

## GOVT 491: Honors Seminar Fall 2008

### Basic Course Information

**Time & Place:** Thursday 1:30 – 4:15 p.m., Robinson Hall A 243  
**Instructor:** Darrene Hackler  
**Office Location:** Department of Public & International Affairs, Robinson Hall A233  
**Telephone:** 703-993-1418  
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**E-mail:** [dhackler@gmu.edu](mailto:dhackler@gmu.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday 3:00 – 4:00 p.m., Thursday 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., or by appt.

### Required Reading:

*Note published editions.*

Baglione, Lisa. 2007. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN-10: 0495092622

Hoover, Kenneth, and Todd Donovan. 2008. *Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN: 0495015857

Electronic Reserves, Johnson Center library. E-Reserves are denoted on the syllabus's reading schedule. For Electronic reserves, go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/ers/OSCRgen.cgi>, select Fall 2008, select course GOVT 491-001 or select instructor Hackler, Darrene. The password is: **honors** (Please note that many of these are available electronically through our library's E-Journal selection. Go to <http://library.gmu.edu/phpzone/ej.php> and enter journal title to determine in which database the journal can be found.)

### Course Description and Objectives

This is the first of a two-semester sequence for students in the Department of Public and International Affairs Honors Program. The first semester is a seminar led by me, with the help of several faculty members, and designed to prepare you to do independent research. During the first half of the course, we will build your abilities to conduct an independent research project. We will explore the empirical inquiry process, using qualitative and conceptual frameworks to help you approach your research from the beginning to the end. We will focus on building and applying a few fundamental research and conceptual skills that students often lack when they begin their research, such as learning how to organize your time, materials and ideas. We will also examine different types of research methods from qualitative to quantitative through the lens of other PIA faculty members as they present their research process. During this time, students will begin their thesis projects—grounding your research in theory, developing a thesis and research questions, and finding a faculty mentor.

## Objectives

At the end of the semester,

1. The student will demonstrate significant conceptual, methodological skills, and analytic research skills through the successful completion of a review of the literature.
2. The student will understand how conceptual foundations form the basis for all sound social science research.
3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the connection between the research question, a theoretical framework and the research methodology through the oral presentation of a research prospectus.
4. The student will be better prepared to complete their research project.
5. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Author-Date referencing system found in Chicago Manual of Style 15<sup>th</sup> edition. See <http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php>. The proposal and literature review use this system of referencing.

During the second semester, each student will carry out research on their chosen subject under the guidance of a faculty member and complete a thesis of 30-50 pages. You will be expected to present your findings to the seminar participants and other faculty members and students at a research colloquium in the spring. Please note that successful completion of the fall seminar, the spring research project, and presentation of your thesis findings are all required in order to graduate with departmental honors.

GOVT 491 fulfills the requirement for the Senior Synthesis course. In general, the “senior synthesis” seminar offers students an opportunity through reading, writing and discussion to reflect on the connections between the liberal arts and sciences and the political world. Students will think broadly about a particular topic, building upon the knowledge and skills that they have gained through both their study of government and international politics or public administration and also their studies in general education. Each seminar requires students to use logical skills and information technology in their research papers and oral presentations.

I encourage you to also apply for an **undergraduate apprenticeship for Spring 2009**. The official blog is <http://gmuresearch.blogspot.com/>, and their old website is <http://cos.gmu.edu/current/undergraduate/apprentice>. Applications for this will be due approximately mid-November. I will be handing out materials related to this, but in order to take advantage of this, you will need to have completed applications from both you and your advisor.

## Course Format

This advanced seminar will be conducted like a standard graduate seminar. Its method of instruction will combine introductory lectures with in-depth discussion of the assigned readings. This is an honors seminar. Seminars are meant to be experiences in shared learning through careful preparation and the exchange of ideas in the classroom. At a minimum, you are expected to have read all the assigned readings and be able to participate actively and intelligently in class discussion. Additional preparation (readings, discussion with other faculty members or knowledgeable persons, etc.) and the ability to positively contribute ideas and insights from that preparation will be rewarded in your grade. During class meetings, I will ask individuals to summarize the major points and ideas presented in the readings.

