

Research Seminar in International Security

Spring 2016

Security Studies Program

Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service

Georgetown University

Room: ICC 112

Wednesdays, 5:00-7:30pm

Prof.: Oriana Skylar Mastro

Office Location: 206 Mortara Bldg

Email: om116@georgetown.edu

Office Phone: 202-687-3994

Office Hours: TW 3:45-4:45pm (*and* by appointment); book at <http://mastro-officehours.youcanbook.me>

Description and Course Objectives

The Research Seminar in International Security is intended to guide the student through the conceptualization, planning, and execution of a major original research project on a policy-relevant topic. To this end, students will learn how to develop and employ suitable research methods; how to collect and utilize appropriate data; and ultimately, how to write an effectively and coherently argued research paper. Students will also learn how to present their findings in a well-organized briefing before their peers. In addition, students will learn to constructively critique and contribute to the work of others.

This class is not intended to train students to become social science scholars. However, the same basic principles underlie all solid research and analysis on which policy is based. Whether it is a scholarly book, a policy brief, or an oral briefing, strong research provides insightful and balanced perspectives on important policy problems.

Course Requirements and Means of Assessment

In order to assess students' progress in meeting the above-noted learning objectives, students will be graded upon several written products noted below, in addition to class participation, which includes a presentation of the first draft of their research papers.

Final grades for the course will be based on:

- Participation 20%
- Research proposal 5%
- Literature review 10%
- Research design 15%
- First draft 20%
- Final paper 30%

Research Proposal: By January 15th, students must send to me a proposal statement.

- Proposals should be no more than 3 pages, 1.5-spaced, 12-pt font, with one-inch margins.

- They should be distributed to the class for discussion on the first day of class.
- They should include: A statement of the empirical question or hypotheses to be tested; and a discussion of the preferred data to be employed

Because the research seminar's scope is international security broadly defined, students may focus their projects on any topic provided that:

- (1) the topic can be justified as "important";
- (2) the topic has implications for contemporary security issues; and
- (3) the project involves some **original** research, i.e., the collection and analysis of primary source material.

Students must receive the instructor's explicit approval of the subject matter to be investigated before proceeding with the project.

Literature Review: Students will next draft a literature review, due February 7 by 5pm. The purpose of the literature review is to ensure that their topic has not been covered extensively before, that their query is informed, and that they have the necessary information to answer their question. The literature review should cover the most significant secondary works that inform the proposed research proposal. ***READ the examples of literature reviews placed on Blackboard. Note that these literature reviews may not be the best models for YOUR literature review. In general, literature reviews should have the following elements:***

- Review of the theoretical literature in which your topic is situated and identification of an anchor text if appropriate.
- Clear statement of what contribution to this literature YOUR work will make.
- A brief overview of the key primary and secondary sources that you will be using to answer your empirical question/test your working hypothesis.

Research Design: Students must subsequently submit a 13-17 page research design either February 24 or March 2 depending on presentation slot. See appendix two for template. Students are expected to give a formal presentation of their research design to the rest of the class.

First Draft: Students must write first drafts of their papers and present these drafts to the seminar in the second half of the semester. Drafts must be circulated four days before they are presented so as to enable the members of the seminar to offer constructive criticism of the drafts when they are presented (so they will be due April 9 or 16 depending on your presentation date). Students are expected to give a formal presentation of their first draft to the rest of the class.

Class Participation and Commentary: Active participation and constructive interaction with other students is central to the success of the class. To make this work, students must:

- Complete course readings and come to class prepared to discuss them;
- Clearly present their own projects to the class; and
- Provide constructive criticism and advice on other students' work, as students will be assigned to provide written and oral comments on other students' research proposals, research designs, and first drafts.

Final Papers: Final papers should display both scholarly weight and analytical rigor, and should contain policy lessons and/or implications that flow directly from the study's findings. These papers should make original contributions to our understanding of the issues under investigation. Final seminar papers should be around 10,000 words.

Course Outline

Session 1: Getting Started

Session 2: Concepts, Measurements and Typologies

Session 3: Review of Thesis Proposals and Progress

Session 4: Causation and Causal Mechanisms

Session 5: Case Selection and Case Studies

Session 6: Review of Research Designs, Part I

Session 7: Review of Research Designs, Part II

Session 8: Data Acquisition, Management and Analysis

Session 9: Approaches to the Final Product

Session 10: Presentation and Review of First Drafts, Part I

Session 11: Presentation and Review of First Drafts, Part II