

Honors in International Affairs

Fall 2015

Professor Vicki Ash Hunter

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:45-3:25pm and by appt.; usually available after class

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Course Outline

This course is unlike most traditional courses in that I do not have a very well defined substantive agenda mapped out at the beginning of the semester. Because the course will be tailored to your particular research interests, the topics discussed will be influenced by your thesis goals. The general pattern we will follow, however, goes as follows:

- The first three weeks of the course we will do some general reading on research methodology and design. During this period we will begin a set of group discussions in which we will start uncovering our individual research interests and outline our basic research questions and topics.

From the seventh week through the end of the semester we will devote ourselves to your individual projects. Each student will be responsible to lead a class discussion/seminar related to his/her research project. These are to be seminars that deal with the intellectual puzzles on which the student is doing research and not formal presentations of research already completed. The intent here is to both allow you and your ideas the exposure to the rest of the students in the class as well as force you to more carefully examine your own presuppositions and arguments. The point here is to specifically sharpen your critical thinking capabilities.

There will be two to three of these presentations per week through the end of the semester. Because the purpose of this class is to lay the foundation for the writing of your honors thesis we will follow a step-by-step plan to help you achieve your final goal of graduating with honors.

1. The first step involves choosing your topic:
 - a. individual consultations with me about your chosen topic.
 - b. group discussions about the structure of a typical research paper.
2. Step two also consists of two parts:
 - a. Writing a 2-3 page first statement of your topic. Students will help each other with constructive suggestions for future research.
 - b. This is crucial — the selection of the official thesis advisor. This advisor will be a member (along with me in most cases) of your three-member honors committee that will examine you in the spring semester. It is important that you pick your advisor early in the semester, but not before you have a good idea of what your topic and research strategy will be. A professor will not be very willing to work with you if you come into her or his office with no idea of what you want to do. Ideally, this professor should be from a department related to the International Affairs program. You may check the following link to see who is on the IA committee, but your choices are not limited to these faculty members:
<http://iafs.colorado.edu/index.php/directory/faculty-iafs-committee>

You should check with all relevant departments to find out the research interests of the faculty.
3. Step three is to begin your actual research and to provide a first literature review (3-5 pages) on your topic. This is where you report on the first materials you have found on your topic. You should be consulting with your advisor at this stage.
4. Step four is conducting a seminar (approx. 30 minutes) on your topic and research to date. You are to give your fellow students a summary of your proposed topic and research plan (approx. 5 pages). You should also bring an outline to class that leaves room under each main topic for student comments (bring a copy for each member of the class). The rest of the class is responsible for giving intelligent questions/suggestions to the seminar leader in written form. These responses will be composed during the seminar and handed to the presenter at the end of the session.

5. Step five is the submission of your final 20-page thesis draft. This should form the foundation of your honors thesis. With the help of your advisor and me, you should know exactly where you stand and how much work remains to be done. You should be off to a good start for the spring semester.

Please consult the department website if you have any questions BEFORE contacting the instructor. There is a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" which may address your concerns:

<http://iafs.colorado.edu/>

Assignments/Grading

The following is a breakdown of assignments and grades. There will be no midterm or final.

1. 2-3 page statement of your topic and proposed research plan due — September 15 (10% of your grade).
2. 4-5 page literature review — due September 27 (30% of your grade).
3. Final 20-page paper — due December 3 (50% of your grade).
4. The presentation counts for 10% of your grade.
5. It should go without saying that class participation is expected in these seminars; the seminar really does not benefit you if you do not practice orally articulating your ideas. In addition, you are expected to attend every seminar. Missed classes will only be tolerated for illness or emergencies.

Instructions for all papers:

Please remember that this is a long process and will involve much writing and rewriting. Each paper (no matter the length) should include an introduction explaining the topic and your goals for the thesis. The papers should also include a concluding section that explains where you are headed from that point on; in other words, try to explain your next steps. This will be true even for the final thesis which will always have room for further research.

Readings

Roselle, Laura and Sharon Spray. 2012. Research and Writing in International Relations. Longman Press.