## Course Rules

So as to avoid any discriminatory practices and in the interest of fairness, the following rules will prevail without exception:

1. Classroom Environment: In order to provide the best learning environment and courtesy to all in the classroom, *please* 1) Turn off your cell phones and any other non-note-taking devices when you enter the classroom; and 2) Arrive early and do not leave the classroom before the class is finished (i.e. no bathroom breaks or leaving to purchase drinks or food; please plan for these before you enter the classroom). Tardiness is disruptive, and it will count as negative participation and detract from your grade. Illness or prior permission from the instructor will be the exceptions.
2. This is an advanced senior seminar, thus attendance is a necessary pre-requisite for class participation. Because we only meet once a week, please make your best effort not to miss any class sessions. Repeated absences will detract from your grade.
3. This course will include PIA faculty presentations to provide valuable insight and prospective on the research process. Attendance is MANDATORY.
4. While attendance is expected, if you develop a serious illness or work or family problem that prevents your attendance, please let me know immediately, so we can figure out how to proceed.
5. The course requires a lot of reading—assigned and for your own research—and some of you will be learning is how to digest large amounts of material economically. I expect that you read the articles and chapters assigned before you come to class. Each class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. You are expected to participate in class discussion. To assist with this, you should take reading notes or outline the readings.
6. All assignments are due in class the day that they are due. No late assignments will be accepted. If you are unable to attend class when an assignment is due, please make prior arrangements to turn it in early directly to me or in my mailbox in the PIA office (Robinson A201) with a time and date stamp from someone working in the office. Remember this person's name.
7. Late assignments will be penalized a grade per day (an A paper will become A- after 1 day, B+ after 2 days, etc.), unless arrangements are made ahead of time.
8. Please speak with me immediately if you feel overwhelmed by the course, so we can figure out how to proceed before it's too late.
9. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## Requirements & Grading

Your grade will be base on the following:		Due
• Reading, class participation, and discussion	10%	Class
• Research Notebook & “pop briefings”	5%	Class
• Topic Selection, Research Question, and Supporting documents	10%	10/2
• Annotated Bibliography	10%	10/16
• Literature Review (5-6 pp) & Conceptual Framework Table	15%	10/30
• Research Methodology Description (3-4 pp) & Conceptual Framework Table	10%	11/13
• Research Proposal (9-11 pp)	25%	12/4
• Research Project Presentation	15%	12/4 & 12/11

The assignments are designed to help you produce drafts of various sections of your research paper. I will provide you with detailed instructions and guidance for most of these assignments; however, below is a generic description of each.

### ***Class Participation & Discussion***

First, please be punctual. Please allow for parking/metro issues.

Second, you are expected to have read all the assigned readings and be able to participate actively and intelligently in class discussion. I will ask individuals to summarize the major points and ideas presented in the readings. In preparing for class, critically read and think about:

- Central idea(s), concept(s), arguments which you found stimulating;
- Connections, linkages, contradictions between one idea or approach and another; and
- Questions, concerns, disagreements with ideas encountered.

### ***Research Notebook & “Pop Briefings”***

The research notebook is one method or framework you will use to help organize your research. You will use it to organize your observations and work in order to connect these efforts to the problem you are studying. It will facilitate your analysis and integration of readings to your overall research project. I will hand out the particulars in class; please follow the steps outlined.

You should use your notebook weekly—it should never be the same. Bring it with you to class and always be ready to talk about your research project weekly, explaining the progress you have made and your next steps. These “pop briefings” will serve to keep you on track.

### ***Topic & Research Question***

You will prepare a document that presents your topic and explains your research question. You will also include a draft of an abstract, a bibliography of at least 10 scholarly journals or books, and the name of your faculty advisor. This is a mini-initial version of your proposal, including a one-page introduction describing your question or puzzle, a one-page literature review, and an initial bibliography including at least 10 citations from scholarly journals or books.

### ***Annotated Bibliography***

You will produce an *annotated bibliography* of at least 10 scholarly books or articles. An annotated bibliography is a list of citations, with each citation followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to remind you of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority. Use the following websites that suggest questions to ask about readings (<http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/cfs1.htm> and <http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/1saj.htm>). These will force you to critically read your sources. Also see an example of annotations starting on p. 2 of this pdf: <http://www.pdc.us/programs/ed/strategy/PDFs/appendix-2-3a.pdf>. You must cite correctly; please refer to #6 of paper guidelines section below.

