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Spring 2020

DIPL 6311 Master's Research Project

Assefaw Bariagaber PhD
Seton Hall University

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Master's Research Project (DIPL 6311)
School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Seton Hall University (Spring 2020)

Instructor: Dr. Assefaw Bariagaber

Office Hours: Thursdays: 10:30am -- 12:00pm and 3:20pm – 4:50pm

And by appointment at other times

Office: McQuaid 119

Office Telephone: 973-275-2877

Email: bariagas@shu.edu

I. About the Course

The primary objective of this course is to produce a well-researched, high quality paper by applying the principles of and approaches in empirical scientific research you saw in DIPL 6310 (and for which you have received a course grade of “C” or above) to actual research endeavors. That is, the primary objective is knowledge production on relevant topics in international relations. 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 knowledge/research in a particular topic. That is, the secondary objective is critical consumption of existing knowledge. 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) that will culminate in the production of a well-researched paper. 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 read three articles published in reputable journals. Based on your readings, you will submit a critical analysis on each, *focusing on whether or not items #1 thru #6 listed above have been sufficiently addressed*. You have to be specific in your assessment of the published research! That is, you need to quote to indicate the presence and, if not, indicate the absence thereof.

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 equally ample time 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:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th edition). Chicago and London, The Chicago University Press, 2013.

Recommended:

Booth, Wayne C. *et al. The Craft of Research* (3rd edition). Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and D. Nachmias. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (7th edition). New York: Worth Publishers, 2008.

Berg, Bruce L. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (8th edition). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. 2012.

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

Salehyan, I. and K. S. Gleditsch. Refugees and the Spread of Civil War, *International Organization*, 2006, 60:335-366.

Vanhanen, Tatu. Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis, *Journal of Peace Research*, 1999, 55-73.

Lijphart, A. The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation. *American Political Science Review*, 1996, 90: 258-268.

III. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Critical review of each of the three articles above carrying a maximum total 15 (15%) points (5 points for each review) to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
2. Research proposal PowerPoint presentation and submission (the latter has more weight) carrying a maximum of 10 (10%) points to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
3. PowerPoint presentation of the completed (or near completion) research paper carrying a maximum of 25 (25%) 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. This includes your participation and contribution during class sessions, including student PowerPoint presentations of both the research proposal and the final paper.

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
< 61 = F

Remarks

1. The research proposal must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced, with (one inch margin on each side, 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 must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced with appropriate margins (one inch on all sides), each 2-3 pages long, and must demonstrate (be specific!) whether or not the items listed on the first page of this course syllabus are included – directly or indirectly -- 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, and/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 one inch margin on each side, 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 submission of an electronic copy is needed in order to guard against any possible plagiarism.* You must include page numbers.
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 two times** after the submission of the proposal. Please remember these meetings will deal with the progress of the research and will occur only after the date the proposal has been submitted.
6. Each student must make class presentation of his/her research proposal on the dates indicated in the Course Schedule below. Similarly, each student must make PowerPoint presentation of the research paper on her/his scheduled day of the presentation. It is important that the slides are clear and readable from a distance, the oral presentation must go well beyond reading of what is written on the slides, and must be presented with confidence.
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. In the event that the instructor decided to accept a late submitted paper, *the amount to be deducted will increase each day after the due date*. No paper will be accepted if submitted 5 days after the due date, and that means zero points for that paper. In addition, it is absolutely necessary that students make their class presentations according to schedule or risk getting zero, as it is virtually impossible to ask students to attend a class session outside of those indicated in the course syllabus. 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: <https://www.shu.edu/student-life/upload/Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf> and <http://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>
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 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.
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](tel:9733136003) 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

Jan. 16

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

Jan. 23

The structure of a research proposal -- What are the important characteristics of research proposal? **An example!**

Pitfalls in the research endeavor

Planning

The need for sufficient variation of the dependent and independent variables

Level of measurement and the appropriate statistical technique

Sources of relevant data – numeric or non-numeric

Writing the research paper

Readings:

Orosz, J. "Twelve Characteristics of a Good Proposal." Available at:
<http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u5/2014/twelvestepstoagoodproposal.pdf>.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Appendix B.

Berg, Ch. 12.

Jan. 30

-) Student presentation of the three readings assigned last week
-) Types of approaches in social science research – quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods(?)
-) 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!!
-) Articles for **Critical review assignment date!**

Readings:

Vanhanen
Salehyan/Gleditsch
Lijphart

Feb. 6

Research proposal development

No formal class will be held. The instructor will be in his office during 5:00-6:30pm (for the DIPL 6311 NA class) and 7:30-9:00pm (for the DIPL 6311 NB class) to help students with issues related to the proposal development.

Critical review paper due-date. Please drop hard copy (only) in my mailbox.

Feb. 13

Student presentation of proposal (15 minutes max.) 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 (for DIPL 6311NA class).

Feb. 20

Student presentation of proposal (15 minutes max.) The schedule of presenters will follow the alphabetical order (by last name) of student list from SHU's Enrollment Services. The second half will present on this date (for DIPL 6311 NA class).

Feb. 27; March 12, 19, 26; April, 2, 16, and 23

No formal classes will be held. The **completed proposal must be handed in hard copy latest by Feb. 27 (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. Please

note that I may travel overseas for a conference on March 26. I will let you know if my possible travel is firmly set.

April 23 -- **Presentation of research findings** (20 minutes max). The schedule of presenters will follow the student list from SHU's Enrollment Services in reverse alphabetical order (DIPL 6311 NA class).

April 30 -- **Presentation of research findings** (20 minutes max.). The schedule of presenters will follow the student list from SHU's Enrollment Services in reverse alphabetical order (DIPL 6311 NA class).

May 7 -- **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.**