



GVPT 879: Topics on International Security; Research Design and Analysis in International Relations

Spring 2023

Wednesdays 2– 4:45 pm

TWS 0201

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2-3 pm

or by appointment (in person or online)

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Course Description

The main focus of this course is to help students develop their Capstone research project. Each session covers a component of the Capstone paper and is designed to help students make progress towards writing their paper. To this end, students will identify a research question based on their theoretical or empirical puzzle. The research question at hand should be theoretically and empirically meaningful and make important policy contributions. They will examine relevant IR literature on the topic to develop new theories and/or extend existing theories to answer this research question. They will then design an empirical plan to quantitatively test their theoretically driven hypotheses. Each assignment in the course corresponds with one or more components of the Capstone research paper. Throughout the semester, students will get feedback from the faculty and peers on their project and complete their Capstone research paper at the end of the semester.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course:

- 1) Students will be able to formulate a novel research question that has important theoretical and policy implications.
- 2) Students will be able to develop a theoretical argument that contributes to the existing literature.
- 3) Students will be able to design an effective research plan to test their theoretical argument.

Course Structure

We will meet in person every Wednesday at 2:00 pm in Tawes Hall (0201). You are expected to read **assigned readings** (if any) **AND** the **capstone components** posted by each week's presenters to participate in the discussion. Each class students will present components of their working paper followed by peer feedback. We will have a short discussion of the corresponding topic in the previous week so that students get a sense of what is to be expected in their presentations. Your participation in the discussion is critical to your success in the class, which will constitute 25% of your grade (see attendance policy).

Required Resources

All reading material will be posted on the course ELMS page (elms.umd.edu).

Assignments

1) Participation and Engagement (25%)

Your grade will be based on your attendance and participation in class discussion. You are expected to be prepared to discuss assigned readings, provide feedback to presenters, and remain engaged during the class. If you are not able to attend the class, you will be required to submit a written make-up assignment for the week. You can use this option twice during the semester (see attendance policy).

Peer review (10%)

Each student presentation will be followed by a peer review and class feedback. For the peer review component, each student will be paired up and prepare a brief review in advance and share with the class. There will be four workshop presentations (and a final presentation) – for research question, literature review, theory development, and research design. Students will provide a peer review for four workshop presentations, each of which will be 2.5% of your total grade. To provide ample time for peer review, presenters will submit their working draft **by Monday 11:59 am**. The peer reviewers will submit their written comments by **Wednesday 2 pm** and summarize their comments during in-class discussion after the presenter (See ELMS for your peer reviewer assignment).

Attendance, punctuality, and engagement (15%)

Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time unless their absence is due to one of the reasons listed under the University excused absence policy. Unexcused absences and lateness will be reflected on your grade. Students who are not the designated peer reviewer should still actively participate and offer insightful feedback to their peers.

2) Capstone Components (50%)

Throughout the semester, you will work on different components of your capstone paper. You will present each component and receive feedback from your peers and faculty. You are expected to incorporate this feedback into your final capstone paper. Each student is assigned to a group

randomly. All group assignments will be posted on ELMS before the first day of class. If you are not able to be in class that week due to an excused absence (religious observation, military obligation, participation in university activities), you will be able to change your assigned presentation day on the first day of class (January 25, 2023). The deadline to submit your working draft for each component is **Monday 11:59 am of the week that you present your material in class.**

- Meeting with MAIR faculty %5 (due before Week 4)
- Research Question %5 (due Week 2 / 3) (1-2 double spaced pages)
- Literature review %10 (due Week 4 / 5 / 6) (3-4 double spaced pages)
- Theory and Hypothesis %10 (due Week 7 / 8 / 10) (5-6 double spaced pages)
- Research Design %10 (due Week 11 / 12 / 13) (5-6 double spaced pages)
- Final Presentations %10 (due Week 14 / 15 / 16)

3) Final Capstone Paper (25%) (around 20 double spaced pages)

Your final draft should include all components of the capstone paper as well as an introduction and a conclusion that discusses policy implications of your proposed project. You will incorporate all the written and verbal feedback you received throughout the semester into your final draft. Your final capstone paper is **due one week after your final presentation.**

Grading Scale

Grades will be based on a straight scale.

