

**RHODES COLLEGE**  
**International Studies Department**  
**INTS 475: Senior Seminar**  
**Fall 2008**

Thu 6:00—8:30 Buckman 105

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Professor Nasong’o  
113 Buckman Hall  
Tel. 901-843-3823  
[nasongos@rhodes.edu](mailto:nasongos@rhodes.edu)

Office Hours:  
Tue 11:00-12:00  
Wed 12:00-1:00  
Thu 2:00-3:00

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“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”  
Chinese Proverb

**Course Overview and Objectives**

This course is intended to guide students majoring in International Studies through the process of writing their Senior Paper on a topic of their choice. Toward this end, the principal focus of the course is on methods and techniques of social science research. Students will spend most of the time thinking and conducting research as social scientists. They will be exposed, through a step-by-step approach, to the mechanics of writing a social science research paper.

Among key issues that will be covered in the course include formulating a research question; the importance of theory; the research process; data analysis; and evidence presentation among others. The overall objective of the course is to guide students to produce a research paper that could be published in a social science journal.

The best way to undertake effective research is to subject one’s research activities to peer review and critique. Accordingly, this course is designed as an endeavor in collective learning whereby students will be expected to comment and provide feedback on each other’s work. This will enable students to develop analytical skills, enhance their capacity for critical thinking, and broaden their perspectives as social scientists.

**Course Requirements:**

1. The prerequisite for taking this course is senior standing.
2. The course meets once every week, on Thursday evening from 6:00-8:30 in Buckman 105. Students are required to attend each class and to participate as part of the interactive process of research. Any absence, unless absolutely unavoidable, will be penalized as it constitutes a whole week of missed work.
3. As detailed in the schedule below, the research paper will be completed in a sequence of stages with each stage constituting a class assignment. Completed assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. It is extremely important that students submit completed assignments on the due dates in order to learn from one another through class discussion and get feedback from the professor. This will facilitate smooth and collective progress from one research stage to the next.

4. **The final paper length must be between 30 and 40 pages, typed double-space using either Times New Roman.** This is the page length preferred by most social science journals. Papers that fall outside this length requirement will be penalized.
5. There are many styles of writing a journal research paper and different journals prefer different styles. These will be discussed in class. Whatever style a student chooses to use, it must be used consistently throughout the paper.

**Late submission of class assignments will result in a 5% reduction in your participation grade per late day.**

**Paper Due Date: The final version of the paper will be due on December 12.**

**No paper will be accepted thereafter!**

**Grade Distribution:**

Paper: 50%

Participation: 30%

Presentation: 20%

### **The Honor Code**

An essential feature of scholarship is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. Accordingly, it is expected that students will abide by the college's honor code in all their scholarly activities and conduct.

### **Seminar Schedule**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
Aug 28	Introduction: What is research?	None
Sept 04	The scientific study of social phenomena	Identify attributes of science
Sept 11	Identifying a topic and research design/ Reference Styles	Ideas about research themes
Sept 18	Hypotheses and How to Test Them	Research topics due/discussion
Sept 25	Gathering Evidence and data analysis	Exercises on causal relationships
Oct 02	Introduction and its Importance	Preliminary bibliography due
Oct 09	Theory/Literature review	Introduction due
Oct 16	Discussion of Introduction Sections	Present peer reviews
Oct 23	The Evidence Section	Theoretical Section due
Oct 30	Discussion of theoretical sections	Evidence Section Due
Nov 06	Discussion of evidence sections	Present peer reviews
Nov 13	Preliminary Conclusions and Problems	Discussion of findings
Nov 20	Final Paper presentation	Critique/peer review
Nov 27	Thanksgiving Day	None
Dec 04	Final paper presentation	Critique/peer review
Dec 12	Final Revised Paper due	Submit a clean copy of the paper