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INTS 475-01, Senior Seminar, Spring 2008

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RHODES COLLEGE
International Studies Department
INTS 475: Senior Seminar
Spring 2008

Thu 6:00—8:30 Buckman 105

Professor Nasong'o
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Tel. 901-843-3823
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Office Hours:
Tue 11:00-12:00
Thu 11:00-12:00
Fri 10:00-11:00

“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 others' 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 Times New Roman 12-point font. 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 April 30 at Noon.

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

Date	Topic	Student Responsibilities
Jan 10	Introduction: What is research?	None
Jan 17	The scientific study of social phenomena	Identify attributes of science
Jan 24	Identifying a Research Topic	Ideas about research themes
Jan 31	Research Design/Process	Research topics due/discussion
Feb 7	Hypotheses and How to Test Them	Exercises on causal relationships
Feb 14	Gathering Evidence	Preliminary bibliography due
Feb 21	Data Analysis	Report on types of data
Feb 28	Introduction and its Importance	Introduction due/discussion
Mar 6	Spring Recess	None
Mar 13	Theory/Literature review	Theoretical Section due
Mar 20	Easter Recess	None
Mar 27	The Evidence Section	Evidence section due
Apr 3	Discussion of Sample Articles	Complete draft of paper due
Apr 10	Preliminary Conclusions and Problems	Discussion
Apr 17	Final Paper presentation	Critique/peer review
Apr 24	Final paper presentation	Critique/peer review
April 30	Final paper due by noon	Submit a hard copy of the paper