98 – 100 = A +	87 – 89 = B +	77 – 79 = C +	67 – 69 = D +
94 – 97 = A	84 – 86 = B	74 – 76 = C	64 – 66 = D
90 – 93 = A -	80 – 83 = B -	70 – 73 = C -	60 – 63 = D -
			59 & below = F

Course Policies

Attendance and absence policy

Attendance in each class session is required. If you are not able to attend the class for reasons that align with university policy for excused absences, please let the instructors know as soon as possible. If you are not able to attend the class for any reason, you will be required to submit a written make-up assignment reviewing assigned readings. You can use this option twice during the semester. Please note that this assignment should be submitted within a week of your absence (unless we agree on an alternative deadline). Any medically necessary absences must be corroborated with documentation which may be submitted within a week of your absence. If you need more than two weeks due to severe illness/emergency, please contact the instructors for alternative arrangements.

Grading

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. We are happy to discuss any of your grades with you and correct any mistakes if identified. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade. Both instructors will review your request and schedule a time to discuss it.

Late Assignments and Extensions

To request an extension for an assignment you should contact both instructors at least 24 hours prior to the due date of the assignment (except in cases of emergency). Late assignments will be penalized 10 percent per day unless you contact us beforehand. Please plan to have your papers submitted before the scheduled deadline to avoid running into technical issues resulting in late submission.

Communication with Instructors

Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with the instructors, please use the emails provided above. DO NOT email questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (e.g., When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

ELMS: IMPORTANT announcements will be sent via ELMS. Make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency.

Campus – Wide Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please see the University's website for graduate course-related policies at:

<https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies>

Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity

The Government and Politics department deeply values the voices and perspectives of all people. We are committed to having a diverse department that recognizes and appreciates the differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, abilities, class, nationality, and

other factors. Our department prioritizes diversity and seeks to foster a diverse community reflected in its faculty, staff, and students.

In this class, students are invited to share their thoughts and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one's statement with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statutes, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

Reporting Racism and Other Forms of Hate and Bias

If you experience racism or other forms of bias in this class or any GVPT course, I encourage you to do at least one of the following:

- Please report the experience to me.
- Report the experience to David Cunningham, the GVPT Director of Undergraduate Studies at dacunnin@umd.edu
- Report the experience to the GVPT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, led by Professor Antoine Banks at abanks12@umd.edu

Please also report all incidents of hate and bias to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at <https://diversity.umd.edu/bias/>.

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for your fellow Terps.

Readings and Course Schedule

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.

Week 1 – Course introductions and expectations (January 25, 2023)

In the first half of the class, we will go over the syllabus. In the second half, we will discuss what is a good research question in preparation for next week's assignment.

Required readings:

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. pages 1 - 33

Brians, Craig Leonard, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard C. Rich. 2010. *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. 8th edition. Boston: Pearson Higher Education. pages 1 - 14

Week 2 – Research question (February 1, 2023)

Students will submit a short write up **due on Monday by 11:59 am** of the week of their presentation. In the write up, you will identify a specific question that can be asked in 1 to 2 sentences. The research question should specify a dependent variable (i.e., the outcome or what you want to explain) and demonstrate that there is variation in the DV. Research questions should be motivated by a gap that you have identified from the existing literature and you need to explain why this question is compelling (i.e. why are you asking this). Your presentation should be no more than 5 minutes. Each presentation will be followed by 5-7 minute discussion starting with the peer reviewer comments and followed by open Q&A.

Presenters: Group 1 (See ELMS for your group assignment)

Week 3 – Research question (February 8, 2023)

Presenters: Group 2 (See ELMS for your group assignment)

After the presentations, we will discuss how to write a successful literature review in preparation for next week's assignment.

