

INST 381: Research Methods for International Studies
MWF 10-10:50 – Croft 107

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

This is a research methods course designed especially for Croft students. It teaches the tools necessary both to understand social scientific research and to conduct your own research, in anticipation of the Croft senior thesis. Throughout the semester, we will develop a working understanding of the fundamentals of social scientific thinking and how to apply them to qualitative and quantitative research in anthropology, sociology, political science, history, and economics.

This is also a “workshop seminar” course. Because the goal of INST 381 is to prepare students to write a Croft thesis, we will work towards this goal in two ways:

- Give significant attention to the necessary elements of a successful senior thesis. This means learning how to: write a literature review, develop a research question, select cases, collect data, and use that data to test a hypothesis or advance an argument. To accomplish this goal, students will work throughout the semester to produce a preliminary research proposal.
- Develop a working familiarity with a range of research methods and techniques from different social science disciplines: semi-structured interviews, mass surveys, participant observation, content analysis, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics. These are all methods you could potentially use in your Croft senior thesis.

COURSE TEXTS

The following books are *required* for this course:

Baglione, Lisa A. 2007. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage.

Hoover, Kenneth and Todd Donovan. 2011. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*, 10th ed. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage.

Additional *required* readings are posted online and listed after the course schedule.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Below are a summary of the course requirements and their percentage of the final grade:

Participation	10%
Midterm exam	15%
Assignments (x10)	50%
Research presentation	10%
Research proposal	15%

Participation

Because this is a workshop seminar, active, engaging, meaningful class participation is essential. I expect you to complete readings and assignments *before* the class for which they are assigned and to be ready to discuss them. Participation grades will be based on my subjective evaluation of your overall performance in class.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam is meant to assess your knowledge of the basic vocabulary and concepts of “social scientific thinking” discussed in the first part of the course (we will apply those concepts in various ways during the rest of the semester). The exam will combine multiple choice, short answer, and short essay. I will hand out a study guide a week in advance of the exam.

Writing Assignments

Throughout the semester you will write ten brief research reports, each based on a different research method or technique:

1. Article summary and annotation exercise
2. Annotated bibliography
3. Draft thesis statement
4. Data collection statement
5. Interview report
6. Ethnographic field report
7. Survey questionnaire & IRB protocol
8. Foreign media analysis report
9. Poster presentation
10. Inferential statistics report

Your grade for all written assignments will be the average of the nine assignments with the highest grade (I will drop the lowest grade, even if it is a zero). I will provide specific guidelines for each report.

Research Proposal & Presentation

Throughout the semester, you will work on a research project of your choice. This has two components:

- A **research proposal** (of 7-8 pages in length) that introduces a research question and rationale, organizes scholarly literature on that topic, justifies your case selection, and outlines a research design to answer that research question. Early in the semester you will select a research topic of your choice; you will develop that topic throughout the semester.
- A **multimedia in-class presentation** (of 7-10 minutes) based on your written research proposal and modeled on the format used in the Croft thesis proposal presentations. The presentations will be given during the scheduled final exam time.

You will work on this project throughout the semester. Several writing assignments are meant to keep you on track throughout the semester. You are free to use any of the work you do throughout the semester—or in other classes—to advance your research project.

If you are a sophomore or junior, I strongly encourage you to use the proposal and presentation as a first step towards your Croft thesis.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES & CLASS RULES

Please be sure you follow these basic class rules and policies throughout the semester:

Classroom Behavior

I do not allow the use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices in class without my permission. I also do not allow the reading of newspapers, sleeping, or working on materials for other courses. Such behavior disrespects me and other students. If you cannot actively participate, do not attend class.

Missing Assignments

I do not accept late assignments. If you know in advance that you will miss an assignment deadline, you may submit the assignment early—and only then appeal for an extension. This means that if you prepare for contingencies (by not starting to work on assignments the night before they are due), you should be safe. Even if your work is not complete, submitting what you have accomplished prior to the emergency is better than earning a zero.

Exceptions to this rule will only be given under extreme circumstances, and require written authorization by Dr. Gispén, Director of the Croft Institute for International Studies.

