

GOV 388L (38165)
Research in International Politics

University of Texas, Spring 2015

M 1230-330p, BAT 5.102

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Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to give second- and third-year IR graduate students an intensive, guided, workshop-based independent research experience, with the final aim of producing a piece of work suitable for a master's report or dissertation proposal (depending on progress in the program). In other words, students will be expected to produce a fully-realized piece of research by semester's end. Class time will be focused on the practicalities of conducting, designing, and writing mainstream social science research. Extensive participation is required, from presenting one's work at specific stages throughout the process to seeking and giving feedback in class discussions. Think of it as one big semester-long workshop.

Requirements

The following components make up the course grade:

- 15% Homework
- 10% Annotated bibliography
- 10% Draft literature review
- 10% Draft theory section
- 10% Draft research design section
- 15% Conference-style presentation
- 30% Final paper (due date TBA)

Note that each assignment, except the final paper, must be submitted to the whole class (including me, of course) by 5pm the day before we discuss them in class. I reserve the right to require additional work, such as further drafts of specific assignments if deemed unacceptable or reflection pieces based on topics that come up during the course of the semester. Finally, due dates are firm. *Late assignments simply will not be accepted.*

University and Campus Policies

1. Students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

2. Accommodations for religious holidays.

By university policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

3. Academic dishonesty.

“Scholastic dishonesty. . . includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act” (Section 11-802 (b), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*).

If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, you should consult with me and [this website](#). Any student that violates this policy will fail this course and have the details of the violation reported to Student Judicial Services.

4. Emergency evacuation policy.

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with “Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley” written in the subject line.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Readings

One book, available at the University Co-op, is required.

- Fisher, Alec. 2004. *The Logic of Real Arguments, Second Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

All other readings are available electronically. I also expect that you will have completed the readings before the sessions for which they are assigned.

Course Outline and Schedule

Session 1 (26 January). *Puzzles, research questions, and where they come from*

- Zinnes, Dina A. 1980. "Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher: Presidential Address." *International Studies Quarterly* 24.3:315-342.
- Varian, Hal. "How to Build an Economic Model in Your Spare Time." [\[Link\]](#)

Session 2 (2 February). *Choosing research questions*

- Bring in three candidate research questions; write a paragraph or two on *why* each is (a) puzzling and (b) worth answering.

Session 3 (9 February). *Structuring your research*

- Bring in an article that you believe to be well-executed and well-organized. Outline the relevant parts, identifying their roles in the overall structure of the article.

Session 4 (16 February). *Literature reviews I: why they're harder than you think*

- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39.1:127-132.
- Submit annotated bibliography of at least ten works *relevant to answering your particular research question*.

Session 5 (23 February). *Literature reviews II: presentations and critiques*

- Submit a draft literature review summarizing existing work *as it relates to answering your particular research question*.

Session 6 (2 March). *Theory building I: logic, logic, logic*

- Read Fisher 2004

Session 7 (9 March). *Theory building II: workshopping*

- Be prepared to discuss potential answers to your research question.

Session 8 (23 March). *Theory building III: presentations and critiques*

- Submit draft theory section

Session 9 (30 March). *Research design I: where theory and empirics meet*

- Bring in an article with what you believe to be a strong, appropriate research design. Outline the research design section and explain how/why each element connects to the theoretical motivation.

Session 10 (6 April). *Research design II: workshopping*

Session 11 (13 April). *Research design III: presentation and critiques*

- Submit draft research design section.

Session 12 (20 April). *Publishing research: process and strategy*

- Read submissions, decision memos, revisions, etc. from IR faculty.

Session 13 (27 April). *Presentations and feedback*

- Give a conference-length (10-12 min) presentation of the whole project.

Session 14 (4 May). *Discussion and workshopping*

Session 15 (11 May). *Wrap-up and conclusion*