### ***Literature Review & Conceptual Framework Table***

Throughout the semester, you will create your own conceptual framework table to help you organize your empirical research process. Using this framework as a foundation, you will draft a literature review (5-6 pages) of at least 10 scholarly books or articles that best help you to understand how other researchers have studied your the research topic and question. These will help you explain relationships between *concepts*, discuss how these concepts can be measured, and develop your hypothesis(es). You will receive detailed instructions as well as the assessment form I will use to grade the literature review. You must use informative headings to logically divide your prose and cite in text and in bibliography correctly; for the former, please make sure not to list name of article or book in text, use author and date style; for the latter please refer to #6 of paper guidelines section below.

### ***Research Methodology & Conceptual Framework Table***

Your conceptual framework table will also outline how you transform of your inquiry from theory to methodology, linking the “conceptual subject-matter” to the “techniques and organs of observation.” You will draft a research methodology section that will explain your empirical research process of data collection and analysis (3-4 pages). Make sure you address the following: 1) What is your primary research question? 2) What is your hypothesis (framed as a statement, not a question)? 3) What methodology will you use? (i.e. quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, narrative discussion, surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc...) 4) How will you use or analyze the evidence you collect? 5) What evidence would convince OTHERS that your hypothesis is true? 6) What evidence would convince YOU that your hypothesis is false?

### ***Research Proposal***

The final written document of this semester is your research proposal. Although by this time you will have drafted various sections of your research paper, you will not have discussed the nature of your complete project, including detailed arguments and your next steps pertaining to possible identification of data sources, collection data, refining of methodology, and your total progress for the project. You can read a good description of a research proposal can at: <http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/pro.htm> Your proposal (9-11 pages) should include the following: abstract, introduction, thesis statement, overview (why important, description of project, how it fits in literature), outline of argument, methodology, updated and expanded bibliography. These could be just some of your informative headings. Notice you will be able to use some of what you have produced in the course to help with the formal proposal. However, it should not include whole sections; rather the proposal should provide detail about your process and how you will logically progress from your topic to findings.

### ***Research Project Presentation***

In the oral presentation of your project, you will share your research purpose and construct the two conceptual framework tables that are the focus of this paper. The first table links your conceptual framework to the literature, and the second table operationalizes the conceptual framework. Your colleagues will also critique your presentation. You should practice your presentation and be ready for a professional, non-rushed demonstration of your work from the semester and future research.

## Grading

Late assignments will be penalized a grade per day (an A paper will become A- after 1 day, B+ after 2 days, etc.), unless arrangements are made ahead of time. The grading schedule is below:

A = 93-100	B = 83-86.9	C = <b>73-76.9*</b>	F = 59.9 & below
A- = 90-92.9	B- = 80-82.9	C- = 70-72.9	<b>*Must receive to apply</b>
B+ = 87-89.9	C+ = 77-79.9	D = 60-69.9	<b>course to the major.</b>

In regard to written material, I will be examining your knowledge as well as your judgment in selection and presentation of material. The following is offered as a guideline:

**A/A-:** An excellent grasp of the facts. Evidence of considerable organizing intelligence and powers of argument

**B+:** Sound factual knowledge. Evidence of sound expository power, i.e. a clear line of argument throughout the essay

**B:** Knowledge of the basic facts. Ability to draw some conclusions, although of a somewhat superficial and generally conventional kind. Main lines of argument visible but with some problems.