Deadlines

There are numerous deadlines that you will have to meet during the year; for more info please check this website: <http://www.colorado.edu/honors/>

Week One (August 25) Introduction to the course

Week Two (Sept. 1) Discuss topics; bring to class one paragraph that states your topic

Week Three (September 8) Doing Research

First statement due; 2-3 pages introducing your topic
Select chapters from text

Week Four (Sept. 15)

Methodology; select chapters from text; choose presentation dates; guest speakers

Week Five (September 22)

Literature review due

Complete honors application form and submit to the Honors Office in Norlin by October 1

Week Six (September 29 or October 1)

Individual meetings in A4

Week Seven (October 6 or 8) presentations start

Week Eight (October 13 or 15)

Week Nine (October 20 or 22)

Week Ten (October 27 or October 29)

Week Eleven (November 3 or 5)

Presentations (SCHEDULE TBD)

Week Twelve (November 10 or 12)

Week Thirteen (November 18: office hours)

Week Fourteen: NO CLASS; HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

FINAL PAPERS DUE DECEMBER 3

Discussion Topics/Research Ideas

It is my hope that most of you already decided upon your general topic area. For those of you still in doubt, there are almost an infinite number of possible projects that you can choose from. Hopefully, you will narrow your focus in the coming weeks. Please keep in mind that your thesis does not have to tackle a huge world problem to be successful. The best theses are constructed around a problem that is answerable and researchable.

Requirements for Topic Statement (note that you do not need to use the terminology stated below):

1. Working title
2. Discuss the dependent variable: what are you studying? What is it you want to understand?
3. Can you obtain the necessary information to analyze this topic?
4. What independent variables will you look at to evaluate change in your main variable?
5. Working bibliography/page numbers

Requirements for your final (20 page) draft

1. Your final draft should include a full, chapter-by-chapter outline of your thesis. The more details you can provide the better. (Remember: you are free to change this outline next semester as you complete your final version).
2. Your final draft should include the most detailed and elaborate introduction of your actual thesis (i.e., the problem you want to examine, your method of examining it, as well as some description of the general importance of the problem you selected and why you thought it significant enough to examine it at all.
3. Your draft should include at least one completed chapter or section. This will enable me to help you not only on matters of style, sentence structure, etc., but also on overall organization, coherence, continuity, etc.
4. A copy of your final draft should be handed to your advisor.

Note: An alternative format is the 'micro-thesis' in which you write a portion of each chapter of your proposed thesis. This would be appropriate if you have researched all aspects of the thesis and have started to put together several chapters. It is important to note within the text where work is yet to be done and where any holes exist in the research.

How to Write a Research Paper

Articles in scholarly journals tend to follow a similar style. There are six parts to the typical research paper. Please use this as a guideline and not an exact template to be followed to the letter. It is meant to get you thinking about the appropriate questions to be asking as you conduct your research.

Part I Introduction

The first part of a research paper typically explores what you are studying and why. In this section you should try to answer the following questions:

1. What is your general goal?
 - a. What subject do you wish to explore?
 - b. What problem do you wish to investigate?
 - c. What topic do you wish to study?
2. What is your specific purpose?
 - a. What puzzle is to be resolved?
 - b. What issue is to be confronted?
 - c. What is your particular point of view?
 - i. The theme of the paper is . . .
 - ii. The argument to be investigated is . . .
 - iii. I aim to . . .
 - iv. I would like to demonstrate the point that . . .
 - v. My solution to the problem of . . . is . . .
3. Why are these issues worthy of investigation?
 - a. What motivates your analysis?
 - b. What motivates your interest?
 - c. What makes the subject important?
 - d. What contributions will your study make?

In short, your introduction should contain a clear motivation and a well-defined thesis statement.

Part II Literature Review

The second part of a research paper typically discusses what is known and unknown, settled and debated, about the subject under study. Here are some questions that you should try to address:

1. What is the current state of our knowledge?
 - a. How does your problem relate to existing scholarship?
 - b. What does the research record on your problem look like?
 - c. What do existing studies on your topic tell us?
2. What does the journal literature look like? (You must track down journal articles as well as books. Much of the good empirical work in the social sciences occurs in the journals and not in books.)
3. What do we know about your
 - a. Research program?
 - b. Theories?
 - c. Hypotheses?
 - d. Methodologies?
 - e. Evidence?

4. What are the literature's major limitations?
 - a. Is there progress or stagnation in this field?
 - b. What are the shortcomings in theory and method?
 - c. What are the major roadblocks to progress?
 - d. What are scholars arguing about (what we don't know)?
 - e. What do scholars agree upon (what do we think we know)?
5. What are the literature's major themes?
 - a. What are the Big Questions that scholars are asking?
 - b. What are the key issues scholars are debating?

The literature review should be based on a carefully compiled sample of the professional literature. You need to reflect upon that literature and organize it in your mind. Summarize it thematically and avoid summarizing article by article. If you refer to theories, methods or data you must cite specific sources.

Part III The Theory to be Tested

The third part of a research paper typically states the theoretical arguments to be explored. Try to address the following questions in this section.

