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Research Methods for Policy Analysis

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DIPL 6310: Research Methods for Policy Analysis

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Course Objectives  
This class is intended to accomplish two goals. First, this is a class for you to develop tools to pose questions and answer them in a social scientific fashion. Second, as this class is an essential prerequisite to DIPL 6311, you will finish this class having developed a template for your master’s research project.

To accomplish this first goal, we will spend the bulk of class time on understanding both qualitative and quantitative research. The second goal is one of application, as you will use insights picked up throughout the class to produce a research design of your own for use in DIPL 6311.

It is worth stressing that this class will be daunting. I will work at a pace faster than other sections, and I will cover more material. You may find this material a challenge. This is not because the material is impossible, but rather because it involves thinking in new and unaccustomed ways. The second part of the course involves a great deal of math, which many of us have avoided.

Course Materials  
The textbook that we will use for this course is the following:


Copies of this textbook will be available in the Walsh Library both for checkout and on reserve. Ms. Susan Malcolm in the Diplomacy office also has a copy of this text for checkout.

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

In addition, we will be using SPSS, which is an industry standard statistical software package, to complete the last four assignments. Students will be provided with a link to download a free version of the software as part of the university’s site license following the end of the drop-add period.

University computers equipped with SPSS can be found either in the information commons area of the library on the second floor or at one of the public computer labs (Jubilee 524 or Nursing 203).

Evaluation  
Your grade will be comprised of the following. More information on each of these is available on the last page of the syllabus.

Homework Assignments (6 total – 6 @ 10% each)  
Research Design (40% of grade)
Student Learning Outcomes
By the end of the semester, students should have acquired knowledge and understanding of: key concepts, models, theories, and debates involved in the study of contemporary international relations and diplomacy and 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.

Other Course Policies
Late work: Late work will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity: 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/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm

Participation: Students are expected to be actively involved in learning in this class. I will rely heavily on in-class discussion and will employ the Socratic method from time to time as a means of drawing out discussion.

Duplication: Students are required to submit original work for the research design.

Policy on Homework Submission: Assignments 4, 5, and 6 must be typed and submitted as a single document.

Note on library issues: Successful completion of the research design will require you to use considerable library research. Please note the following: 1) Wikipedia is not acceptable as a valid source of information and as such should not be cited; 2) I will not assign the pages from Chapter 3 of the Johnson text which deal with writing a literature review, but you will find this helpful. 3) If you have further library questions, you should discuss them with Diplomacy’s library liaison, Lisa DeLuca (lisa.deluca@shu.edu).

Accommodation: It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at DSS@shu.edu.

Grading: The School of Diplomacy does not award grades of D in graduate classes. Final grades below 70% will be entered into the gradebook as an F. Students must receive a grade of C or higher in 6310 in order to register for 6311.

Policy on Incompletes: Incompletes will be given only in exceptional cases for emergencies. Students wishing to request a grade of Incomplete must provide documentation to support the request accompanied by a Course Adjustment Form (available from the Diplomacy Main Office) to the professor before the date of the final examination. If the incomplete request is approved, the professor reserves the right to specify the new submission date for all missing coursework. Students who fail to submit the missing course work within this time period will receive a failing grade for all missing coursework and a final grade based on all coursework assigned. Any Incomplete not resolved within one calendar year of receiving the Incomplete or by the time of graduation (whichever comes first) automatically becomes an “FI” (which is equivalent to an F). It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have completed all course requirements within the timeframe allotted. Please be aware that Incompletes on your transcript will impact financial aid and academic standing.

Schedule of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week Two</th>
<th>Scientific Method / How to Ask Questions</th>
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<td>January 18</td>
<td>JRM: Chapter 1, pages 1-14, 22-25, 40-44 and Chapter 2.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week Three</th>
<th>Research Design Fundamentals</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>JRM: Chapter 3, pages 74-82 and Chapter 4, pages 104-121.</td>
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<th>Week Four</th>
<th>Concepts and Variables</th>
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<td>February 1</td>
<td>JRM: Chapter 4, pages 121-126 and Chapter 5, pages 128-145.</td>
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**Week Five**

**February 8**

**Case Selection**

JRM: Chapter 6, pages 166-171 and 195-203.


**Week Six**

**February 15**

**Building Qualitative Research Designs / Intro to SPSS**


**Week Seven**

**February 22**

**Sampling and Inference**

JRM: Chapter 7 and Chapter 11, pages 348-368.

**Week Eight**

**March 1**

**No Class Scheduled. Sign up for individual meetings with me.**

**MARCH 8**

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week Nine**

**March 15**

**T-tests and Crosstabs**

JRM: Chapter 12 and Chapter 13, pages 412-449.


**Week Ten**

**March 22**

**Correlation and Regression**

JRM: Chapter 13, pages 492-496, 478-492, 496-513.

**Week Eleven**

**March 29**

**Multiple Regression 1**

JRM: Chapter 14, pages 516-559.

**Week Twelve**

**April 5**

**Multiple Regression 2**


**Week Thirteen**

**April 12**

**Regression Applications / Logistic Regression**

JRM: Chapter 14, pages 516-559.


**Week Fourteen**

**April 19**

**Logistic Regression Models**

JRM: Chapter 14, pages 559-581.


**Week Fifteen**

**April 26**

**Open Date**

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**NOTE:** Selected assignments for this course will need to be uploaded to Blackboard. More information on how to do this is available at [http://blogs.shu.edu/techtips/files/safeassign_student.pdf](http://blogs.shu.edu/techtips/files/safeassign_student.pdf)

**Homework Assignments**

There will be six homework assignments addressing the following topics:

- Research Design Problem Statement (10%)
- Variable Operationalization (10%)
- T-Tests and Crosstabs (10%)
- Correlation (10%)
- Multiple Regression (10%)
- Logistic Regression (10%)

**Homework #1: Problem Statement Assignment:**

**Due at the start of class on February 1.**

In a minimum of three double spaced typed pages with standard margins and fonts (1”, 12 point), develop a question that you would like to research. You must do three things:

- Make certain that it is clear what your question is
- Address why your question is *theoretically* important
- Address why your question why is important *for policymakers*

I expect your bibliography to have a minimum of six sources.
Homework #2: Variable Operationalization Assignment:
Due at the start of class on February 15.
In a minimum of four double spaced typed pages with standard margins and fonts (1”, 12 point),
address the following:
  • Briefly (no more than a paragraph) summarize your research question
  • Discuss how other scholars have operationalized the dependent variable that forms
    the basis of your study.
  • Discuss how you will operationalize the dependent variable in your study (concept,
    measure, and source).
I expect your bibliography to have a minimum of ten sources.

Research Design Paper:
The primary written assignment in this class is a 15 page minimum (double-spaced with 1”
margins and 12 point fonts) research design. This paper is due electronically at 12 noon EST
on May 5th. In this paper you will do the following:
  • Develop an international relations research question
  • Locate this question in the context of relevant literature (i.e. discuss the importance of
    the question both for theory and policy)
  • Review the relevant literature on this topic
  • Outline a strategy for answering this question addressing the following
    o Operationalize the dependent variable (or what’s being caused)
    o Develop a series of alternative explanations for the outcome
    o Operationalize independent variables (or what’s doing the causing)
    o Discuss case selection (what cases are you going to look at and why)
    o Develop a testing procedure (or, how you will test your arguments, and how you
      will know you are right)
  • Offer a respectable bibliography comprised of academic research.

You are welcome to pick any topic you wish, so long as it is an international relations topic. If
you wish to build on one of the examples, please discuss this with me. Changes in topics must be
discussed with me in advance.