Research Methods
IR B-6800
Spring 2018
Monday 7:15-9:15
NAC 4/126

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Office Hours
Monday 3:30-5:30
NAC 4/143B
Other Times by Appointment

Description: This course presents an introduction to qualitative research methods and the Masters thesis writing process. It is intended for students who will be writing a Masters thesis in international relations.

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn how to formulate a research question, develop a literature review, and create a research design to answer that question. Additionally, students will learn how to give constructive, critical feedback to other students on their work and receive similar feedback from their peers. Lastly, students will learn how to give professional presentations of their proposed work to an audience.

Course Assignments: There are three primary types of assignments for this course: 1) written; 2) critical feedback; and 3) oral presentations.

1) Written Assignments: The primary writing assignment for the course is to produce a research proposal suitable for submission to a professional academic funding competition. There will be several short assignments to help students develop the necessary skills to produce a typical thesis proposal that will be submitted throughout the term and a final 10-page research proposal to be submitted at the end, incorporating feedback received throughout the course of the semester.
   a. Assignment 1: Develop a Research Question/Puzzle
   b. Assignment 2: Literature Review Assignment
   c. Assignment 3: Research Design
   d. Assignment 4: Final Proposal

2) Critical Feedback: Additionally, students will be required to read and critique work that will be assigned along with each other’s work, as is typically done in a graduate school proposal development workshop.

3) Oral Presentations: Throughout the course of the semester, students will give brief presentations (less than five minutes) of each of the components of their research design. Additionally, at the end of the semester students will give a 15-minute presentation of their final research proposal setting the stage for thesis writing during the second semester of the course.
**Grading and Evaluation:** The course will be graded on a 100-point scale. The breakdown is as follows:

- Assignment 1: 5 points
- Assignment 2: 10 points
- Assignment 3: 15 points
- Final Proposal: 40 points
- Final Presentation: 20 points
- Participation/Critical Feedback: 10 points


**Course Overview**

**Section I: Research Design Overview**

**Week 1 – Course Introduction**

Jan. 29 – Course Introduction


**Assignment 1 Handed Out: Develop a Research Question/Puzzle**

**Week 2 – Overview of a Research Proposal and Project**

Feb. 5 – Elements of a Research Question


**CASE:**


**DUE Assignment 1: Research Question**

**Assignment 2 Handed Out: Literature Review**
Week 3 – Class Cancelled
Feb. 12 - No Class (CUNY Cancellation)

Week 4 – Literature Reviews
Feb. 20 – Elements of a Literature Review
   NOTE: Tuesday Class (CUNY Makeup Class)


CASE:

Read and Be Prepared to Critique Colleagues’ Assignment 1

Week 5 – Critiquing a Research Design, Data and Argument
Feb. 26 – Critiquing a Research Design, Data and Argument

CASE:

Smith, Nicholas Rush. Field Notes and Interview Transcript.

DUE Assignment 2: Literature Review

Assignment 3 Handed Out: Research Design

Week 6 – Elements of a Research Design 1
Mar. 5 – Basic Elements of Qualitative Research: Style and Concepts


**CASE:**

Read and Be Prepared to Critique Colleagues’ Assignment 2

**Week 7 – Elements of a Research Design II**
**Mar. 12 – Comparative Case Designs**


**CASE:**

**Week 8 – Elements of a Research Design III**
**Mar. 19 – Single Case Designs and Process Tracing**


**CASE:**

**Week 9 – Elements of a Research Design IV**

Mar. 26 – Comparative Historical Analysis


**CASE:**


**Week 10 – SPRING BREAK**

Apr. 2 - No Class – Spring Break

**SECTION II: Preparing to Do Research**

**Week 11 – Types of Qualitative Research: Fieldwork**

Apr. 9 – Fieldwork


**CASE:**


**DUE Assignment 3: Research Design**

**Week 12 – Types of Qualitative Research: Archival Research**

Apr. 16 – Archival Research


CASE:

Read and Be Prepared to Critique Colleagues’ Assignment 3

**Week 13 – Why the Evidence You Use Matters to How You See the World**

Apr. 23 – The Consequences of Different Data Sources


CASE:

**Week 14 – Research Ethics and Access Issues**

Apr. 30 – The IRB and Problems of Access
The Belmont Report


CASE:
Week 15 – Final Presentations
May 7 – Final Presentation and Critique Session of Group 1
No Reading

Week 16 – Final Presentations
May 14 – Final Presentation and Critique Session of Group 2
No Reading

Discussion of Outstanding Issues to Begin Researching Thesis

DUE MAY 21: Final Proposals