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School of Diplomacy and International
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Spring 2021

DIPL 6311 Master's Research Project

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Master's Research Project (DIPL 6311)
School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Seton Hall University (Spring 2021)

Instructor: Dr. Assefaw Bariagaber

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays (12:00pm-1:30pm) – by appointment on Microsoft Teams;

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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 of and approaches in empirical scientific research (which you covered 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 in a particular topic. That is, the secondary objective is critical consumption of existing knowledge on relevant topics in international relations. 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 quality term 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 six items, 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*. Please do not write general statements; rather, you have to be specific in your assessment of the published research! That is, you need to quote or indicate the presence of items #1 thru #6 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: (copies are available in the library and the Diplomacy office)

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, all available in JSTOR.

Vanhanen, Tatu. Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis, *Journal of Peace Research*, 1999, 55-73. This may be taken as an example of a quantitative approach ...

Lijphart, A. The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation. *American Political Science Review*, 1996, 90: 258-268. This may be taken as an example of a qualitative approach...

Salehyan, I. and K. S. Gleditsch. Refugees and the Spread of Civil War, *International Organization*, 2006, 60:335-366. This may be taken as an example of a mixed methods approach...

Other Resources:

Graduate Services Guide (General for all programs): <https://library.shu.edu/gradservices/>

Diplomacy Graduate Remote Research Guides: <https://library.shu.edu/diplomacy-remote>

Data Services Guide (with form to request data support): <https://library.shu.edu/data-services>

For more information, please ask Ms. Lisa de Luca, the Diplomacy Connection Librarian.

III. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Critical reviews of any two of the three articles above carrying a maximum total 10 points (10%) to be submitted on a date as indicated in the Course Schedule below.
2. Research proposal PowerPoint (PPT) presentation and submission (the latter has more weight) carrying a maximum of 15 points (15%) to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.

3. PPT presentation of the completed (or near completed) research paper carrying a maximum of 25 points (25%) to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
4. A well-developed research paper carrying a maximum of 40 points (40%) to be submitted 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 the course Blackboard.
5. Class participation carrying a maximum of 10 (10%) points. This includes your participation and contribution during class sessions, including instructor lectures, and student PPT 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. **Coronavirus Safety:** In accordance with the Seton Hall pledge, students must wear a mask in class, maintain required social distancing, and not come to class if you are ill. No mask, no class. The pledge can be found here: <https://www.shu.edu/health-intervention-communication/seton-hall-pledge.cfm> CAPS.
2. As part of our commitment to the health and well-being of all students, Seton Hall University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers initial assessments, counseling, crisis intervention, consultation, and referral services to the SHU community. The CAPS office is located on the second floor of Mooney Hall, room 27. Appointments can be made in-person or by calling 973-761-9500 during regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 8:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. In case of a psychological emergency, call CAPS (973-761-9500) at any time to speak to a crisis counselor. For more information, please visit: <https://www.shu.edu/counseling-psychologicalservices/index.cfm>.
3. All class sessions, including lectures, meetings with the instructor, and student PPT presentations are conducted via **Teams**.
4. Class attendance and participation are important. I intend to give each student equal opportunity to participate, whether the student is attending in-person or remotely. Participation will be measured in terms of the contribution a student makes to the richness of class discussions on student presentations and instructor lectures. Therefore, class attendance will be taken.
5. The critical review of each of any two of the three articles must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced, with one-inch margins 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.

6. 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**.
7. 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 PPT presentation of the completed or near-completed 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.
8. The research proposal must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced, with one inch margin on all sides, and 8-10 pages long, including footnotes/bibliography. You must include page numbers!
9. Each student is required to periodically update the instructor on the progress of his/her research and must meet with the instructor **at least once** after the submission of the proposal. Please remember these meetings will deal with the progress of the research and will occur only after the proposal is duly graded and reviewed with the student.
10. The research paper must be typed (font size = 12), double-spaced with one inch margin on all sides, and about 24-27 pages long, including footnotes and bibliography, and must be handed by the due date *electronically, as Word attachment. The submission of an electronic copy will help guard against any possible plagiarism.* You must include page numbers!
11. 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 paper submitted late, *the amount to be deducted will increase each day after the due date*. No assignment will be accepted if submitted four days after the due date, and that means zero points for that paper. In addition, it is important 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. Please remember, the presentation a student makes is made to the *entire class and not to the instructor only!!*
12. 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>
13. 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.

14. 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.
15. 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.
16. It is very important that students maintain high class etiquette.

IV. Course Schedule

Jan. 28

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

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

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

Vanhanen; Lijphart; and Salehyan/Gleditsch

Feb. 4

Approaches in social science research – quantitative, qualitative, (and mixed methods??)

The structure of a research proposal -- Important characteristics of a research proposal?

The structure of a research paper

Assignment – submit a one-page description of the research topic/issue you would like to work on that includes the research problem/issue, the research question(s), and why it is significant (or important). This must be submitted as a Word attachment by **Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 12:00pm (noon)**.

Also, submit the critical reviews of any two of the three articles. Due-date is Feb.4.

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.

Feb. 11

Research proposal development/writing

No formal class will be held. The instructor will meet with students one-on-one at 5:00-7:00pm to discuss issues related to the proposal development. You are required to make an appointment!!

Feb. 18

Student proposal PPT presentation (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 of the class will make their presentations on this date.

Feb. 25

Student proposal PPT presentation (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 of the class will make their presentations on this date.

Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25; Apr. 8,

No formal classes will be held during these days.

The instructor will hold one-to-one consultation between 5pm and 7:00pm with each student on 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 once during these dates**. Record of meetings will be kept.

The completed proposal is due on Mar. 4.

Apr. 15 – **PPT Presentation of research findings** (22 minutes max). The schedule of presenters will follow the student list from SHU's Enrollment Services in reverse alphabetical order. The first one-third of the class will present on this date.

Apr. 22 – **PPT Presentation of research findings** (22 minutes max.). The schedule of presenters will follow the student list from SHU's Enrollment Services in reverse alphabetical order. The second one-third of the class will present on this date.

Apr. 29 – **PPT Presentation of research findings** (22 minutes max.). The schedule of presenters will follow the student list from SHU's Enrollment Services in reverse alphabetical order. The last one-third of the class will present on this date.

May 6 – Research paper writing. NO formal class. The instructor will answer last minute questions students may have. Please make an appointment!

May 13 -- Research paper due date. Please send the electronic copy (as Word attachment) by 7:00 pm.