INTREL 613
Research Methods and Analysis in International Relations
University of Massachusetts Boston
Thu. 5:30-8:15PM, Location: M02-0421
Spring 2018

Contact Information
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Course Description
This course introduces basic concepts and skills necessary for students to carry out research and to interpret the research of others in the field of international relations. It discusses the stages of research: identifying appropriate questions and assessing existing literature; the challenge of framing questions and identifying the best research approaches for those questions; the problems associated with creating and evaluating data, whether quantitative or qualitative; and strategies for drawing defensible conclusions and identifying further areas for research.

Course Requirements
This course is designed primarily for graduate students and will be run as a seminar, with only brief introductory remarks by me at the start of each class. Students are expected to do all the readings and to be prepared to discuss them. Your grade is based on four components: two exams (each worth 25 percent), class participation (worth 20 percent), and an original research proposal (worth 30 percent). The exams cover different sections of the material and are therefore not cumulative. The class participation component includes one class in which you will act as discussion leader, raising questions from the readings and generally making sure that everyone understands the key points from them. You will also make a brief presentation of your final research proposal during our last meeting.
Important deadlines:

- Exam #1: Thu. 3/8
- Exchange proposals with your review partner: Thu. 4/12
- Provide feedback on your partner’s proposal: Thu. 4/19
- Exam #2: Thu. 4/26
- Presentation of research proposal: Thu. 5/3
- Final draft of research proposal: Thu. 5/10

You are responsible for knowing the provisions of the UMB Academic Code of Conduct. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Deans’ Office. See: https://www.umb.edu/editor_upload/images/life_on_campus/Code_of_Conduct_5-14-14.pdf

Required Texts


Note: All other required readings will be distributed via E-mail.

Schedule and Required Readings

1 Introduction

1.1 Course Overview (Thu., Jan. 25)

There are no assigned readings for this meeting.
1.2 Asking Good Questions (Thu., Feb. 1)
Discussion leader(s): Russell
Required reading:
   - Howard, *Thinking Like a Political Scientist*, Chapters 1-3.
Further reading:

1.3 Generating Good Answers (Thu., Feb. 8)
Discussion leader(s): Nate
Required reading:
   - Howard, *Thinking Like a Political Scientist*, Chapters 4-7.

2 Fundamentals of Empirical Research
2.1 Arguments and Analyses (Thu., Feb. 15)
Discussion leader(s): Matt
Required reading:

2.2 Conceptualization and Measurement (Thu., Feb. 22)
Discussion leader(s): None
Required reading:
   - Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Chapters 5-7.
Further reading:

2.3 Causation (Thu., Mar. 1)
Discussion leader(s): Maryanne
Required reading:
   - Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Chapters 8-10.
Further reading:

2.4 Exam 1 and The Craft of Research, Part I (Thu., Mar. 8)

Required reading:
  • Booth et al., The Craft of Research, Chapters 1-11.

Further reading:

3 Techniques

3.1 Case Studies, Part I (Thu., Mar. 22)

Discussion leader(s): George

Required reading:
  • Gerring, Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, Chapters 1-6.

Further reading:

3.2 Case Studies, Part II (Thu., Mar. 29)

Discussion leader(s): Taylor

Required reading:
  • Gerring, Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, Chapters 7-11.
3.3 Surveys and Interviews (Thu., Apr. 5)

Discussion leader(s): Siya

Required reading:
- Mosley (ed.), Interview Research in Political Science, entire (esp. Chapters 1-4).

Further reading:

3.4 Archival Research and Textual Analysis (Thu., Apr. 12)

Discussion leader(s): Leah

Required reading:
- Schreier, Margrit. 2014. “Qualitative Content Analysis.” In The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis.

Deadline to exchange proposals with your review partner

3.5 Large-N Observational Analysis and Experiments (Thu., Apr. 19)

Discussion leader(s): None

Required reading:

Further reading:

Deadline to provide feedback on your partner’s proposal

3.6 Exam 2 and The Craft of Research, Part II (Thu., Apr. 26)
Required reading:
• Booth et al., The Craft of Research, Chapters 12-17.

4 Class Presentations (Thu., May 3)
There are no assigned readings for this meeting.

Further reading:

Final draft of research proposal due via E-mail on Thu., May 10.