

IAFS 4800
HONORS SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS FALL 2025
M/W 5:05-6:20
Ketchum 1B84

Instructor	Dr. Molly Todd Assistant Teaching Professor International Affairs and Sociology	Office Hours	Wednesdays 10:05-11:05 AM & by appointment Ketchum 165
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Course Overview

This course will lay the foundation for a successful undergraduate honors thesis. It will help you refine your thesis topic, understand and execute the different components of a thesis, and improve your ability to defend your work. It will ask you to fulfill a series of assignments that break your project into manageable parts and help you build the skills and habits to complete a significant original research project. Instead of a traditional content-heavy course, the class will focus on craft and feedback. The topics we will discuss and the material we emphasize will depend in large part on your individual research interests and concerns. I want to be as helpful as possible in establishing a strong basis for your final thesis. As such, please consider our schedule more flexible than a typical course.

Important Deadlines

Check the [Honors Program Website](#)

October 7, 2025: Thesis registration due by 11:59pm

https://www.colorado.edu/honors/graduation#registration_and_deadlines-104

Once the link is available, you are welcome to submit prior to the deadline!

April 1, 2026: Last day to defend AND defense copy due by 11:59pm (in practice, this means your thesis should be complete by **mid-March**)

April 7, 2026: Final copy due on CU Scholar by 11:59pm

April 10, 2026: Honors designations emailed by 5:00pm

More information can be found at: <https://www.colorado.edu/honors/graduation>

Grading Breakdown

Participation (20%)

Topic Statement and Research Plan (10%)

Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review (15%)

Research Presentation (15%)

Reports (10%)

Final Paper (30%)

Assignments

Participation (20%)

This class requires active involvement from all attendees. This participation will come in the form of group work, small presentations, and constructive feedback and questions provided to your peers. You will also offer dedicated feedback for the presentation of one of your peers. Frequent participation offers an invaluable chance to prepare for your thesis defense and improve your ability to articulate your ideas orally.

Topic Statement and Research Plan (10%)

2-3 pages.

Introduces topic and specifies the question(s) you seek to answer. Establishes a preliminary research plan. This will also comprise part of your Honors Registration paperwork.

Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review (15%)

5-7 page annotated bibliography and 5-7 page literature review.

Identify books, articles, online sources, etc. relevant to your topic. Consult with your advisor and explain the literature thematically. Format citations appropriately. An unannotated version of the bibliography will also comprise part of your Honors Registration paperwork.

Research Presentation (15%)

In-class presentation on selected day when you will lead a seminar on your developing research. Summarize your intellectual puzzle, its significance, your methods, the relevant literature, and problems you are having. Address questions from your discussant, peers, and me.

Reports (10%)

To help build strong research, communication, and organizational habits, you will have to complete four short reports. These will include: 1) a topic paragraph; 2&3) two Memoranda of Conversation from meetings with your primary advisor; and 4) a MemCon from your individual consultation with a library specialist.

Final Paper (30%)

20-25 pages.

Includes a detailed introduction, the thesis scaffolding, and a chapter-by-chapter outline of your thesis. It will also include either a “mini-thesis” composed of abbreviated versions of each chapter or a full first chapter. You will submit a copy of this final paper to your primary advisor.

Reading Schedule: All of the course readings will be found on Canvas.

Week One: Introductions and Topics

8/25 Introductions

8/27 Topic Discussion. Be prepared to share.

Week Two: From Topic to Question to Argument

9/1 LABOR DAY NO CLASS

9/3 Making good arguments; In-class work on Topic Statement

*Week Two Canvas Readings

The Art of a Research Paper- what should your thesis include?

Topic Paragraph Report 1 Due

Week Three: Situating Your Research

9/8 Annotated Bibliography & Literature Review Overview

*Week Three Canvas Reading

9/10 Organizing Your Literature Workshop

Topic Statement and Research Plan Due

Week Four: The Research Process

9/15 Scholarly Research: Library Visit with IAFS Area Expert Allan Van Hoya (Narrowing your topic)

Meet in Norlin Library, Room E260B

9/17 Writing Workshop: Annotated Bibliography & Literature Review

Annotated Bibliography Due Sunday

Week Five: Methods of research and Study

9/22 What are methods? Defining your Methods

9/24 Methods workshop: writing a methods statement (to be included in final paper)

Week Six: Data and Empirical Focus

9/29 Defining your data– where do you look to discuss your topic?

