Research Seminar in International
And Comparative Politics

GVPT 808A Spring 2015

Instructor: Professor Huth                                            Seminar Meetings: Monday 12:30-3:15
Office: Chincoteague 2103                                            Seminar Location: Tydings 1111
Email: phuth@umd.edu                                                 Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00                                    & by appointment

Seminar Description
This is a seminar in which students will develop, present, and complete a research paper
on a topic broadly related to the study of international or comparative politics. The
research topic and paper can serve the student’s academic interests in a variety of
different ways. For example, the paper may represent (a) an early draft of a chapter from
the dissertation, (b) a first cut at taking several chapters from the dissertation and
transforming them into a single article-length paper to be submitted for publication, (c) a
draft of what will be become a conference paper unrelated to the dissertation with plans
to eventually submit for publication, and (d) an effort to develop and then produce a full
draft of a paper that meets the general Departmental requirements of completing a
research paper.

For some students this seminar is a logical follow-up to the GVPT 808b seminar in which
a series of central topics and literatures in the study of international and domestic conflict
behavior were discussed. However, 808b is not a pre-requisite for this seminar.

Given the varied reasons a student may have for writing a research paper at this time, the
general goals of the seminar are as follows: (a) to enable students to gain direct
experience in the design and execution of a research project that leads to a completed
paper that has the potential to be published in academic outlets such as peer-reviewed
journals, (b) to develop the student’s skills and abilities in presenting and defending their
research in a public setting before a group of academic peers, (c) assisting students in
advancing their own research program through the development and completion of the
research paper by the end of the semester, and (d) developing the students skills and
abilities in offering constructive and professional advice and feedback on the research
efforts of others.
Seminar Requirements
1. Construct a list of readings and lead a seminar discussion in Section I of the seminar

2. Write up a research design paper (about 10 double-spaced pages) in Section II of the seminar (10% of overall grade)

3. Serve as a discussant in Section II of the seminar (10% of overall grade)

4. Serve as a discussant in Section III of the seminar (10% of overall grade)

5. Complete a draft of a research paper by the time of the presentation in Section III of the seminar (25% of overall grade)

6. Turn in a final draft of the paper on May 15 (25% of overall grade)

7. Actively participate in seminar discussions throughout the semester (20% of overall grade)

Seminar Reading Materials
There are no required books that have been ordered, nor have articles and book chapters been placed on reserve at the library. Instead, students in consultation with Professor Huth will develop a reading list of key works to discuss in a seminar meeting during Section I of the course (see below). Students will be responsible for organizing the readings and making sure that the materials are made available to all seminar participants. If the readings are not available electronically, then copies will need to be made and placed in the GVPT main office well in advance of the upcoming seminar meeting.
Seminar Schedule

January 26: No meeting as Professor Huth will be out due to surgery

Section I: Background Readings and Discussion

Overview: For each meeting of the seminar we will focus on different topics based on the research interests and plans of the students. The seminar discussions will center on helping students address what they view as key questions and issues related to their research projects. As noted above, students will put together a reading list of key items that are tailored to meet his/her interests and objectives.

February 2: Seminar meeting to discuss what makes for an effective journal article. Students will read several articles that have received awards as “best articles of the year” to serve as background for the discussion.


February 9: Seminar meeting to discuss scholarly literatures related to student research topic

February 16: Seminar meeting to discuss scholarly literatures related to student research topic

February 23: Seminar meeting to discuss scholarly literatures related to student research topic

March 2: Seminar meeting to discuss scholarly literatures related to student research topic

March 9: No seminar meeting so that students can research and write in preparation for presentation following Spring Break

March 16: No seminar meeting due to Spring Break

Section II: Research Designs and Collective Feedback

Overview: For each meeting of the seminar one or more student research design papers will be discussed in some detail. The student will begin with a 15 minute presentation of their research design which will be followed by the assigned discussant offering comments for 10-15 minutes. We will then open up the discussion to a general Q&A period for the remainder of the seminar. The research design papers are due the Friday before the seminar in which the student’s research design is scheduled to be discussed.

March 23: Student presents research design and seminar participants provide constructive comments

March 30: Student presents research design and seminar participants provide constructive comments

April 6: Student presents research design and seminar participants provide constructive comments

April 13: Student presents research design and seminar participants provide constructive comments
Section III: Writing the Paper and Further Collective Feedback

Overview: For each meeting of the seminar one or more of the student papers will be presented and discussed. The student will begin with a presentation of his/her paper that will run for about 20 minutes to be followed by comments from the assigned discussant for another 10-15 minutes. After that we will open up the seminar to a general Q&A period. The drafts of the paper are due on the Friday before the seminar meeting in which the student is scheduled to present his/her paper.

April 20: Research and writing week, no seminar meeting

April 27: Presentation of papers and feedback from seminar participants

May 4: Presentation of papers and feedback from seminar participants

May 11: Presentation of papers and feedback from seminar participants

FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER DUE FRIDAY, MAY 15