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School of Diplomacy and International
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Fall 2015

DIPL 4101 AA Senior Research Project

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School of Diplomacy and International Relations
DIPL 4101AA: Senior Research Project
Mondays, 2:00 – 4:30 in Fahy 237

Professor: Benjamin Goldfrank
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00, and by appointment
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Course Summary:

This course is designed to help students learn research, writing, and oral communications skills that they can apply to all academic and professional pursuits. The ultimate goal is to complete a well-written, strongly argued, and thoroughly documented Senior Research Project. The course is structured to include both class and individual meetings. The first several weeks mix class and individual meetings with the professor to focus on helping students turn their research interests into a research puzzle, find and use primary and secondary sources, develop hypotheses, conceptualize variables, identify an effective research design, and present their ideas professionally in public settings. The next several weeks help students shape their particular projects, with a focus on writing, revising, and providing effective feedback to fellow students. During the last weeks the students formally present their research findings and constructively critique one another's presentations.

Expectations and Grading:

Students should come to class meetings prepared to discuss the readings and to present their assignments to their colleagues and the professor. Students should come to each of the individual meetings with the professor prepared to present and discuss their assignments. The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Writing assignments: 15%
- Participation: 15%
- Preliminary draft: 15%
- Oral presentation: 20%
- Final draft: 35%

Important Notes:

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the administration, and may result in a lowered or failing grade for the course and up to possible dismissal from the School of Diplomacy. See university and school standards for academic conduct here:
<http://www.shu.edu/offices/student-life/community-standards/community-standards.cfm>
<http://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>

Use of electronic devices for any purpose other than taking notes is not appropriate during class time. It distracts other students and the professor and will result in a lowered grade (in other words, do not use your laptop for email, shopping, Twitter, Facebook, and the like).

Required Reading (available at the SHU Bookstore):

Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008) 3rd Edition.

Course Meetings, Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates:*

*Note: Any assignments may be turned in early

Weeks 1-3: Class and Individual Meetings

Monday, Aug 31 (class):

Course overview and choosing a topic

Identifying research questions, defining problems, and finding, using, and citing sources

Monday, Sep 14 (class):

Hypotheses, variables, thesis statements, causal claims, and research design

Reading: BCW (Booth, Colomb, & Williams), pp. 35-101, 273-276

Assignment: **Preliminary Bibliography – due in class**

Bring a bibliography with at least 20 potential sources on your research topics. This should help you to determine if there is enough information about your topic/s to continue with it or choose one of two. All sources should be academic books, journal articles, or primary materials such as government documents or institutional databases.

Monday, Sep 21 (individual meetings):

Reading: BCW, pp. 105-138

Assignment: **Research Topic Descriptions – due at meeting**

Write two descriptions of research topics that you are considering, each a paragraph long. What's the puzzle? Why is it interesting and important? Be prepared to present the descriptions to the professor.

Week 4: Individual Meetings

Monday, Sep 28:

Discussion of the bibliography, research question, and research strategy

Reading: BCW, pp. 139-151

Assignment: **Annotated Bibliography – due at meeting**

Bring a bibliography with at least 10 annotated sources. Below each of these 10 sources describe the article's key points and how they relate to your research in 3-4 sentences. Do not simply use the article's abstracts; use your own words. All sources should be academic books or journal articles. Be prepared to discuss progress and future plans.

Weeks 5-7: Class and Individual Meetings

Monday, Oct 5 (class):

Assessing existing research

Assignment: **Preliminary Literature Review – due in class**

Write a three-page review of *at least five articles in academic journals* that directly relate to your research topic. The review should compare and contrast the readings, stressing the major arguments presented, the evidence used, the type of analysis employed, limitations, and areas of contention between the authors. Most importantly, the review should propose how your research question relates to one or more debates within the academic literature. Be prepared to present the review to the class.

Monday, Oct 19 (individual meetings):

Thesis statements and research strategies

Assignment: **Thesis Statement / Research Strategy – due at meeting**

Write a two-page thesis statement and research strategy that includes how the thesis relates to the state of the debate regarding your topic and what strategy you will use to assess your causal claims, including what cases you will examine and what data sources you will use.

Monday, Oct 26 (class):

Thesis statements and research strategies

Assignment: **Thesis Statement / Research Strategy – due in class**

Present a revised thesis statement and research strategy to the class in a 3-5 minute formal presentation that includes how the thesis relates to the state of the debate regarding your topic and what strategy you will use to assess your causal claims, including what cases you will examine and what data sources you will use.

Weeks 8-9: Individual meetings

Monday, Nov 2 and Monday, Nov 9:

Discussion of the introduction and outline (and research progress at subsequent meetings)

Reading: BCW, pp. 173-202

Assignment: **Introduction and Outline – due at meeting**

Bring a detailed 3-7 page introduction and outline. The introduction should not be more than 4 pages and should include the research puzzle, the policy &/or theoretical importance of the question/topic, the thesis statement (or set of hypotheses), and the plan for the paper. The outline should briefly describe the main points (and, preferably, the sources to be used) in each section.

Week 10: Class meeting

Monday, Nov 16:

Presenting research in public and making revisions

Assignment: **Preliminary draft – due in class**

Hand in the preliminary draft at the beginning of class and send an electronic copy as well. The preliminary draft should be at least 4,000 words and should include at least the introduction, the literature review section, some analysis of cases and data, and an outline of the remaining pages.

Week 11: Individual meetings

Monday, Nov 23:

Discussion of ways to strengthen the preliminary draft

Reading: BCW, pp. 203-210, 232-269

Weeks 12–14: Class Meetings

Monday, Nov 30; Monday, Dec 7, and Monday, Dec 14:

Student presentations

Reading: BCW, pp. 213-231.

Assignment: **Oral Presentation and Constructive Critique**

Students should come prepared to present their research, including the puzzle, thesis statement, findings, and conclusions. Presentations should be 10-12 minutes long and should include some kind of visual aid (overhead projector, PowerPoint presentation, or hand-out). Students should also be prepared to provide constructive critiques (including praise) of their fellow students.

December 17: Final Paper Due (earlier is welcome)

Final drafts are due. An electronic copy should be sent to my email address and a hard copy placed in my mailbox by 4 p.m. Both an electronic and a hard copy are required.

Requirements:

- 7,000 to 9,000 words total, including title, text, notes, bibliography, and tables (roughly 25-30 pages)
- Typed, double spaced, one-inch margins
- Must incorporate suggestions from the individual meetings with the professor and from the oral presentation
- Must include appropriate citation method, and all sources in the bibliography must be cited in the text

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students should have acquired in-depth knowledge of a particular functional area and/or region of the world and knowledge and understanding of the social science research process. Students should also have developed the skills to: collect, sort, and evaluate information; analyze complex situations and synthesize information; integrate different fields of study in analysis of a complex world; and communicate effectively in oral and written form.

*** Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, students at Seton Hall University who have a disability may be eligible for accommodations in this course. Should a student require such accommodation, he or she must self-identify at the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 67, Duffy Hall, provide documentation of said disability, and work with DSS to develop a plan for accommodations. The contact person is Ms. Diane Delorenzo at [\(973\) 313-6003](tel:9733136003). ***