10/1 Research Workshop

Week Seven: Honors Paperwork

10/6 final edits of your Honors Registration paperwork [HONORS REGISTRATION FORM](#)
DUE OCT. 7th AT 11:59 pm, Upload PDF of your completed submission to Canvas after submitting through the Honors portal.

10/8 Report 2 Advisor Memcon One Due

Week Eight: A complete thesis

10/13 Putting It All Together: Analyzing Sample Theses *Week Five Canvas Reading

10/15 Organizing the pieces: Your Table of Contents; Chapter summaries

Week Nine: Independent Writing

10/20 Research & partner writing in location of choice; one-on-one meetings w/ Dr. Todd

10/22 Research & partner writing in location of choice; one-on-one meetings w/ Dr. Todd

Week Ten: Research Workshop & Strategy Session

10/27 Literature Review writing workshop

10/29 Literature Review writing workshop II

Literature Review Due

Week Eleven: Independent Writing

11/3 No class- Research & Writing in location of choice; one-on-one meetings w/ Dr. Todd

11/5 No class- Research & Writing in location of choice; one-on-one meetings w/ Dr. Todd

Report 4 Advisor Memcon Two Due

Week Twelve: Research Presentations

11/10 Presentations

11/12 Presentations

Week Thirteen: Research Presentations

11/17 Presentations

11/19 Presentations

Week Fourteen: FALL BREAK

11/24-11/28 no class

Week Fifteen: Research Presentations

12/1 Presentations

12/3 Presentations

Final Paper Due Dec. 8th @ 11:59 pm MT *NO EXTENSIONS

COURSE POLICIES

Late work and Grading- The Honors process moves fast. It is crucial you stay on schedule. If students anticipate a delay or are experiencing anything preventing them from completing an assignment on time, they should contact the instructor immediately. The instructor may accept late assignments on a case-by-case basis, and in general will apply the following penalty for late work: 1-2 days past deadline -5%; 3-4 days past deadline -10%; work submitted one week or later past the deadline will not earn more than 50% credit for the assignment.

Assignment of letter grades based on percentages of total points will be as follows, employing standard rounding when percentages fall between whole numbers: 94%+ = A; 90%-93%=A-; 87%-89%=B+; 83%-86%=B; 80%-82%=B-; 77%-79%=C+; 73%-76%=C; 70%-72%=C-; 67%-69%=D+; 63%-66%=D; 60%-62%=D-; 59% & below=F.

Communication

In general, I do not use email for basic communications regarding my courses. See below.

If you have questions, or need to communicate with me, please do the following:

1. **Attend class. Ask your question during class.** I always do my best to make time for questions, and appreciate students using class time to address class related matters.
2. Come to my office hours. Office hours are completely open– you can ask any questions or concerns you may have.
3. If for some reason you could not get your question answered in class, write a message through the Canvas Portal. When you write a message, use a salutation: Good afternoon Dr. Todd; Dear Professor Todd; Hello Dr. Todd. You should also use a complimentary close: Sincerely, Your name; Warmly, Your name.
4. For deeply personal matters, you may send me an email. Include the Course Number in the subject line. I will do my best to respond in a timely manner, but please note I receive a high volume of emails. For more detailed matters I may suggest we set up an appointment if you cannot attend my office hours.

I communicate with students using the following:

1. **This syllabus.** Please review carefully. If you miss a class, you should consult the syllabus to see what you missed, and then check-in with a classmate. Do not ask me or your TA's to repeat what was said in class.
2. I make announcements and guidance for assignments **in-class**, along with critical course material.
3. I also use Canvas to communicate important announcements. Turn your Canvas notifications on, so that you see announcements.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure 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 race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), [the Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Requirements for Infectious Diseases

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases. The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus. For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office. For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

Accommodations

For students requiring accommodations, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please alert me as soon as possible.

Preferred Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such

updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name. If you would like me to use a name or pronoun other than that listed, please let me know.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part in adhering to the Honor Code.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the Honor Code will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit Honor Code for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Honors AI policy

The current Honors AI policy is that AI may not be used in the writing, re-writing, or editing of an undergraduate Honors thesis. A student using generative AI to help write, edit, and/or rewrite their thesis is no longer the sole author. A requirement of writing an Honors thesis is that the student be the sole author of the work.

However, you may conditionally use gen AI tools in this course for the purpose of brainstorming ideas, but not for writing your paper. Final work must be student-generated. If you use gen AI tools on assignments in this class, document your usage with the Chicago Manual of Style or appropriate citation guidelines for this course.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic