Masters Research Project

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Master’s Research Project (DIPL 6311)  
School of Diplomacy and International Relations  
Seton Hall University (Spring 2018)

Instructor: Dr. Assefaw Bariagaber  
Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11:00am -- 12:00pm AND 4:00pm – 5:00pm  
By appointment at times convenient to the instructor

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I. About the Course

The primary objective of this course is to produce a well-researched, high quality paper by applying the principles and practice of empirical scientific research covered in DIPL 6310 in actual research endeavors. The secondary objective is to understand and critically analyze studies conducted by other scholars, as it would be virtually impossible to write a quality paper without understanding the state of research in a particular topic. As in any legitimate research endeavor, therefore, the course begins with the development of a well-conceived and well-developed research proposal (or research design). I understand that you have all submitted a research proposal/design in fulfillment of the requirements in DIPL 6310. Therefore, all students are expected to include, among other things, the following both in the proposal and in the completed research paper:

(1) Description of the problem/issue and why it is significant or important. This section includes statement of the problem/issue and why it is of academic and/or policy interest, the research question(s) raised, and the hypothesis(es)/proposition(s) formulated.

(2) Literature review and how the study is related to studies that have been conducted previously. What will the study add to the existing knowledge on the issue? In other words, one needs to locate the problem within the extant literature and identify the gap/void to be filled.

(3) Variable definition/conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement (the latter is especially important if the study is quantitative), and the design and data collection methods.

(4) Analysis techniques (statistical or otherwise), and why this is a particularly appropriate approach for the study.

(5) Result interpretation, discussion, and/or conclusion.

(6) Bibliography (of cited works).

In order to help you to accomplish the primary and secondary objectives, among other things, you will critically review three articles published in reputable journals. Based on your review, you will submit a critical analysis of each, focusing on whether or not items #1 thru #6 listed above have been sufficiently addressed.

Let me emphasize that this course may be seen as the Master’s program “capstone” course, where you are expected to show what you have learned over the last two years in the program by producing a well-conceived, thoroughly-researched, and meticulously-prepared paper of publishable quality. Therefore, you are required to spend ample time to plan and to write the best paper you can possibly write.

Note: Students who intend to conduct interviews may have to seek approval from the Office of Institutional Research Board (IRB), located in the Presidents Hall, especially if the data collection procedure(s) involves risk to human subjects and if the findings are to be disseminated outside of the classroom. This is an issue which Seton Hall University, the State of New Jersey, and the Federal Government see with utmost concern, especially if the interview and any other data collection method
involve more than “minimal risk” to the research subjects. Since research involving human subjects may not begin without the IRB approval, you need to see the instructor to file the necessary papers as soon as possible. Given the lengthy process and the time needed for IRB approval, it is important to seriously consider the feasibility of conducting research involving human subjects. Completion of the research in one semester may be hard to meet unless IRB approval was granted well ahead of time.

II. Books

Required:

Recommended:

Articles for Critical Review (I strongly suggest that you print copies of these articles for a more careful and critical reading).

III. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Critical review of each the three articles above carrying a maximum total 15 (15%) points (5 points each) to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
2. Research proposal presentation and submission carrying a maximum of 15 (15%) points to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
3. PowerPoint presentation of research paper carrying a maximum of 20 (20%) points to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
4. A well-developed research paper carrying a maximum of 40 (40%) points to be handed on a hard copy and electronically on a date as indicated in the section below. You are required to choose one or the other citation style attached in your course Blackboard
5. Class participation carrying a maximum of 10 (10%) points.

Final course grade will be awarded according to the following scale:

- 93 - 100 = A
- 89 - 92 = A-
- 85 - 88 = B+
- 81 - 84 = B
- 77 - 80 = B-
- 73 - 76 = C+
- 69 - 72 = C
- 65 - 68 = C-
- 61 - 64 = D
Remarks

1. The research proposal must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced with appropriate margins (one inch on all sides), and between 8 and 10 pages long, including footnotes/bibliography. You must include page numbers!

2. The critical review of each of the three articles must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced with appropriate margins (one inch on all sides), 2-3 pages long each, and must demonstrate whether or not the items listed on the first page of this course syllabus are included and whether or not the author has provided a convincing explanation for each item.

