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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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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 |