Required readings:

Miller, Steven V. 2014. "How to Do a Literature Review." *Steven V. Miller* (blog). November 12, 2014. <http://svmiller.com/blog/2014/11/how-to-do-a-literature-review/>.

Brians, Craig Leonard, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard C. Rich. 2010. *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. 8th edition. Boston: Pearson Higher Education. pages 35 - 52

Week 4 – Literature review (February 15, 2023)

Students will submit a draft of their literature review **due on Monday (by 11:59 am)** of the week of their presentation. An effective literature review should outline not only existing explanations to your research question, but it should essentially capture the scholarly debate that links back to foundational works. Your presentation should be no more than 7 minutes. Each presentation will be followed by 7-8 minute discussion starting with the peer reviewer comments and followed by open Q&A.

Presenters: Group 1 (See ELMS for your group assignment)

Week 5 – Literature review (February 22, 2023)

Presenters: Group 2 (See ELMS for your group assignment)

Week 6 – Literature review (March 1, 2023)

Presenters: Group 3 (See ELMS for your group assignment)

After the presentations, we will discuss components of a theoretical argument and how to develop your own theory in preparation for next week's assignment.

Required readings:

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. pages 75 - 114

Brians, Craig Leonard, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard C. Rich. 2010. *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. 8th edition. Boston: Pearson Higher Education. pages 15 - 34

Week 7 – Theory development and hypothesis (March 8, 2023)

These 3 weeks will be used to refine your question and help develop a plausible theory for your capstone. At this stage, not all students will have made the same progress toward their capstone. Some of you may have sketches of their intuition about how to answer the research question while others may have developed a more structured theoretical argument. Regardless, all students will submit a draft, whatever stage they are in, with major components of the theoretical argument, including what your assumptions are, who the agents are, and what are the theoretical

mechanisms at work. Along with the theory, you will come up with a testable hypothesis that is derived from your theory. Remember that a hypothesis is not a summarization of your argument but a testable and/or observable implication derived from your argument. our presentation should be no more than 7 minutes. Each presentation will be followed by 7-8 minute discussion starting with the peer reviewer comments and followed by open Q&A.

Presenters: Group 1

Week 8 – Theory development and hypothesis (March 15, 2023)

Presenters: Group 2

Week 9 – Spring Break (March 22, 2023)

Week 10– Theory development (March 29, 2023)

Presenters: Group 3

After the presentations, we will discuss components of a theoretical argument, and how to develop your own theory in preparation for next week's assignment.

Required readings:

Brians, Craig Leonard, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard C. Rich. 2010. *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. 8th edition. Boston: Pearson Higher Education. pages 67 - 96

Week 11 – Research design (April 5, 2023)

The last part of the course will be devoted to developing an empirical plan to test your theory. The plan should include the identification of the key variables, data sources and/or plans for data coding or case studies, a plan for analysis (i.e. what method is most appropriate and why), and likely challenges for the empirical part of the project. our presentation should be no more than 7 minutes. Each presentation will be followed by 7-8 minute discussion starting with the peer reviewer comments and followed by open Q&A.

Presenters: Group 1

Week 12 – Research design (April 12, 2023)

Presenters: Group 2

Week 13 – Research design (April 19, 2023)

Presenters: Group 3

Week 14 – Final presentations (April 26, 2023)

The final presentation should include all components of the capstone paper developed and revised throughout the semester based on the feedback written and verbal feedback from peers and instructors. Final presentation should also include a discussion of policy implications of the proposed research plan. our presentation should be no more than 7 minutes. Each presentation will be followed by 7-8 minute class discussion and open Q&A (there will be no peer review for the final presentations).

The final version of your capstone paper is **due one week after** your presentation.

Presenters: Group 1

Week 15 – Final presentations (May 3, 2023)

Presenters: Group 2

Week 16 – Final presentations (May 10, 2023)

Presenters: Group 3