

PACS 4500: Senior Seminar in PACS

Course Syllabus and Class Policies

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Michael English

I am the Associate Director of the Peace, Conflict, and Security Program (PACS) for the University of Colorado Boulder.

Office Location

My office is located in Norlin Library, room S423. My office is in suite S436 with the Special Undergraduate Enrichment Programs (SUEP). Follow the signs for SUEP if you do not see signs for PACS.

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment only and will be held through Zoom. Please schedule an appointment [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#). I am always happy to meet with you!

Email

You can reach me at michael.d.english@colorado.edu

Course Information

Description

This is the capstone course for students in the Peace, Conflict, and Security Certificate Program at CU Boulder.

This course is focused on helping students identify where they fit in the field of PACS and in developing students' skills as researchers, creators, and presenters of information on PACS related issues. Learning how to produce empirical research is not just for scholars; its creation and distribution are vital in helping activists, policymakers, humanitarian organizations, artists, and other citizens make informed decisions about the pressing matters facing our world. Our work over the semester is directed toward helping students develop their talents in the design, implementation, and presentation of an independent, pilot research project. We will discuss the research process as it pertains to the field of PACS, including ethical concerns, topic formation, research methodologies, data collection strategies, as well as how to present findings. We will

explore the differences and commonalities between knowledge manufactured for policymakers, academicians, and the public. Additionally, we will practice various methods of data collection and analysis techniques. This course encourages students to become further specialized in an area of PACS of interest to them and their career ambitions.

Prerequisites

This course is restricted to Juniors and Seniors. It is required that you have taken PACS 2500 prior to this class.

Format

As an advanced seminar, the course will be taught at the graduate school level. Students will have the freedom to explore a research project of their choice, designing it from the ground up. The flipside to this is that there are fewer but more complex assignments, more reading, and an expectation that students will spend more time outside of class working on their projects.

As a seminar, students and the instructor will embark on a collaborative learning experience, partaking in a range of activities and discussions designed to deepen our understanding of the assigned materials. This includes working in small groups, guest speakers, and other experiential activities that might take place inside or outside of the classroom. Student participation and preparedness are crucial to making the class a successful learning experience.

Learning Goals

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- - Identify research topics and questions relevant to advancing our knowledge of PACS;
 - Explain the importance of ethical standards and practices in the conduct of research;
 - Implement methods of data collection and data analysis appropriate to specific research interests;
 - Create an independent pilot research project on a PACS related topic;
 - Evaluate peer projects, recognizing their strengths and areas for improvement.

Textbooks

There are no required texts for this course.

- All materials are available to students as pdfs or webpages in the [Modules](#) section on Canvas.

Assignments

Your grade for this course is determined by the completion of assignments. There are 100 possible points.

1. Mini-Presentations (10% of your final grade, 2 presentations)
 - Due 2/10 and 3/29
2. Peer Review Team Feedback on Mini-Presentations (20% of your final grade)
 - Due 2/11 and 3/30
3. Work-in-Progress Statements (WIPS) (20% of your final grade)
 - Due 2/13, 2/27, and 3/31
4. Project Briefing (10% of your final grade)
 - Due 4/17, 4/19, 4/24, or 4/26
5. Project Presentation (10% of your final grade)
 - Due 4/19, 4/21, 4/26, or 4/28
6. Peer Feedback on Final Presentations (20% of your final grade)
 - Due 4/20, 4/22, 4/27, and 4/29
7. Reflection on Research Process, Final Presentation, and Peer Feedback (10% of your final grade)
 - Due 5/1

A full version of the assignment details can be found on the [Assignments Overview](#) page.

Course Calendar

This course contains 5 Units.