**C:** Knowledge of the basic facts but weak in argument or relevance, OR reasonably relevant but displaying factual weakness

## Paper Guidelines

- 1) Papers must be typed with 1" left, right, top and bottom margins, size 12-point font. Pages must have page numbers. Either endnotes or footnotes are required (see "Style" below) as well as a bibliography. Papers should have section headings and be double-spaced.
- 2) Papers must have a title page but **do not** put papers in covers, binders or any other kind of package.
- 3) No late assignments will be accepted without the instructor's prior approval. Papers are due at the beginning of class. If turned in any later but on the same day, a grade reduction will occur as well as for every day it is late.
- 4) Papers with unacceptable errors in spelling and grammar will be returned for correction prior to grading and penalized 5 points per day until turned back in correctly. Students who feel they are weak in this area should seek help from the Writing Center.
- 5) **The instructor may ask to review your source material. Do not discard it for at least a month after your final paper is turned in.**
- 6) Style refers to the way a paper treats headings, footnotes, bibliographic citations, illustrations, tables, etc.
  - a) You should choose and adhere to a particular style. You may wish to use the style outlined in the department's "Research Handbook," located at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/pia/links/Guide.pdf>. This guide is somewhat dated, especially with respect to the use of the library's on-line capabilities.
  - b) For citation help, see Scott & Garrison reading on e-reserves; for citation of e-mail messages, World Wide Web sites, and other items on the internet, you may follow the format specified in:
    - 1) [http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.2/inbox/mla\\_archive.html#citing\\_sites](http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/1.2/inbox/mla_archive.html#citing_sites).

- c) In addition to the guidelines in the “Research Handbook,” papers for this course require the following: (i) identify your sources in footnotes; (ii) include source information for all figures and tables; (iii) include a bibliography of all source material at the end of your paper.

## Honor Code Policy

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. Please consult the Student Handbook for a full definition of these terms. **All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.** Violations include but are not limited to the following:

- Cheating includes any “willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students,” by any means whatsoever, or the attempt to do so. Examples: copying off another student; using notes during a closed-book exam; obtaining an assignment ahead of time from a student who took the class a previous semester; turning in the same work in more than one class (without prior authorization from all professors concerned).
- Plagiarism includes “presenting as one’s own the works, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement” or “borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.” Examples: getting your paper off the Internet; turning in a paper that was written by somebody else; buying a paper; taking a written piece from someone else but rewording it so that it looks different.
- Lying includes “the willful and knowledgeable telling of an untruth, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deceit, or fraud in an oral or written statement relating to academic work.” Examples: lying to faculty member by saying you were sick when you were not; falsely claiming a death in the family or a personal emergency; falsifying any official documentation.
- Stealing encompasses “taking or appropriating without the permission to do so, and with the intent to keep or to make use of wrongfully, property belonging to any member of the George Mason University community or any property located on the University campus.” Examples: stealing exams or paper assignments from the professor for the purposes of cheating; selling notes you take in class to an individual or a business.

## Course Schedule†

Below is the schedule of topics to be discussed and assigned readings to be read *before* the start of that class. Note that there will be readings that accompany most faculty presentations that you should read. Readings not in your books can be found: online (library or web), E-reserves (**ER**), or shared electronically (**S**).

**Dates to Remember:** 1) September 9 – Last day to add; 2) September 26 – Last day to drop; and 3) September 27 – October 24 – Selective withdrawal period

†The schedule for readings and assignments may change due to unforeseen circumstances.

### Week 1    8/28    Introduction

- Review syllabus and begin discussing Shields & Tajalli (2006), see link under 9/4 readings
- Sample honors timeline, Finding an advisor (see appendices at the end of syllabus)
- Using the library: e-journals, MyAladin, WRLC, pdfs, etc...
- Keeping track of your sources 1) Research Notebook assignment & 2) Bibliographic database (Endnotes, download and install from: <https://chimera.gmu.edu/endnote/prod>)
- Need help with your writing? University Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>)
- Undergraduate Apprenticeship introduction (<http://cos.gmu.edu/current/undergraduate/apprentice>)

### Week 2    9/4    What & How of an Honors Research Project & Thesis?

- Developing the Topic for the Honors project: The question that will form the basis for the thesis should be developed carefully in consultation with a faculty member. Upper-division courses in political science are often good resources for getting ideas for theses and provide opportunities to get to know potential thesis advisors. Many students will find that initial ideas arise in upper-division courses taken in the junior year; they will then connect with an advisor and do some reading and thinking over the summer between the junior and the senior year. Writing a good thesis is often a year-long project, so getting an early start on the process of formulating the research question is vital to ensure success.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Baglione, Ch. 1
  - Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 1
  - Critical thinking (Schmidt. 2005. *Writing in Political Science*, pgs. 8 & 14.) **S**
  - Read these resource websites for content and familiarity: What is an Honors Thesis (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/honors.html>) & Writing in Political Science (readings from UNC: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/polisci.html>) **Make sure to read** all links from the main address too!
  - Shields & Tajalli. 2006. "Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship?" Available at <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=polsfacp>.
  - Conceptual Framework Table: Helping you theorize your research (Read, print, and bring to class: <http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/conframe.htm>)

- Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.

