sessions 4 and 5 (20% of the grade), and the Petit Oral (60% of the grade).

The Petit Oral will take place on Thursday, July 16th. Each 3-member team will study a historical case of negotiation throughout the Summer School and will present it in no more than 12 minutes to the whole group, including the professor and a colleague. This 2-member jury will then assess the presentation based on an evaluation grid presented from the very first session and will send individualized written feedback to each student.



Professor's biography

Barthélémy Michalon holds a PhD in Political Science from Sciences Po, specializing in digital politics.

He has been teaching International Relations at Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM) in Mexico for over fifteen years, covering a wide range of subjects including Geopolitics, International Negotiations, Europe, World History and Strategic Prospective.

Barthélémy published various articles in indexed journals, as well as several case studies on foreign policy and international relations. He frequently includes case studies and other role-playing activities in his courses, strengthened by technological tools.

