2013

390-01 International Relations Seminar

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Course Description

This seminar focuses on research design. Participants will design an original research project based on scholarly literature from international relations. The emphasis is on learning by doing. Students will read original scholarship, identify hypotheses, and critically assess these with a view to testing or evaluating alternatives. A significant portion of the course will revolve around student presentation, discussion, and deliberation over choices in different stages of the research design process.

Course Objectives

- to survey selections from research-shaping scholarship on international relations
- to select a research question and explore related literature
- to produce a research design that builds on the scholarly literature

Required Texts


This readable work provides stepwise questions for designing research without sacrificing broader discussion of underlying philosophical starting points. Please read carefully and use the section questions to brainstorm and outline your own project. You are responsible for all assigned portions of this text.


This reader provides selections from major scholars on questions in international relations. It provides a common base for identifying and discussing specific hypotheses and research strategies.

The course will include selections from other sources. These will be available through library reserves and online documents, usually linked through the course Canvas site (details to be given in class). All students are expected to visit Canvas to locate these materials.

Grading and Assessment

Please see the departmental guidelines accompanying this syllabus. Where course components are evaluated on a points system, grades will be assigned based on percentage scores, as follows.

A = 93% – 100%; A- = 90% – 92%
B+ = 87% – 89%; B = 83% – 86%; B- = 80% – 82%
C+ = 77% – 79%; C = 73% – 76%; C- = 70% – 72%
D = 60% – 69%;  F = Below 60%

The course paper gives an opportunity to investigate an area of interest in depth. The latter portion of the semester requires concentrated work on this seminar project. Consistent time on the project should be invested in order to produce a polished and critically considered final paper. To ensure steady progress, project components will be submitted in several iterations, including a topic, a literature review, a rough draft, a presentation, and the final paper.

Assessment will be based on the following distribution:

**Paper Topic** 5%

The topic includes a research question and an annotated bibliography.

**Literature Review** 25%

The literature review should survey between 20 and 30 pieces of scholarship related to your topic.

**Rough Draft** 5%

The rough draft should include an introduction, literature review, and research design. Investment in a thorough rough draft will leave ample time for incorporating critiques and making the final product more sophisticated and persuasive.

**Final Paper** 50%

The final paper will incorporate feedback from the prior components, including a presentation.

**Memos, Presentations, and Participation** 15%

Students will have multiple opportunities to present on readings and their projects; these presentations are vital to assimilating the material and sharpening final papers. Students presenting on the readings may be asked to bring short overview memos or outlines. Coming prepared to class is all-important as regular participation is expected of all students. The early portion of the course has an intense reading schedule; students must devote adequate time on a weekly basis to meet this requirement. *To ensure informed participation, reading assignments must be completed before class.*

As the class meets once a week, missing a class is the equivalent of missing a full week of classtime. The instructor reserves the right to lower the course grade if there is more than one unexcused absence. Additional factors contributing to the participation grade include overall improvement and quality of in-class contributions.

Note that plagiarism is a serious infraction of university academic expectations. The instructor may use tools such as the campus-supported TurnItIn software service to better ensure adherence to university guidelines. Questions should be referred to the instructor.
Course Schedule

Assigned readings should be completed before class. Note that all chapter readings are taken from the course textbook unless otherwise indicated. Please note that changes and revisions to this schedule may be made at the instructor’s discretion. A week-by-week table is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk/ Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 1. Aug 28</td>
<td>Literature, hypotheses&lt;br&gt;Three Design Types</td>
<td>Syllabus&lt;br&gt;Cresswell, Ch.1</td>
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<td>Wk 2. Sept 4</td>
<td>IR Approaches, History&lt;br&gt;Literature Review, Theory</td>
<td>Mingst, Ch. 1, 2&lt;br&gt;Cresswell, Ch. 2, 3</td>
<td>Overviews, presentations</td>
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<td>Wk 3. Sept 11</td>
<td>IR perspectives, System level&lt;br&gt;Writing, Ethics, Intros</td>
<td>Mingst, Ch. 3,4&lt;br&gt;Cresswell, Ch. 4,5</td>
<td>Overviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 4. Sept 18</td>
<td>IR State level, Individual level&lt;br&gt;Purpose of study, hypotheses</td>
<td>Mingst, Ch. 5, 6&lt;br&gt;Cresswell, Ch. 6,7</td>
<td>Overviews</td>
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<td>Wk 5. Sept 25</td>
<td>Int’l Orgs, Law, War&lt;br&gt;Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>Mingst, Ch. 7, 8&lt;br&gt;Cresswell, Ch. 8</td>
<td>Overviews&lt;br&gt;Topic ideas</td>
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<td>Wk 6. Oct 2</td>
<td>War, Int’l Political Economy&lt;br&gt;Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>Mingst, Ch. 8, 9&lt;br&gt;Cresswell, Ch. 9</td>
<td>Overviews</td>
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<td>Wk 7. Oct 9</td>
<td>IPE, Globalization&lt;br&gt;Mixed Methods</td>
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<td>Wk 10. Oct 30</td>
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<td>Wk 11. Nov 6</td>
<td>Paper Presentations</td>
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<td>Literature review due</td>
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<td>Wk 12. Nov 13</td>
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<td>Wk 14. Nov 27</td>
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<td>Wk 15. Dec 4</td>
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<td>Wk 16. Dec 11</td>
<td>Forum on design&lt;br&gt;Beyond the seminar</td>
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<td>Final paper due</td>
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