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Diplomacy Syllabi

School of Diplomacy and International  
Relations

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Fall 2023

## **DIPL 6311 NA Master's Research Project**

Assefaw Bariagaber PhD.

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**Master's Research Project (DIPL 6311NA)**  
**School of Diplomacy and International Relations**  
**Seton Hall University (Fall 2023)**

Instructor: Dr. Assefaw Bariagaber

Virtual Office Hours (Microsoft Teams): Tuesdays, 10-10:50am and Thursdays, 10-10:50am  
Thursdays, 6:30-7:30pm; by appointment at other times

Office: McQuaid 119

Mobile phone: 973-409-1145; Email: bariagas@shu.edu

## **I. About the Course**

The primary objective of this course is to produce a well-researched, 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 *critical consumption of existing knowledge* on relevant topics in international relations. The latter pertains to understanding and critically analyzing 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. 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 research proposal/design in fulfillment for the requirements in DIPL 6310; therefore, each student is 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) Citations of works based on one of the two *Chicago Manual of Style* citation formats: Author-Date or Notes and Bibliography.

To help you accomplish the secondary objective, among other things, you will critically read two articles published in reputable journals (please see next page for the articles). Based on your reviews, you will submit a critical analysis of each of the two articles, *focusing on whether or not items #1 to #6 listed above have been sufficiently addressed*. To reiterate: please do not write general statements or give a general critique of the paper; rather, you have to be specific in your assessment by quoting (or paraphrasing) and by concretely indicating the presence (or the absence, if that is the case) of each item #1 thru #6.

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 writing 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

**Recommended:** (copies are available in the library and/or the Diplomacy Office)

Booth, Wayne C. *et al. The Craft of Research* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. [the third edition is also ok].

### Articles for critical review, *all available in JSTOR*.

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...

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...

**For qualitative approach – Lijphart and Salehyan/Gleditsch**

**For quantitative or mixed methods approach – Vanhanen and Salehyan/Gleditsch**

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 Mrs. Lisa Bond, the Diplomacy Connection Librarian.

## III. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Critical review of two published articles as indicated above, carrying a maximum of 15 points (15%) to be submitted on the date indicated in the Course Schedule below.
2. Research proposal PowerPoint (PPT) presentation and a written submission (in hard copy) of the completed proposal. The completed written proposal carries a maximum of 15 points (15%) to occur on the date indicated in the Course Schedule below.
3. PowerPoint (PPT) presentation of the completed (or near completed) research paper carrying a maximum of 20 points (20%) to occur on the date indicated in the Course Schedule below.
4. A well-developed research paper carrying a maximum of 40 points (40%) to be submitted in a *hard copy and electronically* on the date indicated in the Course Schedule below. Remember! You are required to choose one or the other citation style, both of which are posted on the Course Blackboard.
5. Class participation carries 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. Students are expected to attend classes regularly based on the Course Schedule below and will be held responsible for materials covered in class. A high rate of participation is expected of each student because it will be an asset in borderline grades.
2. This course is an in-person course, and no student will be allowed to follow any regular class session remotely.
3. The critical review of two 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* (in specific and concrete ways) 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 on each item.
4. 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! I will go over the proposal with each student; however, proposals will not be returned to students.
5. 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 *in hard copy and electronically, as Word attachment. The submission of an electronic copy will help guard against any plagiarism.* You must include page numbers!
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 amend the proposal, the student must first secure the instructor's approval for the change **before it is too late.**
7. Each student must make a 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 (i) the slides are clear and readable from a distance, (ii) the oral presentation must explain the issues and go well beyond reading of what is written on the slides, and (iii) the material must be presented with confidence.
8. 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 by the instructor with the student.

9. All assigned work must be completed and submitted on **time**. The instructor will deduct significant points or may decline to accept any project not handed in on time. If the instructor decided to accept a paper submitted late, *the amount to be deducted will be 5% of the total grade per day after the due date*. No assignment will be accepted if submitted five 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!*
10. Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: 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 <https://www.shu.edu/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>. In addition, students may not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT. Any use of AI tools will be considered plagiarism.
11. 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.
12. 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](mailto:DSS@shu.edu).
13. CAPS: 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-psychological-services/index.cfm>
14. 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 on the course Blackboard.
15. It is particularly important that students maintain high class etiquette.

#### IV. Course Schedule

8/31

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

Empirical scientific research – the research problem! Example!

Pitfalls in the research endeavor

Planning (need ample time to plan, organize/ prepare, and draft the research paper)

The need for sufficient variation of the dependent and independent variables

**Assignment** (due on 9/14) -- critical reviews of published research (the basic question one needs to ask is: does the article include each of the items listed on page 1 of this syllabus? If so, where?

Be specific!! [Vanhanen; Lijphart; and Salehyan/Gleditsch]

9/7

Characteristics of a research proposal?

The structure of an academic research paper

**Example(s)** of a research problem/issue

Research question, variables (DV and IV), hypothesis(es), operationalization of the variables, data sources, analysis

**Assignment** (email by 9/12 a 1–2-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).

Readings:

My guidelines for DIPL 6310 – on Course Blackboard

Orosz, J. “Twelve Characteristics of a Good Proposal.” Available at: <https://www.ncfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Twelve-Characteristics-of-a-Good-Proposal-The-Grantmaking-School-2000-twelve-characteristics-of-a-good-proposal.pdf>

9/14

Research proposal development/writing

Meeting with each student in my office for 20-25 minutes during class time (7:35-9:45) to discuss issues related to proposal development. You are required to make an appointment! This meeting is especially important!

9/21

Research proposal development/writing (cont.)

**Research proposal development 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.

**Assignment due-date-- critical reviews of published research**

9/28

**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.

10/5

No class formal will be held

**Submit the completed proposal in hard copy in my office by 8pm.**

**10/12, 10/26, 11/2, 11/9, 11/16,**

**No formal classes** will be held during these days.

The instructor will hold one-to-one consultation with students between 7:35pm and 9:45pm 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.

Please note that no meeting will be held on 10/19, as I will travel to attend a professional conference.

**11/23**

Thanksgiving Day! No class

**11/30**

**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 by last name. The first half of the class will make their presentation on this date. The presentation must include important items presented during the proposal presentation and continue with the findings, the discussion thereof, and the conclusion.

**12/7**

**PPT Presentation of research findings** (22 minutes max). The second half of the class will make their presentation on this date. The presentation must include important items presented during the proposal presentation and continue with the findings, the discussion thereof, and the conclusion, as needed.

**12/14**

**Research paper due date. Please submit the hard copy and email the electronic copy (as Word attachment) by 8pm.**