1. Research Methods in PACS
2. Working with Texts and Documents
3. Interviewing
4. Surveys
5. Presentations

A full version of the course reading schedule and bibliographic information can be found: [Course Calendar and Reading Schedule](#)

Grade Scale

Your final grade for this course is determined by the number of points acquired through exams and assignments. There are 100 total points possible. The grading scale is as follows:

- A (100-94 points)
- A- (93-90 points)
- B+ (89-87 points)
- B (86-83 points)
- B- (82-80 points)

- C (79-70 points)
- D (69-65 points)
- F (64 points or below and/or student has 6 or more unexcused absences)

Course Policies

Attendance (Mandatory)

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. You do not get points for attendance and participation, but failure to attend class and/or disruption can be grounds for your final grade to be reduced or, in extreme cases, you to be dropped from course.

You are expected to attend class on time and be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. To record attendance, the instructor will either call out attendance or pass around a sign-in sheet during the class session. Students are **allowed to be late or absent three times** without a deduction to their final grade.

Students are allowed three unexcused absences without a deduction to their final grade.

- A fourth unexcused absence will result in a ½ letter grade deduction of your final grade for this course.
- A fifth unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade deduction off your final grade for this course.
- Students with six or more unexcused absences will receive an F in this course.

Students are allowed to be partially present (tardy) for class three times without a deduction to their final grade.

- I consider you to be tardy if you are more than 5 minutes late to the start of a session.
- If you are tardy four times, it will result in a ½ letter grade deduction of your final grade for this course.
- You will lose a ½ letter grade off your final grade for each time you are tardy thereafter.

******If you have issues with mental health (stress, anxiety, depression, etc...) and this prevents you from attending class, please schedule an appointment with [Disability Services](#)[Links to an external site.](#). They can work with you to address your health needs and in many cases provide you with an accommodation letter for excused absences due to mental health reasons.

*******If you need support with mental health issues, please reach out to CU's [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#) CAPS offers support to all CU students.

What is the difference between an unexcused and an excused absence?

Unexcused absence: Students get three free unexcused absences in this course. An *unexcused absence* is any absence that does not meet the excused criteria discussed below. What this means for you is that if you need a day off for whatever reason, you can take a day off. Examples of this include if you overslept, wanted to go skiing, need a you day, or just had other things you wanted to accomplish. **Please do not email me regarding unexcused absences.** Taking an unexcused absence for these days is your prerogative. However, use your three wisely, because your fourth will cost you per the grade deductions described above.

Excused absence: An *excused absence* is any instance that a student is unable to attend class for a medical, mental health, religious, or family emergency reason. Students are required, when requested by the instructor, to provide documentation for this absence, such as a doctor's note from the Wardenburg Health Center or medical provider. You should email me at the earliest opportunity to let me know you missed class for a health or family reason. Please do not come to class if you are sick to tell me that you are sick. Stay home and get healthy! *However, students with more than 3 excused absences over the semester will be required to conduct a make-up assignment equivalent to the amount of class time lost.*

Participation

Participation in class can take many forms. I know not all students are comfortable with speaking in front of a large group, which is why I will employ a number of strategies to allow for various participation types.

However, there is a difference between discomfort and distraction. Distraction takes away from our ability to learn together as a group. Students will lose points for participation if they are engaged in any of the following behaviors that distract from the learning environment, such as working on materials for other courses, surfing the web or watching tv on their devices, or having conversations not related to the material under discussion. Earbuds and headphones are not allowed.

Students will receive a warning for a first offense. A second offense will result in 10% deduction off your final grade. A third offense will be grounds for administrative action as per CU Boulder policy.

Waitlist

What if I join the class late?

Students who register for the course after the term has already started are responsible for making up work they have missed and obtaining any lecture notes from peers. Late work should be completed within 7 days of joining the course. The attendance policy for missed sessions and tardiness comes into force on the first day a student joins the class. It is recommended that you introduce yourself to me after your first class so that you are not accidentally penalized.

What if I'm on the waitlist?