1. What is the research program under which you are working?
 - a. What are its core assumptions?
 - b. What are its operating rules?
2. For each hypothesis that you derive from that research program?
 - a. What is the linkage among the variables?
 - i. Can you offer a verbal statement of the causal argument?
 - ii. Can you offer a formal statement, an if-then hypothesis?
 - b. What do you want to explain?
 - i. What is your dependent variable?
 - ii. How do you define it?
 - c. What is your explanation?
 - i. What is your independent variable?
 - ii. How do you define it?
 - d. Under what conditions is the hypothesis true?
 - i. What are your control variables?
 - ii. What is the context under which the relationship holds?
 - iii. Where and when are the independent and dependent variables related?
 - e. Why do you believe that the hypothesis is true?
 - i. What assumptions lead you to propose this hypothesis?
 - ii. Why is the hypothesis plausible?
 - iii. What is the reasoning behind the hypothesized relationship?

Your theory section should contain clearly stated ideas. You need not put down your ideas in terms of hypotheses, independent variables, dependent variables, etc. However, you must be precise about what you are trying to explain and how you are trying to explain it.

Part IV The Research Design: Methodology

The fourth part of a research paper usually proposes a research design to investigate the theoretical arguments you have advanced. Here are some questions you should try to address.

1. What methodological guidelines will you follow?
 - a. What is your study design or research plan?
 - i. How will you confront the issues you raised?
 - ii. How will you answer the questions you posed?
 - b. How does your research design address the problem?
 - i. Why have you chosen a particular method?
 - ii. How do you justify your research choices and decisions?
2. How will you choose cases to examine?
 - a. Why were your cases selected?
 - b. Why were other cases not selected?
 - c. What type of sample are you drawing?
 - i. Individual level data or aggregate data?
 - ii. Cross-sectional or time-series data?
3. How will you measure your data?
 - a. What sources of evidence will you use?
 - i. Survey research — questionnaires, interviews
 - ii. Fieldwork — participant and non-participant observation
 - iii. Secondary analysis of statistical sources
 - iv. Content analysis of archives and historical records
4. How will you eliminate plausible rival hypotheses?
 - a. What evidence/testing procedures lend support to your hypotheses?
 - b. What evidence/testing procedures lead to the rejection of your hypotheses?

The research design should contain clear procedures. You should state how you will evaluate your ideas.

Part V Findings

The fifth part of a research paper typically discusses and interprets findings. Here are some questions to address.

1. What was your purpose in analyzing the data?
 - a. Why present the data?
 - b. Why conduct the analysis?
2. What speculations follow from the data?
 - a. Where do the results lead us?
 - b. What do the results tell us about the hypotheses?
 - c. What indirect implications can be drawn?
 - d. What is the larger importance of your findings?

This part of your paper is the punch line. You need to demonstrate that all your careful preparation paid off. Explore your evidence. Think about what you have found.

Part VI Conclusions

The final part of a research paper typically evaluates the research. Here are some questions to address.

1. What is a succinct summary of your paper?
 - a. Purposes?
 - b. Arguments?
 - c. Methods?
 - d. Findings?
 - e. Implications?
2. What has your research accomplished?
 - a. Significance?
 - b. How would you assess your work?
 - c. Did you satisfy your original motives and purposes?
3. What are the limitations of your analysis?
 - a. How adequate was your work?
 - b. What self-criticisms would you raise?
 - c. How firm were your conclusions?
 - d. What shortcomings exist?
 - e. What problems remain?
4. What does your research imply about future work?
 - a. What new theoretical speculations should be investigated?
 - b. What new policy recommendations should be developed?
 - c. What new research strategies should be explored?

The final section of your paper allows you to move beyond the data and to speculate about the implications of your work. In this section you have the opportunity to explore your upcoming honors thesis.

Specific Requirements

Your papers must be done professionally. This means correct punctuation, spelling, etc. More specifically, your papers must meet the following requirements:

1. Typed
2. Stapled (no clips)
3. Double-spaced
4. Cover sheet (no plastic covers)
5. Title page containing
 - name
 - date
 - title
 - to whom the paper is submitted
 - course name and number
6. 8½" x 11" paper
7. pages numbered
8. consistent reference style

You must do more than get the form right. You also must write clearly and effectively. Writing well takes time. I highly suggest you invest the time now to read some books on effective writing skills:

1. Lanham, Richard A. (1992). *Revising Prose*. New York: Macmillan.
2. Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. (1972). *The Elements of Style*. 2nd edition. New York: Macmillan.

If you use a word processor (which I highly suggest) you should think about using its related tools: a spellchecker, thesaurus, and bibliographic compiler.

OTHER INFORMATION

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html>