3. Each student must seek approval of the research topic before starting the research. The final research paper must be firmly based on the approved proposal. Once approved, students may not change the topic, questions, or methodology unless approved by the instructor, or risk getting zero. In case of an unavoidable need to make changes in the proposal, the student must first secure the instructor’s approval for the change before it is too late.

4. The research paper must be typed (font size = 12), double-spaced with appropriate margins (one inch on all sides) and 23-26 pages long, including footnotes and bibliography, and must be handed by the due date, both in a hard copy and electronically. The electronic copy is needed for submission to SafeAssign and to guard against any possible plagiarism. You must include page numbers in the paper!

5. Each student is required to periodically update the instructor on the progress of his/her research, and is expected to meet with the instructor at least twice between March 13 and April 10. Remember these meetings will deal with the progress of the research and will occur only after the proposal is approved. Pre-approval meetings are not included in this.

6. Each student must make class presentation of his/her research proposal on one of dates indicated (in the course Schedule below). Similarly, each student must make PowerPoint presentation of the paper on the day of the presentation. It is important that the slides are clear and readable from a distance; the oral presentation is made with confidence; and the material included in the slides are well explained.

7. All work must be completed and submitted on time. The instructor will deduct significant points or may decline to accept any project not handed on time. If the instructor decides to accept a late submitted paper, the amount to be deducted will increase for each day after the due date. No paper will be accepted if submitted beyond 5 days after the due date, and that means zero points for that paper. In addition, it is absolutely necessary that students make their presentations according to schedule or risk getting zero, as it is virtually impossible to call students to a class session outside of those indicated in the course syllabus or squeeze in an additional student on another presentation date. That is, the presentations are class presentations!!!

8. Class attendance and participation are important. Participation will be measured in terms of the contribution a student makes to the richness of class discussions and the overall success of the course. Therefore, class attendance will be taken.

9. 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:


10. **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 coursework 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.

11. 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.

12. Papers should utilize one of the *Chicago Manual of Style* citation formats: Author-Date or Notes and Bibliography. The guidelines for these formats are posted in the course Blackboard.

13. It is very important that students maintain high class etiquette.

### IV. Course Schedule

**January 23**

- General introduction
  - Course readings, schedule, timelines, grading, important remarks, etc.
  - Introduction to the research process and how this course may be related to DIPL 6310
  - The structure of a research proposal

**January 30**

- Starting the research project – the importance of variation in Social Science
- What are the important characteristics of research proposal?
- Pitfalls in the research endeavor
  - Planning
  - The need for sufficient variation of the Dependent and independent variables
  - Questions, hypothesis, data, and appropriate statistical technique for analysis

Writing the research paper

Readings:
Booth et. al. Ch. 1, 3,
Orosz, J. “Twelve Characteristics of a Good Proposal.” Available at:
Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Appendix B.
Berg, Ch. 12.

February 6
Critical review of published research (the basic question one needs to ask is: does each article include the items listed on page 1 of this syllabus? If so, where? Be specific!!)

**Critical review assignment due date!**

Readings:
Vanhanen
Salehyan/Gleditsch
Lijphart

February 13
Research proposal development
**No formal class** will be held. The instructor will be his office during 5:00-7:00pm (for the DIPL 6311 NA class) and 7:35-9:00pm (for the DIPL 6311 NB class) to help students with issues related to the proposal development.

February 20
**Student presentation** of proposal (about 10 minutes). The schedule of presenters will follow the alphabetical order (by last name) of student list from SHU’s Enrollment Services. The first half will present on this date

February 27
**Student presentation** of proposal (continued) -- The second half will present on this date

**March 6 -- no class – Spring Break!**

March 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10,
No formal classes will be held. The **completed proposal must be handed in hard copy latest by March 13** (this will serve as the instructor’s copy and will not be returned; however, students can take pictures of pages following review and discussion with the instructor on the completed and approved proposal). The instructor will be in his office at 5:00-6:30pm (for the NA class) and 7:30-8:30 (for the NB class) on these dates to help students with issues related to individual projects. Please remember, each student is required to schedule an **appointment to update the instructor on the progress of the research at least two times during these dates.** Record of meetings will be kept.

April 17, 24, May 1
**Presentation of research findings** (about 20 minutes). The schedule of presenters will follow the student list from SHU’s Enrollment Services in reverse alphabetical order.

May 8 -- Research paper due date. **You must drop off the hard copy at the instructor’s office and e-mail the electronic copy (as Word attachment) by 8:00 pm.**