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Diplomacy Syllabi

School of Diplomacy and International
Relations

Spring 2020

DIPL 4101/5101 Research Project

Brian K. Muzás Ph.D.
Seton Hall University

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School of Diplomacy and International Relations
DIPL 4101 / DIPL 5101
Mondays, Alfieri Hall 120
2:00 PM – 4:30 PM Section AA
5:00 PM – 7:30 PM Section NA

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON FACTORS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING: CHANGES IN SCHEDULE OR AVAILABILITY; THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS; AND FACULTY EVALUATION OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE. STUDENTS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE REVISION PROCESS WHEN POSSIBLE.

Professor: Rev. Brian K. Muzás, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM; also by appointment

Office: McQuaid Hall 101D

Phone: +1 973 313 6022

Email: brian.muzas@shu.edu

Course Summary

This course is designed to help students learn research, writing, and oral communications skills that they can apply to all academic and professional pursuits. The ultimate goal is to complete a well-written, strongly argued, and thoroughly documented Senior Research Project. The course is structured to include both class and individual meetings. The first several weeks mix class and individual meetings with the professor to focus on helping students turn their research interests into a research puzzle, find and use primary and secondary sources, develop hypotheses, conceptualize variables, identify an effective research design, and present their ideas professionally in public settings. The next several weeks help students shape their particular projects, with a focus on writing, revising, and providing effective feedback to fellow students. During the last weeks the students formally present their research findings and constructively critique one another's presentations.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students should have acquired in-depth knowledge of a particular functional area and/or region of the world and knowledge and understanding of the social science research process. Students should also have developed the skills to: collect, sort, and evaluate information; analyze complex situations and synthesize information; integrate different fields of study in analysis of a complex world; and communicate effectively in oral and written form.

Expectations and Grading

Students should come to class meetings prepared to discuss the readings and to present their assignments to their colleagues and the professor. Students should come to each of the individual meetings with the professor prepared to present and discuss their assignments.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Writing assignments: 15%
- Participation: 15%
- Preliminary draft: 15%
- Oral presentation: 20%
- Final draft: 35%

Important Note

Use of electronic devices for any purpose other than taking notes is not appropriate during class time. It distracts other students and the professor and will result in a lowered grade. (In other words, do not use your laptop for email, shopping, Twitter, Facebook, and the like.)

Required Textbook

Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008) 3rd Edition. (The 4th edition came in late 2016, but the 3rd edition is much the same – and now much less expensive – so I present the old numbers.)

Academic and Professional Integrity

All forms of dishonesty, whether by act or omission, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and knowingly furnishing false information, are prohibited. Work submitted in the course must be the product of the efforts of the student presenting the work. Contributions of others to the finished work must be appropriately acknowledged.

The Standards of Academic Conduct of the School of Diplomacy and International Relations can be found online at <http://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>.

Disability Services

If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for accommodations, in academic classes, the residence halls, food services areas, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To receive accommodations or assistance, please self-identify at the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67. The staff at DSS will help you to develop a plan for accommodations. For more information contact DSS at (973) 313-6003.

DSS information can be found online at <https://www.shu.edu/offices/disability-support-services/>.

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.

Course Meetings, Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates*

*Note: Any assignments may be turned in early

Weeks 1-3: Class and Individual Meetings

January 13 (class)

Course overview and choosing a topic

Identifying research questions, defining problems, and finding, using, and citing sources

Reading: BCW (Booth, Colomb, & Williams), pp. 35-101, 273-276

January 27 (class)

Hypotheses, variables, thesis statements, causal claims, and research design

Assignment: **Preliminary Bibliography – due at the beginning of class**

Bring a bibliography with at least 20 potential sources on your research topics. This should help you to determine if there is enough information about your topic/s to continue with it or choose one of two. All sources should be academic books, journal articles, or primary materials such as government documents or institutional databases.

February 3 (individual meetings)

Reading: BCW, pp. 105-138

Assignment: **Research Topic Descriptions – due at meeting**

Write two descriptions of research topics that you are considering, each a paragraph long. What's the puzzle? Why is it interesting and important? Be prepared to present the descriptions to the professor.