If our classroom capacity allows, I will try my best to admit students listed on the waitlist. I am restricted by university policy to follow the fire marshal's posted room occupancy limits, regardless of the number of desks or chairs. If, for example, the capacity states 50, that's the cap. If you are on the waitlist, I encourage you to attend class, since there will no doubt be a few drops during the first week. However, I cannot guarantee you a place, nor can I adjust the order of the waitlist to prioritize admission.

Late Work

Please complete the required assignments and readings by the due dates listed on Canvas. All work must be submitted electronically through Canvas as a watchable video, Word document, or discussion post unless otherwise noted. **Late work will be docked 25% off per day it is past due.** All due dates and exam dates are available to you in advance for planning purposes. Students should contact me prior to the due date if they have a concern regarding an assignment and are seeking an extension. Exceptions for extended due dates and make-up exams are considered on a case by case basis, which requires a discussion with me.

Accommodations for students with disabilities must be handled by the office of Disability Services, which determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Please contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. More information on accommodations is listed below under the Accommodations Statement section. When your accommodations are approved, please schedule an appointment with me to present your letter(s) and to discuss how we can make sure your needs are met.

Technologies

We will use the Canvas and likely the Zoom as part of our course. Canvas works best in Firefox and Chrome. If you use another type of browser, please be warned that some things may not function properly. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the platform since you will need to do everything for this course on it, including submission of all your assignments. If you need help with technology, please contact the [Office of Information Technology](#). I would love to be able to help you with all your tech needs, but I'm not that person. Information about Zoom and related policies on how we will use Zoom for remote learning can be found on the [Instructions for Zoom page](#) under Module 1.

In the classroom, the use of laptop computers and tablets for the purposes of note-taking and accessing readings is permitted as long as the user does not engage in activities such as emailing, searching the web, playing games, or anything that might be of distraction to the class and its members. Students may also not wear earbuds or headphones during class. Students violating this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class session. The instructor reserves the right to revoke the use of laptops and tablets in the classroom at his discretion.

Mobile phones should be set to silent and kept out of sight for the duration of the class. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class.

session. Please speak with the instructor before the start of class if there is an emergency situation that requires you to have your phone out during the session.

Email Responses

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours during the work week (Monday through Friday). If you do not get a reply within 36 hours, please send me a follow-up email. The answer to most general questions can be found within the syllabus, so please double check it before sending your email.

Also, kindly remember that an email is not a text message. Make sure to include your full name, the course and section number you are taking with me, and a detailed explanation of the issue. You do not need to email me if you are going to miss class unless it is the result of a medical or family emergency.

Letters of Rec

At some point, you may need the dreaded letter of recommendation or professional reference. I know how difficult it can be to get these from faculty. I am always happy to support students in this way, but I do have some criteria that you must meet. Things to keep in mind:

- You have taken **at least two courses** with me;
- Maintain a B average in my classes;
- Did not have more than 3 unexcused absences;
- You should be able to describe the job, internship, or program you are applying for and your interest in it;
- Provide me with a current copy of your resume (or we can build one if you need it);
- Ask politely.

If this is something you require, please send me an email to get the conversation started.

University Mandated Policies

Accommodations for Disability

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, 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.

Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. 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 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 policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policies](#).

Covid-19

As a matter of public health and safety, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). For more information, see the policy on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

CU Boulder currently requires masks in classrooms and laboratories regardless of vaccination status. This requirement is a precaution to supplement CU Boulder’s COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Exemptions include individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, as well as those who are hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. If you qualify for a mask-related accommodation, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus. In addition, vaccinated instructional faculty who are engaged in an indoor instructional activity and are separated by at least 6 feet from the nearest person are exempt from wearing masks if they so choose.

If you feel ill and think you might have COVID-19, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should stay home and follow the further guidance of the [Public Health Office](#) (contacttracing@colorado.edu). If you are fully vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay home; rather, you should self-monitor for symptoms and follow the further guidance of the [Public Health Office](#) (contacttracing@colorado.edu).

In this class, if you are sick or quarantined, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Preferred Name 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.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. The university will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and the support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.