

**MOSCOW STATE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF RUSSIA**

School of Government and International Affairs

B.A. in Government and International Affairs Program

«Approved»

Deputy Dean, School of Government and International Affairs

_____ **Anastasia Solomentseva**

«__» _____ 2019

Research Designs, Methods and Contexts

Course Syllabus

This syllabus is designed in accordance with the MGIMO Educational Standard for the Bachelor Program in International Affairs (program track “Government and International Affairs”).

Instructors _____ Prof. Dr. Christopher Korten, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mikhail Troitskiy

Director, MGIMO Library _____ Marina Reshetnikova

This syllabus is approved by the MGIMO School of Government and International Affairs on “ ” _____ 2019

Deputy Director _____ Anastasia Solomentseva

Syllabus developed by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mikhail Troitskiy, 2019

© Mikhail Troitskiy, Christopher Korten, 2019

© MGIMO University, 2019

The undergraduate workshop on “Research Designs, Methods, and Contexts” provides advanced training in research and writing to SGIA 4th-year students during the final stages of preparation of their Bachelor theses. Each workshop session is divided into two parts. In the first part, students present their Bachelor theses design and findings to date as well as research methods they plan on employing. Each student is required to make two presentations: **one laying out the core argument** and logic of their thesis project and **the other— the policy implications of the thesis’ key findings**. These 15-minute presentations will be discussed by fellow students and the course instructor with the aim of providing feedback and advice to the presenter on both the substance and optimal methods of research. Two student presentations will be delivered in each session—ideally, one on the argument and the other—on the policy implications of the thesis in the making. The policy presentation must be complemented with a handout—a 500-word “policy memo” outlining the research puzzle and question, major policy-relevant conclusions, and the meaning / policy implications of those conclusions.

In the second part of each session, students and the instructor discuss required readings on research goals, designs, and methods. It is important that the students read the assigned literature before each class and consider how its ideas relate to their thesis research projects.

The course will help students to:

- distinguish between “research” and “non-research” writing;
- understand the role of research questions, concepts, and theories in social science;
- learn core methods of supporting the argument;
- apply methods by using specific research and writing techniques.

Assessment will be carried out according to the following criteria:

Class attendance and participation – 30 percent
Thesis argument presentation – 25 percent
Thesis methods presentation – 25 percent
Final test on research methodology – 20 percent

Class attendance is mandatory and essential for this discussion seminar with a limited amount of reading for each class. Critical thinking and active learning during the seminar sessions are key to achieving the goals of the course and writing and defending a successful Bachelor thesis. Failure to show up for one class will deduct 2.5 points from the overall grade (100 points maximum).

We shall be using three main textbooks, all available in the course Dropbox folder:

Core Readings

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, (SAGE, 2016)

Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997)

Additional Readings

John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Spring 2019 Semester schedule (for the group led by M. Troitskiy)

	Date / Time	Topic	Required Readings
1.	March 12, 9:00	What is and what is <i>not</i> research? Criteria of quality research. The criterion of policy relevance.	
2.	March 12, 10:35	The interplay of education and policymaking: The role of theories and concepts	Stephen Walt, "America's IR Schools are Broken," <i>Foreign Policy</i> , February 20, 2018, http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/20/americans-ir-schools-are-broken-international-relations-foreign-policy/
3.	April 2, 9:00	What is theory? What makes a good or bad theory?	Van Evera, pp. 7-21
4.	April 2, 10:35	Making and testing theories	Van Evera, pp. 21-43
5.	April 9, 9:00	Myths about theory validation	Van Evera, pp. 43-48
6.	April 9, 10:35	Formulating a research question: Part I	Baglione, pp. 15-40
7.	April 16, 9:00	Formulating a research question: Part II	Baglione, pp. 15-40
8.	April 16, 10:35	Method example: Counterfactual analysis	<i>Marten K.</i> Reconsidering NATO expansion: a counterfactual analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s // <i>European Journal of International Security</i> . January 2018.
9.	April 23, 9:00	Descriptive concepts	Gerring, pp. 107-131
10.	April 23, 10:35	Causal arguments	Gerring, pp. 197-217
11.	April 30, 9:00	Case studies I: Creating and testing theories	Van Evera, pp. 49-88
12.	April 30, 10:35	Case studies II: Selecting cases	Van Evera, pp. 49-88
13.	May 7, 9:00	Distilling the argument	Baglione, pp. 93-108
14.	May 7, 10:35	Revising and editing	Baglione, pp. 109-119
15.	May 14, 9:00	Bringing the paper together: Part I	Van Evera, pp. 123-128
16.	May 14, 10:35	Bringing the paper together: Part II	Baglione, pp. 175-190

Course literature

Core

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, (SAGE, 2016)

Ethridge M. *The Political Research Experience: Readings And Analysis : Readings And Analysis*. London: Routledge; 2015. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Klass G. *Just Plain Data Analysis : Finding, Presenting, And Interpreting Social Science Data*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers; 2012. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

Kadry S, Al-Taie M. *Social Network Analysis : An Introduction With An Extensive Implementation To A Large-Scale Online Network Using Pajek*. Oak Park, IL: Bentham Science Publishers; 2014. Available from: eBook Academic Collection

Additional

Galaskiewicz J, Wasserman S. *Advances In Social Network Analysis : Research In The Social And Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, Inc; 1994. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

Johnson, Gail. *Research Methods for Public Administrators*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002. *eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost

Martel A. *A Student's Guide For Writing In Political Science*. [Ottawa]: MQUP; 1997. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

Morton R. *Methods And Models : A Guide To The Empirical Analysis Of Formal Models In Political Science*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press; 1999. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

Rog D., Bickman L. *The SAGE Handbook Of Applied Social Research Methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc; 2009. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

Sample student presentations schedule

Session number	Date / Time	Presenters	
		Argument	Policy implications
1.	March 12, 9:00	Smith	Jones
2.	March 12, 10:35	Smirnov	Wu
3.	April 2, 9:00	...	...
4.	April 2, 10:35	...	...
5.	April 9, 9:00	...	...
6.	April 9, 10:35	...	...
7.	April 16, 9:00	...	...
8.	April 16, 10:35	...	...
9.	April 23, 9:00	...	...
10.	April 23, 10:35	...	...
11.	April 30, 9:00	...	...
12.	April 30, 10:35	...	...
13.	May 7, 9:00	...	...
14.	May 7, 10:35	...	...
15.	May 14, 9:00	...	...
16.	May 14, 10:35	...	...