### **Week 3    9/11    The Discipline and Inquiry**

- Reading & Assignments:
  - The state of the discipline, (Scott & Garrison. 1998. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, p. 9-23) **S**
  - Putnam's elegant theory? (Shively. 1998. *The Craft of Political Research*, p. 16) **S**
  - Continue to work toward selecting your topic. Read as much as possible. Use Conceptual Framework Table to help you think about what a project on a possible topic would look like.
- Special guest: Dr. Claire Snyder; Normative Political Theory (1:30 p.m.)
  - *Reading*: 1) "Introduction" and "Machiavelli and the Citizenship of Civic Practices" Ch. 1 of R.C. Snyder. 1999. *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. **S**

### **Week 4    9/18    Empirical Inquiry & The Research Process**


- What's the research problem? Which theory or tool can help you connect to the real world through observations and data? This framework gives direction on how to collect/analyze your data PLUS it grounds your research question backward to literature in order to connect and justify problem/ideas/tool to help develop your inquiry.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Baglione, Ch. 2, 4
  - Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 2, 6
  - Cycle of research (Read: <http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/cer.htm>)
  - What is a hypothesis? (Read: <http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/hypo.htm>)
  - Common Research Terms: bring to class already defined  
<http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/term.htm>
  - Come with 2 alternative topics and be ready to present them. You will need to start reading the literature surrounding these topics.
  - Utilizing the Conceptual Framework Table: How can you use it to theorize your research (bring your copy to class in using Excel; original at: <http://uweb.txstate.edu/%7Eeps07/conframe.htm>)
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.
- Special guest: Dr. Eric McGlinchey, research questions, mixing designs (1:30 p.m.)
  - *Reading*: TBA

### **Week 5    9/25    Research Purpose and Questions**

- Using the Conceptual Framework table
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Select one topic and use the Conceptual Framework table's columns 1 (Research Purpose) and 2 (Research Question) to develop a solid and testable research question. What's the problem? Define it.

- You will need to focus in on the literature. Come with at least 3 citations from this literature that was helpful in developing the research question.
- Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 3
- Writing competently: (Scott & Garrison. 1998. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, p. 50-72) **S**
- Know how to cite properly: (Scott & Garrison. 1998. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, p. 93-106, 123-125) **S**
- What is an abstract? It is the first introduction to your paper, and it should include the following parts: motivation for research, problem statement, approach, expected results (hypotheses), and expected conclusions. See <http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html> for more on abstracts.
- Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.

### **Week 6    10/2    Research Design**

- Taming your topic: Research design is about how you frame your analysis, and this will differ from discipline to discipline while examining the same topic. Recall dependent variables, independent variables, theory, indicators, operationalization, and hypotheses, among other things.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Baglione, Ch. 6
  - Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 4
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.
- ✓  Topic Selection, Research Question & Supporting Documents Due
- Special guest: Dr. Colin Dueck, comparative case studies (1:30 p.m.)
  - *Reading*: Dueck. 2005. "Realism, Culture and Grand Strategy: Explaining America's Peculiar Path to World Power." *Security Studies* 14(2):195-231. **ER**

### **Week 7    10/9    Research Design Continued...**

- Reading & Assignments:
  - Epstein & King. "The Rules of Inference." Available at: <http://gking.harvard.edu/files/rules.pdf> p. 54-61
  - King, Keohane, and Verba. 1995. "The Importance of Research Design in Political Science" <http://gking.harvard.edu/files/kkvresp.pdf>
  - Reminder on citation style (in text and bibliography)
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.

