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School of Diplomacy and International
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Spring 2017

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 2017)

Instructor: Dr. Assefaw Bariagaber

Office Hours: Mondays: 6:30 --7:30pm

Tuesdays: 11:00am -- 12:00pm

Tuesdays: 4:00pm -- 5:00pm

By appointment at times convenient to the instructor

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I. About the Course

The primary, general 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 in any legitimate research endeavor, therefore, the course begins with the development of a well-conceived and well-developed research proposal (or research design), which I understand that you have all submitted 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 particularly relevant for the study.
- (5) Result interpretation, discussion, and/or conclusion.
- (6) Bibliography (of cited works).

The above items #1 thru #6 may constitute the specific objectives of the course. They include the ability to identify a research puzzle/question and relate it to the existing state of knowledge; formulate the research hypotheses; identify the dependent and independent variables and their measurement/operationalization; locate data sources and apply appropriate technique to analyze the data; and relate the findings with the extant literature. In order to help you to accomplish the objective, among other things, you will read two articles published in reputable journals and submit a critical analysis of each, focusing on whether or not items #1 thru #6 listed above are 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 as students 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 prepare and 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 think about 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 (you will only submit critical analysis of each of the first **two** articles below, and critically read the third article).

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. Research proposal presentation and submission carrying a maximum of 15 (15%) points to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
2. PowerPoint presentation of research paper carrying a maximum of 20 (20%) points to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
3. Critical review of each the first two articles above carrying a maximum total 15 (15%) 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* to occur on a date as indicated in the section below.
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

< 61 = F

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.
2. The critical review of each of the two articles must be must be typed (font size = 12) and double-spaced with appropriate margins (one inch on all sides), 2-3 pages long, 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. 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 **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 as well as electronically. The electronic copy is needed because I will, as necessary, submit the electronic copy to *SafeAssign* to guard against any possible plagiarism.
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 February 21 and April 4. Remember this meetings will deal with the progress of the research and will occur only after the proposal is approved.
6. Each student will make class presentation of his/her research proposal on the dates indicated below, and must make PowerPoint presentation of the paper on the day of the presentation (please see last page fort the dates). The presentation must go beyond simple reading of the material in the PowerPoint presentation. That is, the slides must be clear and readable from a distance; the oral presentation must be presented with confidence; and the student must explain and discuss the material included in the slides.
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 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.
8. 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.

9. 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.
10. 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://www13.shu.edu/offices/student-life/community-standards/upload/Seton-Hall-University-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>>
<<http://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>>
11. **Disability Services Statement.** 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.

IV. Course Schedule

January 10

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 17

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 variable

Questions, hypothesis and appropriate statistical technique for analysis

Questions, hypothesis and appropriate data

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.

January 24

Critical review of published research (the basis question you need to ask is: does each articles include the items listed on page 1 of the Syllabus? If so, where? Be specific!!

Assignment due

Readings:

Vanhanen

Salehyan/Gleditsch

Lijphart

January 31 --

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 7

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.

February 14

Student presentation of proposal (continued)

February 21, 28, March 14, 21, 28, and April 4

No formal classes will be held. The **completed proposal must be handed in hard copy latest by February 28 (this will serve as the instructor's copy and will not be returned; however, students can take pictures of pages following a discussion on the completed proposal with the instructor)**. The instructor will be in his office at 5:00-7:00pm (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 there is no class on March 7 – Spring Break!

April 11, 18, 25

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 2 -- **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.**