

International Relations Senior Seminar
INTRL-UA 990-002, Fall 2018
Monday, Wednesday 9.30-10.45am
12WV L113

This course is designed to equip students with the skills required to write an original, publishable international relations thesis in the spring semester. It is designed to be taken in the fall semester of senior year. You will learn how to ask research questions, develop explanations for international phenomena, derive testable hypotheses, and develop research designs capable of testing your hypothesis and adjudicating between competing explanations.

By the end of the semester, you will submit two items. The first is a research prospectus that addresses each of the components in the Prospectus Guidelines, which will be distributed early on in the semester. The main goal of the prospectus, which will be approximately 15-20 pages, is for you to identify the question you want to answer in your thesis and develop a research design capable of answering it. The second is a data set that you have assembled, either from scratch or by manipulating existing data sets, which you intend to analyze for your thesis. Completion of an approved data set and prospectus are necessary to progress to the second semester and complete a thesis. To this end, there will be intermediate assignments throughout the semester in which one or more components of these two items will be due in draft form.

The focus of the course is on equipping you with the skills to write an excellent senior thesis. To this end, it is divided into three parts. In the first part, we will review the basic tenets of political science research and understand how they have been applied by scholars working on important international phenomena. Next, we will move to one-on-one meetings, in which you are required to meet with both the professor and teaching assistant to discuss your plans for the thesis. Finally, we move to presentations of your research prospectuses as they are taking shape. These presentations are a valuable opportunity for you to succinctly explain the question you are tackling, the hypotheses you are weighing up, the data you are assembling and the research design you are developing, and receive feedback on your project from your peers.

In addition to the research prospectus, data set, and drafts designed to help you produce those two items, your participation is an integral component of the course. You are expected to attend all scheduled sessions and recitations. When meetings with the professor or teaching assistant are required, you are expected to sign up and attend the meetings. During scheduled sessions, you are expected to have read the material and have come prepared to discuss it. During presentations by your peers, you are expected to listen carefully and offer constructive feedback.

Please note that after the conclusion of this course, a draft of your thesis will be due at noon on March 8th, 2019. The final draft of your thesis is due at noon on April 5, 2019. The IR and Politics Undergraduate Research Conference, where you will present the findings of your research, will take place on Friday April 12, 2019. This conference begins in the morning and concludes with a party in the evening. These deadlines are absolutely final.

Professor: Amy Catalinac

Email: amy.catalinac@nyu.edu

Office: 19 West 4th St, Office 315.

Office Hours: Wed 2-4pm.

Teaching Assistant: Lucia Motolinia Carballo

Email: lucia.motolinia@nyu.edu

Office: 19 West 4th St, Office 419.

Office Hours: Tues, 10am-12pm

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown:

- **Participation (20%)** (requirements are described above)
- **Draft Research Question and Literature Review (10%)** (requirements will be clarified)
- **Draft of Preferred and Competing Hypotheses (10%)** (requirements will be clarified)
- **Draft of Research Design and Description of Data Set (10%)** (requirements will be clarified)
- **Prospectus and Data Set (50%)** (requirements will be clarified)

Important Due Dates (Fall 2018):

Draft Research Question and Literature ReviewOctober 19, noon
Draft Preferred and Competing Hypotheses November 2, noon
Draft Research Design & Description of Data Set November 16, noon
Prospectus and Data SetDecember 14, noon

Important Due Dates (Spring 2019):

Draft ThesisMarch 8, noon
Thesis April 5, noon
IR and Politics Undergraduate Research Conference . April 12, all day

Recitations: these will begin on September 21. They are held on Fridays from 12.30 pm until 1.45 pm at 25 West 4th St., room C6. These are noted on the syllabus. We may add extra sessions at the conclusion of the course, depending on the needs and interests of students.

Deans Undergraduate Research Fund (the “DURF”): You are all encouraged to apply for funding to complete your thesis from the DURF. The deadline is November 2. Information can be found [here](#).

Stata: For data analysis, Stata is recommended. This is available in computer laboratories around NYU. Students may wish to purchase their own copy of Stata so that they can use it on their local computer. If purchased, please get the Intercooled Stata (the student version of Stata is not powerful enough for your thesis). NYU has a list of available software [here](#), and clicking on the button pertaining to purchasing Stata will take you [here](#).

Assigned Readings: The assigned readings for each week are available through the course website on NYU Classes. In earlier weeks, these are mostly book chapters. In later weeks, these are research articles. There may be adjustments as the course progresses, which will be communicated well in advance.