Communication

Email is the most common way for students and faculty to communicate outside of class. I try to answer messages promptly, but do not expect emails sent *after 6pm* to be answered until *after 8 am* the following day. Additionally, remember to keep messages professional and respectful (e.g. use salutations, such as “Professor Centellas” or “Dr. Centellas”). Also, check your university email account regularly; I will use that address when sending important messages related to the course.

Student Disability Services

If you have a *documented* disability as described by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 933-112 Section 504) or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and would like to request academic and/or physical accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services at 234 Martindale Center (662-915-7128). Course requirements will not be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided as appropriate. Please consult <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/sds/> for more information on student disability services.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

As a student at the University, all work submitted under your name, for your credit, is assumed to be your original work. While teachers hope and expect for you to incorporate the thinking of others in your work, you *must* credit others' work when you use it. In your written assignments, there are only three methods for properly importing the works of others: quotations, paraphrase, and summary. In this course, we will use the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) conventions.

The penalty for plagiarism in this class is failure of the assignment. Additional penalties are also possible.

Upon determining plagiarism, the instructor will notify the student and the Director of the Croft Institute in writing. Students may appeal this finding and/or penalty by notifying the Academic Discipline Committee within 14 days of the instructor's decision.

The applicable full University policy is ACA.AR.600.001 and should be consulted by any student concerned with plagiarism. Broadly speaking, plagiarism is completely avoidable. However, if you are ever unsure if you are committing plagiarism, consult your instructor

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic & Reading	Class Activity	Assignment
1	1/24	Introduction	Hand out syllabus and discuss semester expectations	
	1/26	Hoover/Donovan, Chapter 1	<u>Lecture</u> : What it means to think ‘scientifically’?	
	1/28	Hoover/Donovan, Chapter 2	<u>Lecture</u> : Vocabulary of science	
2	1/31	Baglione, Chapters 1-2	<u>Lecture</u> : What a thesis is/is not	Bring research topic ideas
	2/02	Hoover/Donovan, Chapter 3	<u>Lecture</u> : Looking beyond ‘facts’	
	2/04		<u>Lecture</u> : The Rule of 5: Basic elements of a research paper	Article summary + annotation exercise
3	2/07	Baglione, Chapter 3	<u>Exercise</u> : Identifying different schools of thought	Bring intro-level textbook from another class
	2/09		<u>Workshop</u> : Find journal articles	Meet in library computer lab
	2/11	<i>No Class—I will be away at a conference</i>		Annotated bibliography
4	2/14	Baglione, Chapter 4	<u>Lecture</u> : Developing a model or thesis using variables	
	2/16		<u>Exercise</u> : Operationalize variables (in small groups)	
	2/18			Draft thesis statement
5	2/21	Baglione, Chapter 5	<u>Lecture</u> : Comparative method	
	2/23	Baglione, Chapter 6	<u>Workshop</u> : Find data sources	
	2/25			Data collection statement
6	2/28	Hoover/Donovan, Chapter 5	<u>Exercise</u> : Rescaling variables	
	3/02	Baglione, Chapter 7	<u>Discussion</u> : Quantitative, qualitative, or hybrid design	
	3/04		Midterm Exam	Bring blue book
7	3/07	Readings on semi-structured & elite interviews (see list)	<u>Workshop</u> : Semi-structured interviews	
	3/09		<u>Discussion</u> : Uses (and abuses) of semi-structured interviews	
	3/11		<u>Lecture</u> : IRB (Diane Lindley)	Interview report
8	3/21	Emerson et al, “Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research”	<u>Workshop</u> : Ethnographic participant observation	Meet on Croft porch (facing The Grove)
	3/23	Readings on fieldwork (see list)	<u>Discussion</u> : Being a stranger in a strange place	
	3/25		<u>Guest Lecture</u> : Doing research abroad (former students)	Ethnographic field report

