DIPL 6310: Research Methods for Policy Analysis

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Office Hours: By appointment

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 6311, you will finish this class having developed a template for your master’s research 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 6311.

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. You may 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.

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

In addition, we will be using SPSS, which is an industry standard statistical software package, to complete the last four assignments. Students may use university computers equipped with SPSS either in the information commons area of the library on the second floor or at one of the public computer labs (Jubilee 524 or Nursing 203).

Students may be interested in purchasing SPSS for their home machines. A URL to obtain the software for purchase or rental is here: http://e5.onthehub.com/WebStore/ProductSearchOfferingList.aspx?ws=49c547ba-f56d-dd11-bb6c-00304856b08&vsro=8&srch=spss

There is an open source version of SPSS known as PSPP. It can be downloaded at http://www.gnu.org/software/pspp/.

If you choose to rent, purchase, or download software – I am not responsible for its functionality vis-à-vis our homework assignments.
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 not be accepted.

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.

Participation: Students are expected to be actively involved in learning in this class.

Duplication: Students are required to submit original work for the research design.

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; darren.sweeper@shu.edu).

Schedule of Assignments

Week One
Introduction
January 20

Week Two
NO CLASS – EDWARDS AT CONFERENCE
January 27

Week Three
Scientific Method / How to Ask Questions
February 3
JR: Chapter 1, pages 1-3, 11-12, 20-24 and Chapter 2, pages 27-49.

Week Four
Research Design Fundamentals
February 10
JR: Chapter 3, pages 60-87.


**Week Five**

**Concepts and Variables**

February 17

JR: Chapter 4.


**Week Six**

**Case Selection**

February 24

JR: Chapter 5, pages 122-126 and 147-166.


**Week Seven**

**Building Qualitative Research Designs / Intro to SPSS**

March 3


**SPRING BREAK**

**Week Eight**

**Sampling and Inference**

March 17

JR: Chapter 11, pages 351-393.

JR: Chapter 7

**Week Nine**

**OPEN DATE**

March 24

All students must meet with me in person during the week or during class time to discuss the status of their research designs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Ten</th>
<th>T-tests and Crosstabs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 11, pages 393-420.</td>
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<td>JR: Chapter 12, pages 426-462.</td>
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<td>Week Eleven</td>
<td>Correlation and Regression</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 12, pages 463-498.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Twelve</td>
<td>Multiple Regression 1</td>
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<td>JR: Chapter 13, pages 503-526.</td>
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<td>Week Thirteen</td>
<td>Multiple Regression 2</td>
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<td>Week Fourteen</td>
<td>Regression Applications / Logistic Regression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>JR: Chapter 13, pages 526-546.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week Fifteen</td>
<td>Logistic Regression Models</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>JR: Chapter 13, pages 526-546.</td>
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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 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 February 24th.
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 Monday May 10th. 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.