Week 4: Individual Meetings

February 10

Discussion of the bibliography, research question, and research strategy

Reading: BCW, pp. 139-151

Assignment: **Annotated Bibliography – due at meeting**

Bring a bibliography with at least 10 annotated sources. Below each of these 10 sources describe the article's key points and how they relate to your research in 3-4 sentences. Do not simply use the article's abstracts; use your own words. All sources should be academic books or journal articles. Be prepared to discuss progress and future plans.

Weeks 5-7: Class and Individual Meetings

February 17 (class)

Assessing existing research

Assignment: **Preliminary Literature Review – due at the beginning of class**

Write a three-page review of *at least* five articles in *academic journals* that directly relate to your research topic. The review should compare and contrast the readings, stressing the major arguments presented, the evidence used, the type of analysis employed, limitations, and areas of contention between the authors. Most importantly, the review should propose how your research question relates to one or more debates within the academic literature. **Be prepared to present the review to the class.**

February 24 (individual meetings):

Thesis statements and research strategies

Assignment: **Thesis Statement / Research Strategy – due at meeting**

Write a two-page thesis statement and research strategy that includes how the thesis relates to the state of the debate regarding your topic and what strategy you will use to assess your causal claims, including what cases you will examine and what data sources you will use.

March 9 (class):

Thesis statements and research strategies

Assignment: **Thesis Statement / Research Strategy – due at the beginning of class**
Present a revised thesis statement and research strategy to the class in a 3-5 minute formal presentation that includes how the thesis relates to the state of the debate regarding your topic and what strategy you will use to assess your causal claims, including what cases you will examine and what data sources you will use.

Weeks 8-9: Individual meetings

March 16 and March 23 (March 16 = sign-up day; March 17-27 = meeting days)

Discussion of the introduction and outline (and research progress at subsequent meetings)

Reading: BCW, pp. 173-202

Assignment: **Introduction and Outline – due at meeting**

Bring a detailed 3-7 page introduction and outline. The introduction should not be more than 4 pages and should include the research puzzle, the policy &/or theoretical importance of the question/topic, the thesis statement (or set of hypotheses), and the plan for the paper. The outline should briefly describe the main points (and, preferably, the sources to be used) in each section.

Week 10: Class meeting

March 30

Presenting research in public and making revisions

Assignment: **Preliminary draft – due at the beginning of class**

Hand in the preliminary draft at the beginning of class and send an electronic copy as well. The preliminary draft should be at least 4,000 words and should include at least the introduction, the literature review section, some analysis of cases and data, and an outline of the remaining pages.

Week 11: Individual meetings

April 6

Discussion of ways to strengthen the preliminary draft

Reading: BCW, pp. 203-210, 232-269

Weeks 12–14: Class Meetings

April 20, April 27, and May 4

Student presentations (equally divided per class)

Reading: BCW, pp. 213-231.

Assignment: Oral Presentation and Constructive Critique

Students should come prepared to present their research, including the puzzle, thesis statement, findings, and conclusions. Presentations should be 8-12 minutes long (to allow for 3-7 minutes of Q&A for a total of 15 minutes) and should include some kind of visual aid (overhead projector, PowerPoint presentation, or hand-out). Students should also be prepared to provide constructive critiques (including praise) of their fellow students.

May, date TBA (definitely during finals period): Final Paper Due (earlier is welcome)

Final drafts are due. An electronic copy should be sent to my email address and a hard copy placed in my mailbox by **noon**. Both an electronic and a hard copy are required.

Requirements:

- 7,000 to 9,000 words total (8,000 to 10,000 for honors), including title, text, notes, bibliography, and tables
- Formatted via the template posted to Blackboard
- Must incorporate suggestions from the individual meetings with the professor and from the oral presentation
- Must include appropriate citation method, and all sources in the bibliography must be cited in the text

Please note that the Diplomacy School standard for citations is the current edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Thus, the student may choose either the footnote/bibliography style or the in-text/reference list style but not an amalgam of both.

CLASS WILL NOT MEET ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS:

January 20 Martin Luther King Day
March 2 Spring Break
April 13 Easter Monday