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School of Diplomacy and International
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Summer 2016

DIPL 4101/6311 Senior/Masters Research Project

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DIPL 4101/6311: Senior/Masters Research Project

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Course Objectives:

This class is the capstone of your graduate experience. As such, you will be drawing on the lessons that you have learned in DIPL 3800/6310 to develop and execute a research project. The class will be a mix of one-on-one sessions as well as traditional meetings. My goal is for you to write a publishable quality manuscript that tests hypotheses head to head either qualitatively or quantitatively.

Course Materials:

Two textbooks have been ordered for this course. We will not have assignments from these texts. The Van Evera work is a good reference for qualitative work, and the Johnson and Reynolds text is geared more for quantitative work.

Stephen Van Evera. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. ISBN: 0-8014-8457-X.

Janet B. Johnson and H.T. Reynolds. 2012 *Political Science Research Methods* 7th Edition. SAGE/CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-60781-689-0.

Evaluation:

Your grade in this class will be based on the following:

Presentation (10%)
Research Design (10%)
Draft Manuscript (30%)
Final Version of Manuscript (50%)

More information on each of these elements can be found on the last page of the syllabus.

Other Course Policies:

Late work will not be accepted in this class.

Attendance at each of the scheduled class meetings is mandatory.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to procedures outlined in the School Academic Integrity Policy. Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will receive a failing grade for the course and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent permissible.

- June 6: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 7: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 9: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 10: FRIDAY. Rough Drafts Due (Submitted Electronically to Blackboard by 4pm EST)**
- June 13: Feedback on Rough Drafts. (CM)
- June 14: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 16: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 20: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 21: Individual Meetings (As Needed)
- June 24: FRIDAY. FINAL PAPER DUE (Submitted to Blackboard by NOON EST)**

Particulars on Assignments:

Presentation

A formal presentation of your topic is required on May 19 with a possible carry-over date of May 23. This presentation will be formal (standing at a podium in the front of the class) and will last roughly ten minutes in length. Imagine that you are briefing a Congressional Committee. I expect you to focus on four issues: What is the question? Why is this question important? How have other scholars operationalized the dependent variable? How will you operationalize the dependent variable? Students will present in alphabetical order. *(Please note that the use of the word “formal” means dress up!)*

Research Design

The first written assignment in this class is a 15 page (double-spaced with 1” margins and 12 point fonts) research design that is due on May 27. In this paper you will do the following:

- Develop a research question
- Importance of the question for theory and policy
- Outline a strategy for answering this question, addressing each of the following:
 - Operationalize the dependent variable (or what’s being caused)
 - Develop a series of alternative explanations for the outcome
 - Operationalize independent variables (or what’s doing the causing)
 - Discuss case selection (what cases are you going to look at and why)
 - Develop a testing procedure (or, how you will test your arguments, and how you will know you are right)
- Attach a preliminary bibliography (not included for page purposes).

Draft/Final Manuscript

Your completed project will be a minimum of 30 pages (double-spaced with 1" margins and 12 point fonts with numbered pages) that will consist of the following elements to be noted as separate sections of the manuscript:

- 1) The Problem and its Importance
- 2) Literature Review
- 3) Research Design
- 4) Findings and Discussion
- 5) Conclusions
- 6) Bibliography

The finished product must consist **either** of a set of comparative case studies (if a qualitative project) or a set of multivariate statistical tests with discussion of statistical and substantive significance (if the project is quantitative). I expect the draft manuscript to have an advanced discussion of findings. I also expect that the final version will include a detailed memo in which you outline all of the changes that you have made since the rough draft. In particular – how have you responded to my comments?

All written assignments must be submitted online through Blackboard. Instructions are at the following URL: http://blogs.shu.edu/techtips/files/safeassign_student.pdf

Students with disabilities should contact Disabilities Support Services for special accommodations.

Successful completion of the project 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;¹ 2) I will not assign Chapter 3 of the Johnson text (which deals 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).

Students with research designs submitted for earlier classes must discuss them with me in advance of submission.

All submissions must have numbered pages.

Late changes to one's research project must be approved by me.

The final version of the manuscript must address issues raised by me in the rough draft.

Class Schedule

NOTE: Sessions with a class meeting will be denoted with (CM) below

May 17: Introduction. (CM)
Administrative Matters

May 19: Presentations (CM)

May 23: Presentations (CM) (If Needed)

May 24: Individual Meetings (As Needed)

May 26: Individual Meetings (As Needed)

May 27: FRIDAY. Research Designs Due (Submitted Electronically to Blackboard by 4pm EST)

May 30: Memorial Day – No Class

May 31: Feedback on Research Designs. (CM)

June 2: Individual Meetings (As Needed)

¹ <http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/article/1328/wikipedia-founder-discourages-academic-use-of-his-creation>