### **Week 8    10/16    Theory and Literature Reviews**

- How to use theory to inform your research. How to write a literature review that is theoretically sophisticated and informs your research. **Please note** in examples how authors cite previous research—by author's last name, not the article or book title.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Baglione, Ch. 3, 5

- Thomas and Darnton. 2006. "Social Diversity and Economic Development in the Metropolis." *Journal of Planning Literature* 21(2): 153-168
- Hackler & Mayer. 2006. "Diversity, Entrepreneurship, and Urban Environment"
- Mayer. 2006. "Economic Trends And Location Patterns Of Women High-tech Entrepreneurs" Available at: [http://www.babson.edu/entrep/fer/2006FER/chapter\\_xi/paperfr\\_xi\\_1.html](http://www.babson.edu/entrep/fer/2006FER/chapter_xi/paperfr_xi_1.html).
- Another example to skim: Haag. 2000. "Community Reinvestment and Cities: A Literature Review Of CRA's Impact And Future." Available at <http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/haag1.pdf>.
- Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.

✓  Annotated Bibliography Due

- Special guest: Dr. Lehn Benjamin, interviewing techniques (1:30 p.m.)
  - *Reading*: Kvale. 1996. *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing (Interview Situation)* Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publications. 124-143. **ER 2)** Seidman. 2006. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers Education and the Social Sciences (Technique Isn't Everything But It Is a Lot)*. New York : Teachers College Press. 78-94. **ER 3)** Schoenberger. 1991. "The Corporate Interview as a Research Method in Economic Geography," *Professional Geographer* 43(2):180-189.

### **Week 9    10/23    Theory and Independent Variables**

- How to use theory to inform your research. Recall how theory helps identify hypotheses and independent variables.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Hoover & Donovan, review Ch. 4 again
  - Baglione, Ch. 7
  - Argumentation (see appendix C below)
  - Epstein & King. "The Rules of Inference." Available at: <http://gking.harvard.edu/files/rules.pdf> p. 61-80
  - Progress on Conceptual Framework Table: bring updated one to class
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.

### **Week 10    10/30    Defining Your Question and Identifying Your Evidence**

- What is systematic analysis? As you read the descriptions of different types of variables and causal processes, think how your own topic might submit to this kind of structure.
- \*\*\**Undergraduate Apprenticeship: Applications due approximately mid-November.*\*\*\*
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 5, p. 83 – 89
  - Van Evera. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Ch. 1, p. 7 – 48 (-20 **ER**)
  - Epstein & King. "The Rules of Inference." Available at: <http://gking.harvard.edu/files/rules.pdf> p. 80-114
  - Select one of your articles you are using in your literature review and be ready to discuss the answers to these questions: 1) What is this author's dependent variable? 2) What are the independent variable(s)? 3) What are the hypotheses? 4) Are there any "conditioning

variables”? 5) What is the research design? 6) What other cases, if any, could have been used to investigate the question that motivates the author?

- Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.

### ✓ Literature Review with Conceptual Framework Table Due


- Special guest: Dr. Peter Balint, research methods and data collection (3:00 p.m.)
  - *Reading*: 1) Balint and Mashinya. 2008. “CAMPFIRE During Zimbabwe’s National Crisis: Local Impacts and Broader Implications for Community-Based Wildlife Management” *Society and Natural Resources* 21:1–14. (**NOTE**: give special attention to p. 5) **ER**; 2) Balint, Desai, Stewart, and Walters. 2006. “Managing Wicked Environmental Problems: Integrating Public Participation and Adaptive Management.” (**NOTE**: give special attention to p. 14-15) **ER**

## **Week 11 11/6 Refining the Understanding of Evidence**

- Putting the pieces together. We will work toward understanding how research purpose connects to your conceptual framework (hypotheses, descriptive categories, etc...) and how to operationalize these hypotheses to research techniques/methodologies.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 5, p. 89 – 97
  - Draft a complete Conceptual Framework Table for you’re your research project, bring it with you to class to present and discuss. Your working hypotheses should list the appropriate to the literature and you should work to operationalize your hypotheses (see table 2 and 3, respectively, of Shields & Tajalli).
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.
  - You should continue to work on your research project. Fill your time with reading, collecting, analyzing, writing, etc...

