DIPL 3800: Investigating International Relations

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Office Hours: W 11-12, 1-3

Course Objectives

This class is intended to accomplish two goals. First, this is a class for you to develop tools to pose questions and answer them in a social scientific fashion. Second, as this class is an essential prerequisite to DIPL 4101, you will finish this class having developed a template for your senior project.

To accomplish this first goal, we will spend the bulk of class time on understanding both qualitative and quantitative research. The second goal is one of application – you will use insights picked up throughout the class to produce a research design of your own for use in DIPL 4101.

It is worth stressing that this class will be daunting. I will work at a pace faster than other sections, and I will cover more material. Graduate students often find this material a challenge. This is not because the material is impossible – but rather because it involves thinking in unaccustomed ways. The second part of the course also involves a great deal of math, which many of us were taught to avoid.

Course Materials

The textbook that we will use for this course is the following:


Copies of this textbook will be available in the Walsh Library both for checkout and on reserve. An additional set of readings will be available on Blackboard.

In addition, we will be using SPSS, which is standard on your computers. Please be advised that you will need to latest version of SPSS installed on your PCs. This can be done at the PC Support office in the Corrigan Hall basement.

Evaluation

Your grade will be comprised of the following. More information on each of these is available on the last page of the syllabus.

Homework Assignments (6 total – 2@ 5% each; 4 @ 10% each)
Research Design (50% of grade)

Other Course Policies

*Late work:* Late work will be penalized with a deduction of one letter grade per day.
**Academic Integrity:** Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to procedures outlined in the Whitehead School Academic Integrity Policy. Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will receive a failing grade for the course and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent permissible.

University and school policies regarding academic integrity are detailed here: (http://diplomacy.shu.edu/academics/ugrad/academic_integrity.html).

**Participation:** Students are expected to be actively involved in learning in this class. I will rely heavily on in-class discussion and will employ Socratic method from time to time as a means of drawing out discussion.

**Accommodation:** Students with disabilities should contact Disabilities Support Services for special accommodations.

**Note on library issues:** Successful completion of the research design will require you to use considerable library research. Please note the following: 1) Wikipedia is not acceptable as a valid source of information and as such should not be cited; 2) I will not assign Chapter 6 of the text (which deals with writing a literature review) but you will find this helpful. 3) If you have further library questions, you should discuss them with Diplomacy’s library liaison, Darren Sweeper (973-275-2058; sweepeda@shu.edu).

### Schedule of Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>No Class</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week Two</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scientific Method / How to Ask Questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>January 22</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 1, pages 1-3, 11-12, 20-24 and Chapter 2, pages 27-49.</td>
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<td><strong>Week Three</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research Design Fundamentals</strong></td>
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<th>Week Four</th>
<th>Concepts and Variables</th>
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<td>February 5</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 4.</td>
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<th>Week Five</th>
<th>Case Selection</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 5, pages 122-126 and 147-166.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week Six</th>
<th>Building Qualitative Research Designs / Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Intro to SPSS. Bring your computers to class!</td>
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<th>Week Seven</th>
<th>Sampling and Inference</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 11, pages 351-393.</td>
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<td>February 26</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 7</td>
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<th>Week Eight</th>
<th>T-tests and Crosstabs</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 11, pages 393-420.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 12, pages 426-462.</td>
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**SPRING BREAK**
Week Nine  OPEN DATES
March 17/19  All students must meet with me in person to discuss the status of their research designs.

Week Ten  Correlation and Regression
March 24  JR: Chapter 12, pages 463-477.
March 26  JR: Chapter 12, pages 477-498.

Week Eleven  Multiple Regression 1
April 2  JR: Chapter 13, pages 503-526.

Week Twelve  Multiple Regression 2

Week Thirteen  Regression Applications / Logistic Regression
April 16  JR: Chapter 13, pages 526-546

Week Fourteen  Logistic Regression Models
April 21  JR: Chapter 13, pages 526-546

Week Fourteen  Extensions / Catch-up / Wrap-up
April 28  JR: Chapter 14
Particulars on Assignments

Homework Assignments
There will be six homework assignments addressing the following topics:
- Research Design Problem Statement (5%)
- Variable Operationalization (5%)
- T-Tests and Crosstabs (10%)
- Correlation (10%)
- Multiple Regression (10%)
- Logistic Regression (10%)

Homework #1: Problem Statement Assignment:
Due at the start of class on Tuesday February 3rd.
In a minimum of one double spaced typed page with standard margins and fonts (1”, 12 point),
develop a question that you would like to research. You must do three things:
- Make certain that it is clear what your question is
- Address why your question is theoretically important
- Address why your question why is important for policymakers

Homework #2: Variable Operationalization Assignment:
Due at the start of class on Thursday February 19th.
In a minimum of three double spaced typed pages with standard margins and fonts (1”, 12 point),
address the following:
- Briefly (no more than a paragraph) summarize your research question
- Discuss how other scholars have operationalized the dependent variable that forms
  the basis of your study.
- Discuss how you will operationalize the dependent variable in your study.

Research Design Paper:
The primary written assignment in this class is a 15 page minimum (double-spaced with 1”
margins and 12 point fonts) research design. This paper is due electronically at 12 noon EST
on Tuesday May 5th. In this paper you will do the following:
- Develop an international relations research question
- Locate this question in the context of relevant literature (i.e. discuss the importance of
  the question both for theory and policy)
- Outline a strategy for answering this question addressing the following
  o Operationalize the dependent variable (or what’s being caused)
  o Develop a series of alternative explanations for the outcome
  o Operationalize independent variables (or what’s doing the causing)
  o Discuss case selection (what cases are you going to look at and why)
  o Develop a testing procedure (or, how you will test your arguments, and how you
    will know you are right)
- Offer a respectable bibliography comprised of academic research.

You are welcome to pick any topic you wish, so long as it is an international relations topic. If
you wish to work off one of the examples, please discuss this with me. Changes in topics must be
discussed with me. Students are strongly recommended to consult with me throughout this
process.