

INTS 475: INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SENIOR SEMINAR

Fall 2010

Thursday 6 PM, 103 Buckman

Professor Risley

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Office hours: Thursday 2 – 4:30 pm

Friday 3 – 4:15 pm

(or by appointment)

“Learning is experience. Everything else is just information.”

-- Albert Einstein

This course is designed to guide International Studies seniors through the process of writing a major research paper. The seminar provides you with the opportunity to conduct research on a topic of interest. Over the course of the semester, you will gain an appreciation for the challenges and rewards of doing social science research and be exposed to the various stages involved in preparing a high-quality paper. These include developing a research question, acquainting yourself with the scholarly literature related to your topic, formulating hypotheses, and collecting and analyzing data, among other steps.

Because research and writing are activities that benefit greatly from peer review and feedback, students should be prepared to participate actively every week. All members of the class are expected to discuss their own projects and the work of their peers. Think of the seminar as a forum in which you will enhance your ability to effectively communicate your ideas and to give (and receive) constructive criticism. Ideally, your experiences in this course will build on the many skills that you have developed both as an IS major and as a Rhodes undergraduate.

Requirements and grading policies

The final grade for this course is based on the following components:

Research paper (final draft)	50%
Assignments and drafts	15%
Participation	20%
Presentation	15%

1. **Research paper:** The length of the paper will be between 30 and 40 double-spaced, typed pages (using a 12 pt. Times or Times New Roman font). Your works cited page and any appendices you include will not count toward this page limit. It is not necessary to attach a title page. All papers must adhere to proper norms of citation and use a style consistently from start to finish. More detailed guidelines will be provided in class.

Final papers are due on **Friday, December 10 at 4:30 PM**. Papers turned in late will be marked down by one full letter grade per day until received (for instance, an A becomes a B, etc.). No papers will be received after Monday, Dec. 13 at 4 PM. Failure to submit a final paper will result in a failing grade for the course.

2. **Assignments:** You will complete the research paper in a step-by-step manner, turning in assignments at each stage of the process. I will provide feedback on your progress and address your concerns/questions at each stage.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class where noted. Late work will be penalized (it also limits my ability to provide timely feedback on your project). Neglecting to turn in your work will lower your grade; more importantly, it will severely hinder your ability to complete a high-quality final paper.

3. **Participation:** The course is conducted as a seminar. Students are expected to attend every class and to participate vigorously. The participation grade is based on:
 - a. Attendance: *Unexcused* absences will lower your participation grade, and **three** or more such absences will automatically result in a failing participation grade. *Excused* absences entail providing documentation of a personal or family emergency (e.g., illness) or prior commitment (e.g., jury duty) and are subject to the instructor's approval. Personal travel is not a valid reason for missing class; make your plans accordingly.
 - b. In-class contributions: frequent, high-quality participation in class discussions and activities. This participation should show that you have prepared for class by reading/completing all assignments and thinking about the topics to be covered.
4. **Oral presentation:** During our final meetings of the semester, you will share your research findings and field questions and comments from the other members of the class. Guidelines for these 15-minute presentations will be given in class.

The grading scale for the course is as follows: A (100-93); A- (92-90); B+ (89-88); B (87-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-78); C (77-73); C- (72-70); D+ (69-68); D (67-63); D- (62-60); F (59 and below).

Other course policies

- I expect the College's Honor Code to govern the work that you complete in this course and your conduct in class.
- I will not accept assignments or final papers submitted via email (except where noted below).
- If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at x3994 as soon as possible.
- If you participate in student athletics or other extra-curricular activities, it is your responsibility to inform me of travel/conflicts as soon as you know your schedule for the semester. You should prepare and turn in assignments early whenever possible.
- Students taking this course must have senior standing.

Course readings

There are no texts to purchase at the Rhodes Bookstore for this course. All required readings are available in my public folder. Hard copies will also be kept in a folder in the IS Department office (on the bookcase to the left of my office door).

Readings must be completed before the class meetings under which they are listed. Please note that although the assigned reading load for this course is light, you should budget time *every week* for the large amount of outside reading needed to write a solid paper.

You may wish to purchase the American Political Science Association's *Style Manual for Political Science* (2001), which can be ordered for about \$6 at http://www.apsanet.org/section_362.cfm. This short text provides guidelines for proper citation and addresses other stylistic issues (You also can visit <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA.html>).

Seminar schedule (Note: This schedule is subject to modification if the instructor deems it necessary.)

8/26: Greetings, introduction to the course & discussion of students' interests

9/2: Overview of the research process & social scientific methods

Readings: Buttolph Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods* (2005), p. 27-35.

Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, 6th ed. (2004), p. 4-10; 13-20; 24-31.

9/9: Research design: From topic to research question
Using theory & testing hypotheses

DUE: Preliminary ideas for paper topics – bring two copies

Readings: Buttolph Johnson and Reynolds, p. 103-119; 84-88.

Shively, p. 32-45; 57-66.

9/16: Research design continued

DUE: Preliminary research question and a working bibliography (1-2 pages will suffice) – bring two copies

Readings: Shively, p. 74-88; 94-109.

Lim, *Doing Comparative Politics* (2006), p. 74-90 (saved as Lim 1 in my public folder).
See also the file saved as “comparative syllabus.”

- 9/23: More on designing research & writing your theory section
- DUE:** Revised research question and some working hypotheses/IVs – bring two copies
- Readings: Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2003), p. 76-83.
- Knopf, “Doing a Literature Review” *PS* (January 2006), p. 127-132.
- Appendix from Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (1997), p. 123-128.
- 9/30: Evidence: Gathering & analyzing data
- DUE:** Preliminary literature review – bring one copy
- Reading: Lim, p. 3-63 (saved as Lim 2 in my public folder).
- 10/7: **No seminar meeting** (academic conference).
- Readings: Works available in the folder marked “articles” in my public folder.
- 10/14: Seeing the big picture: Analysis of sample student papers and published articles, TBA
Come ready to discuss these works.
- Readings: Papers available in the folder marked “sample papers” in my public folder.
- 10/21: **No seminar meeting: Individual paper conferences will be scheduled for this week**
- Come prepared to discuss the revisions you are making to your literature review, your preliminary theoretical section (see deadline below), and any other issues/concerns.
- 10/28: Revisiting issues of research design, case selection, measurement, etc.
- DUE:** Preliminary theoretical section of paper – bring one copy.
Be prepared to talk about your research design.
- 11/4: Evidence continued
- DUE:** Preliminary evidence section of paper – bring one copy

11/11: Guidelines for presentations and troubleshooting

DUE: First complete draft of paper! Please do not staple your paper (just use a clip). Bring two copies: one for peer evaluation and one for me.

Important note: Your completed peer evaluations (please refer to the handout provided in class) are due on Monday, 11/15 by 4 PM. Give one copy to the author and turn another copy in to me (please leave it in my mailbox if I'm not in my office). It is your responsibility to arrange a time outside of class this week to meet with the person whose paper you've evaluated to provide additional feedback.

11/18: **Paper Presentations**

We will meet in a smart classroom TBA. Send your handouts and/or Power Point presentations to me as an email attachment before you present.

11/25: **No class (Happy Thanksgiving)**

12/2: Last class meeting: **Paper Presentations**

Final papers are due Friday, December 10 at 4:30 PM!!

Don't forget to submit a hard copy and an emailed copy.

We will also tentatively schedule our end-of-semester celebration for Dec. 10th, location and time TBD!

Note: I will return your final papers to you with comments and feedback, so stay tuned.