## **Week 12 11/13 Information and Analytical Design**

- How to present information and evidence visually. Tufte is a master making the most of information, regardless its design or content. His general advice for effective analytical reasoning includes:
  - Develop[ing] and fine-tune[ing] *a sense of the relevant*, both for identifying the key leverage points in any problem and also for examining large amounts of information to find the rare diamonds in the sand.
  - Nearly all serious analysis requires multivariate-thinking, comparison-thinking, and causal-thinking. Develop such thinking. (*Tufte, 2006*)
- His basic rules and principles of graphical design stress graphical minimalism in data presentation: 1) show the data, 2) minimize the ink-to-data ratio; 3) avoid “ChartJunk”.
- Reading & Assignments:
  - Hoover & Donovan, Ch. 5, p. 97 – 116, 118
  - Go to <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5673332>, view “Edward Tufte Lectures...” below his picture. Also listen to the NPR interview.
  - Read Klass, p. 2733 at <http://lilt.ilstu.edu/gmklass/articles/klassJsm2004-000175.pdf>.

- Read the following presentations on data presentation and the Challenger and Columbia space shuttle accidents: 1) <http://www.asktog.com/books/challengerExerpt.html>; 2) [http://www.edwardtufte.com/bboard/q-and-a-fetch-msg?msg\\_id=0001yB&topic\\_id=1](http://www.edwardtufte.com/bboard/q-and-a-fetch-msg?msg_id=0001yB&topic_id=1)
  - Redraft your Conceptual Framework Table and bring it with you to class to present and discuss.
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.
  - You should continue to work on your research project. Fill your time with reading, collecting, analyzing, writing, etc...
- ✓  Research Methodology Description and Conceptual Framework Table Due
- Special guest: Dr. Suzanne Robbins, social network analysis (3:00 p.m.)
    - *Reading*: 1) Keeter, Scott. 2005. "Survey Research." In *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*, D. Druckman, ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Research. 123-162. **ER 2)** TBA.

### **Week 13 11/20 Preparing the Proposal**

- Reading & Assignments:
  - Baglione, Ch. 8 & 9
  - Writing a Proposal Checklist: Review Checklist for Research Paper (Schmidt. 2005. *Writing in Political Science*, p. 358) **S**
  - See Appendix D of syllabus
  - Bring your research notebook and I will assess your progress.
  - You should continue to work on your research project. Fill your time with reading, collecting, analyzing, writing, etc...
  - Human Subjects forms, depending on methodology



11/27 *No Class: Thanksgiving*

### **Week 14 12/4 Wrapping UP**

- ✓  *Research Project Presentations*
- ✓  *Research Project Proposal due*

### **Week 14 12/11 Finals Period: 1:30 – 4:15 p.m.**

- ✓  *Research Project Presentations*

## Appendix A: Sample Time Table for Completing Honors Research

Fall 2008	Take Govt 491 Honors Seminar.
Weeks 1-7, fall 2008	During seminar, work intensively on formulating the research question; assemble a complete bibliography for the thesis; continue collecting necessary data. Finalize selection of thesis advisor.
Weeks 8-11, fall 2008	Complete proposal. Have research question completely formulated and decide on what approaches and methods you will use to write the research paper; develop a detailed outline of the paper; begin planning a writing schedule. Run outline by advisor.
Weeks 12-14, fall 2008	Complete a rough draft of the introduction, literature review, and methodology. Begin collecting data and writing argumentative section. Present your work to seminar participants. Obtain feedback from advisor.
Weeks 1-3, spring 2009	Enroll in GOVT 496 (section # depend advisor). Analyze data, draft findings, and complete a rough draft of the argumentative section. Run drafts by advisor.
Weeks 4-5, spring 2009	Finish draft of findings and conclusion. Run draft by advisor. Revise introductory section and begin revisions on argumentative section.
Weeks 6-7, spring 2009	Complete revisions on argumentative and findings sections and conclusion. Run revised drafts by advisor.
Week 8-9, spring 2009	Address advisor's comments on thesis. Send penultimate drafts of entire thesis to advisor.
Weeks 10-11, spring 2009	Continue making substantive revisions. Finalize thesis; proofread and make stylistic revisions. Deliver revised versions to advisor.
Week 12, spring 2009	Make any necessary changes requested by advisor. Turn in final version of thesis to advisor.
Week 13, spring 2009	Advisor and second reader approve thesis.
Week 13-14, spring 2009	Prepare research presentation. Consult with advisor.
May 5, 2009	Honors Research Presentations & Colloquium.
May 16, 2009	Graduate with honors.