9	3/28	Readings on survey research (see list)	<u>Lecture</u> : Transforming variables into survey questions	
	3/30	<i>No Class—I will be away at a conference</i>		
	4/01	<i>No Class—I will be away at a conference</i>		
				Survey questionnaire & IRB protocol (drop off at office)
10	4/04	Ear et al, “Use of Newspaper Data in the Study of Collective Action”	<u>Workshop</u> : Content analysis of newspaper front pages	
	4/06	Readings on content analysis (see list)	<u>Discussion</u> : Challenges using and collecting newspaper data	
	4/08			Foreign media analysis report
11	4/11	Examples of data presentation & visual design (in-class)	<u>Lecture</u> : Importance of visual design	
	4/13		<u>Workshop</u> : Design a poster using PowerPoint	Meet in Weir Hall computer lab
	4/15		<u>Workshop</u> : Design tables, charts, and figures using Word	Meet in Weir Hall computer lab
12	4/18	Baglione, Chapter 5	<u>Workshop</u> : Develop a title and outline for the project	Poster presentation
	4/20	Baglione, Chapter 6	<u>Workshop</u> : Develop a research design	
	4/22	<i>No Class—Good Friday Holiday</i>		
13	4/25	Hoover/Donovan, Chapter 5 Baglione, Chapter 7	<u>Workshop</u> : Chi-square test	Meet in Weir Hall computer lab
	4/27		<u>Workshop</u> : Linear regression	Meet in Weir Hall computer lab
	4/29			Inferential statistics report
14	5/02	Baglione, Chapter 8 Hoover/Donovan, Chapter 6		
	5/04	Wolman, “Truth About Autism” Zimbardo, “Stanford Prison Experiment”	<u>Discussion</u> : Dilemmas of subjectivity & ethics in social science research	
	5/06	Baglione, Chapter 9	<u>Workshop</u> : Edit and revising for presentations	
15	5/13	Finals Week	Final Research Presentations	Meet in Croft 107 – 8:00-11:00

ADDITIONAL READINGS***Semi-Structured & Elite Interviews***

- Aberbach, Joel D. and Bert A. Rockman. 2002. "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35 (December): 673-676.
- Berry, Jeffrey M. 2002. "Validity and Reliability in Elite Interviewing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35 (December): 679-682.
- Leech, Beth L. 2002. "Asking Questions: Techniques for Semistructured Interviews." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35 (December): 665-668.
- Werning Riversa, Sharon, Polina M. Kozyreva, and Eduard G. Sarovskii. 2002. "Interviewing Political Elites: Lessons from Russia." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35 (December): 683-688.

Ethnography & Fieldwork

- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research." In *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 1-16. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Aldrich, Daniel P. 2009. "The 800-Pound *Gaijin* in the Room: Strategies and Tactics for Conducting Fieldwork in Japan and Abroad." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37 (April): 299-303.
- Bayard de Volo, Lorraine and Edward Schatz. 2004. "From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37 (April): 267-271.
- Hertel, Shareen, Matthew M. Singer, and Donna Lee Van Cott. 2009. "Field Research in Developing Countries: Hitting the Road Running." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37 (April): 305-309.
- Townsend-Bell, Erica. 2009. "Being True and Being You: Race, Gender, Class, and the Fieldwork Experience." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37 (April): 311-314.

Survey Research

- Orr, Shannon K. 2005. "New Technology and Research: An Analysis of Internet Survey Methodology in Political Science." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 38 (April): 263-267.
- Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 65-88.

Content Analysis

- Earl, Jennifer, Andrew Martin, John D. McCarthy, and Sarah A. Soule. 2004. "The Use of Newspaper Data in the Study of Collective Action." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 65-80.
- Johnson, Janet B. and H. T. Reynolds. 2008. "Document Analysis: Using the Written Record." *Political Science Research Methods*, 6th ed, 266-296. Washington: CQ Press.
- Eksterowicz, Anthony J. and Robert P. Watson. 2000. "Treatment of First Ladies in American Government and Presidency Textbooks: Overlooked, Yet Influential Voices." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 33 (September): 589-595.
- Eksterowicz, Anthony J. and Paul C. Cline. 1991. "Ratification of the Constitution: The Great Debate as Portrayed in American Government Textbooks." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 24 (June): 211-215.

Subjectivity & Ethics

- Wolman, David. 2008. "The Truth About Autism: Scientists Reconsider What They Think They Know." *Wired* 16.03 (March): http://www.wired.com/medtech/health/magazine/16-03/ff_autism
- Zimbardo, Philip G. 2009. The Stanford Prison Experiment. <http://www.prisonexp.org>