Additional textbooks: Additional textbooks that you may wish to consult are below. We also read selected chapters of the first two, which have been scanned and are available on the course website:

Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research Methods*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Lawrence C. Hamilton. *Statistics with Stata. Updated for Version 12*. Duxbury Press, 12 edition, 2012.

Janet Johnson, H.T. Reynolds, and Jason Mycoff. *Political Science Research Methods*. Sage and CQ Press, 8 edition, 2016.

Policy on Collaboration: You are encouraged to discuss with one another your approach to any of the items you will produce over the course of the semester, but you must ensure that any material submitted to meet the requirements of the course is your own work.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability should speak with the professor as soon as possible (and preferably by the end of the second week of the semester). Failure to do so may result in the instructor’s inability to respond in a timely manner.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: Building Blocks

Sep 5

This is an introduction to the course and its goals. We will also divvy up presentation slots for later in the semester. There are no required readings.

Sep 10

Understanding the scientific study of politics and the role played by theory.

Kellstedt et al, Chapters 1 and 2.

Sep 12:

How to identify a research topic, develop a research question, and review the literature.

Johnson et al, Chapter 3.

Sep 17

How to propose explanations and formulate hypotheses.

Johnson et al, Chapter 4.

Sep 19

What to consider when evaluating causal relationships.

Kellstedt et al, Chapter 3

Sep 21

Recitation: Thesis Basics

Sep 24

How to come up with a viable research design.

Johnson et al, Chapter 6

Sep 26

How to operationalize your variables and measure them.

Kellstedt et al, Chapter 5

Sep 28

Recitation: Introduction to Stata

Oct 1

Example of contemporary research in IR (observational). We will also have a brief presentation by Dean Joel Ward about the DURF.

Michael C. Horowitz and Allan C. Stam. How Prior Military Experience Influences the Future Militarized Behavior of Leaders. *International Organization*, 68(3):527–529, 2014.

Oct 3

“Understanding Social Sciences Data”, lecture by Specialized Research Services and Social Sciences, Bobst Library.

Oct 5

Recitation: Recoding and Generating Variables

Oct 9 (Tuesday)

Example of Contemporary Research in IR (observational).

Matthew A. Baum. The Iraq Coalition of the Willing and (Politically) Able: How Party Systems, the Press and Public Influence on Foreign Policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 0(0):1–17, 2012.

Oct 10

“Understanding the Politics Literature Review”, lecture by Specialized Research Services and Social Sciences, Bobst Library.

Oct 12

Recitation: First Review Session

Oct 15

Example of Contemporary Research in IR (experimental).

Joshua D. Kertzer and Ryan Brutger. Decomposing audience costs: Bringing the audience back into audience cost theory. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1):234–249, 2016.

Oct 17

“Stata Brushup”, lecture by Specialized Research Services and Social Sciences, Bobst Library.

Draft Research Question and Literature Review Due October 19 via NYU Classes

Oct 19

Recitation: Merge, Reshape and Collapse Datasets

Part II: One-on-One Meetings

Class will not meet on October 22, 24, 29, 31, and November 5 and 7. Instead, I will make myself available during this time and during my weekly office hours to meet with you to discuss your project. You are required to sign up to meet with me at least once during this time. You are expected to use these meetings to explain your plans for the thesis and seek my advice.

Oct 26

Recitation: Linear Regression

Nov 2

Recitation: Control Variables and Fixed Effects

Draft Preferred and Competing Hypotheses Due November 2 via NYU Classes

Part III: Presenting Work-In-Progress

In these sessions, you are expected to present your work-in-progress, explaining your research question, preferred hypothesis, research design for testing this, data you are collecting, and any challenges you are encountering. Each session will feature two presentations, which will enable us to collectively devote a substantial amount of time to discussing each project. There will be no recitations on November 9 or 16. Instead, you are expected to meet with Lucia to discuss your progress on the project.

Nov 12

Two student presentations.

Nov 14

Two student presentations.

Draft Research Design & Description of Data Set Due November 16 via NYU Classes

Nov 19

Two student presentations.

Nov 26

Two student presentations.

Nov 28

Two student presentations.

Nov 30

Recitation: Interpreting Results and Exporting Tables

Dec 3

Two student presentations.

Dec 5

Two student presentations.

Dec 10

Two student presentations.

Dec 12

One student presentation and wrap-up.

Prospectus and Data Set Due December 14