## **Appendix B: The Thesis Advisor**

Each student writing an honors thesis must have a principal thesis advisor, who is a faculty member in the Public and International Affairs Department. The thesis advisor is the principal faculty member with whom the student will work.

The advisor helps the student to formulate a workable research question, often suggesting materials to read and places to go to find empirical information. This faculty member then oversees the process of writing, helping the student to develop a schedule for completing drafts of sections. The advisor will also read the thesis as the student is writing it, providing feedback along the way to keep the student on track. In selecting a thesis advisor, the student should try to find someone who knows a lot about the thesis topic and who will have the time to give the student adequate feedback. Planning in advance is helpful in securing a good thesis advisor, as most faculty members are unable to supervise more than two theses in any given quarter.

In general, students should note that faculty members tend to be quite busy, particularly at the beginnings and ends of terms. Do not expect an advisor to read a lengthy draft and provide comments unless you give that person at least a week. It is also much easier to get comments quickly if you work out a firm schedule with your advisor and stick to it – most faculty members can read drafts much more quickly if they know when to expect them and can set aside time from their schedules in advance. Faculty members are generally very willing to help you if you are organized and motivated. Know your advisor's office hours and make use of them!

Finding an advisor does not need to be a stressful experience. Many students will find potential advisors in their upper-division classes. If you are not sure what members of the faculty share your research interests, the department keeps a list of faculty areas of interest on the bulletin board outside of the main office. Even when they are not teaching, all faculty have weekly office hours when they are in residence at the university.

## **Appendix C: Argumentation**

An honors thesis in any field of Political Science has three basic parts. The first is a clear and concise explanation of the main argument of the thesis itself. The second, which comprises the bulk of the thesis, is a presentation of the argumentation and evidence that will convince the reader that the argument is valid. The final part is an explanation of the implications of the argument.

The first section of the thesis will be the most difficult to write for most people because it requires that you have a complete understanding of what you will do in the thesis. Most people write a draft of the introduction to their thesis and return to it to sharpen their insights after they have written up the argumentative section. In the first section of the thesis, the author should identify the problem or issue with which she or he will be dealing and sketch out his or her answer or solution. This section should also demonstrate the student's mastery of the academic literature associated with the problem or issue. Here, the student explains both what other analysts have had to say about the issue or problem and differentiates her or his approach and analysis from others' approaches and analyses. The student should also explain here what methods he or she intends to use to support the analysis she or he will undertake.

The second, or argumentative, section is the heart of the thesis. In this section, the student presents the argument and evidence promised in the first section. Careful organization is crucial to the success of this section; arguments and evidence should be presented to flow logically toward the conclusion the student wishes the reader to endorse. The student should also ensure that she or he is arguing rather than merely presenting evidence. Pieces of empirical data should be placed in their proper contexts and their relationship to each other should be clearly outlined. The inclusion of all evidence and arguments must be justified by direct relationship to the main point of the thesis. The student should avoid mere description or recitation of facts in favor of in-depth analysis. Finally, the student should deal effectively with counter arguments or contrasting cases that might tend to persuade the reader that his or her main point is invalid.

The final section of the thesis should summarize effectively what the student has accomplished. In addition, it should explain what implications the student's findings have for the field in which she or he is writing. How should scholars and readers think about the main question differently after having encountered the thesis?

## Appendix D: Sample Title Page for Honors Thesis

[Title of Honors Thesis]

An Honors Thesis Presented

by

[first name, middle name, and last name of author]

to

Curriculum and Honors Committee

Department of Political Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for a degree with honors

of Bachelor of [Arts or Sciences]

George Mason University

[month and year]

Thesis Advisor: [title and name of Thesis Advisor]