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Substantial Research Paper Syllabus
Global Governance, Politics, and Security Students
AY 13-14

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The Substantial Research Paper (SRP) is the capstone, integrative project for master's degree students. The purpose of the SRP is to further develop your expertise in an issue of concern to the field of global governance, politics, and security, AND to demonstrate your ability to conduct theoretically informed, analytical research. The knowledge and skills that you use in the research and writing of your SRP are evidence of your substantial knowledge of the field in which you are earning your degree.

Faculty supervisors for the SRP must be faculty members who are in the GGPS Program at SIS. For the academic year 13-14 these are: Celeste Wallander, Amitav Acharya, Boaz Atzili, David Banks, Aaron Boesenecker, David Bosco, Dylan Craig, Keith Darden, Sarah Cleeland Knight, Anders Hardig, Chris Rudolph, Tazreena Sajjad, Holger Schmidt, Dan Schneider, Mike Schroeder, and Matthew Taylor. Please note that you do not have to write your SRP under the supervision of the faculty member who was assigned as your initial advisor or who signed your Statement of Purpose and Academic Plan (SPAP). It is also possible to work with SIS faculty outside GGPS in special circumstances. Such outside arrangements must be approved by Professor Wallander.

I. SRP REQUIREMENTS

CONTENT: The SRP asks and answers an analytical research question based on a topic within the field of international relations. International relations is understood broadly, but not so broadly as to be disconnected from the literature in the field. You should be able to connect the research you are undertaking to the themes and concerns of international relations scholarship.

The SRP must contain both a review of existing scholarly literature and original research critiquing or contributing to that literature. The research must be empirical (you must have evidence to support the claims you make), though it need not be statistical. Whatever your methodology is, it must be explicit and explained. Your work must be distinguishable from superficial description or policy prescription by the explicit use of a standard social science model (testing a falsifiable hypothesis) or an alternative approach grounded in a non-positivist epistemology.

SIS regulations require a fifty-page paper plus a bibliography. The bibliography may include web-based resources, but you must pay careful attention to the quality and reliability of on-line material. Your review

of the literature must include scholarly books and/or articles appearing either in print or as e-books or e-journals available through the American University library website. However, we urge you to actually go to the library to examine print materials because not everything is available on-line!

The SRP must not be a polemic in which you simply argue, without careful attention to evidence, a point of view you have already taken. (A good rule of thumb is that if you already know the answer, what you are doing is not research. Research begins with a question or a puzzle.)

QUALITY OF THE WRITING: Recipients of master's degrees in international affairs are expected to be skillful writers. Consequently, students writing SRPs are held to a high standard for the quality of their prose. The SRP must be logically organized, grammatically correct, and stylistically pleasing.

The SRP must follow an appropriate academic format. Most students should use *The Chicago Manual of Style* (either form a or form b), though some will be directed otherwise by their faculty supervisor. JD/MA students may be asked to use standard legal style.

GRADING: SRP grades will be based on the quality of the research and the quality of the writing. Students must receive a grade of B or better for the SRP to satisfy graduation requirements and to be eligible to take the oral comprehensive exam.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see your faculty supervisor if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course. More information on academic integrity can be found at http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/

KEEP COPIES OF YOUR SRP, YOUR RESEARCH NOTES, AND YOUR ROUGH DRAFTS. An unfortunate truth of the Information Age, is that the ease of copying digitized materials makes plagiarism and other violations easier. The result has been increased scrutiny of student's work to verify that academic integrity has been upheld. Keep copies of your research materials and drafts so that you will be able to document the work you have done in case a question is raised about sources for or the originality of your research.

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH: If any portion of your research involves human subjects as defined by AU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects, your research must receive prior approval by the IRB. To determine whether your research requires IRB approval or to begin the IRB review process, please speak with your faculty supervisor and consult http://www.american.edu/irb/.

II. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Copies of the final SRP **must** be emailed to the GGPS Program Coordinator, at ggps@american.edu. We keep a record of completed SRPs and we use anonymous versions for our own assessment processes.

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III. THE SRP PROCESS

The substantial research project involves a series of steps:

1. **INITIAL PRESENTATION OF TOPIC**: At the beginning of the semester, meet with your faculty supervisor to discuss your topic.

   If your project involves interviews, surveys, or observations of people, you MUST receive PRIOR approval from the SIS faculty member who serves as our teaching unit representative for the University board supervising research involving human subjects BEFORE you begin the research. You must address human subject issues at this stage of initial presentation of the topic to your faculty supervisor. You can find out more information on the use of human subjects in research by consulting with your faculty supervisor and by reading the material posted at http://www.american.edu/irb/

2. **PROPOSAL:** You must prepare a proposal that is an extended outline (5-10) pages that lays out: your research question; a discussion of its importance; a discussion of the literature you intend to review; an explanation of your methodology; the evidence you are considering to answer your question; a preliminary bibliography; and a schedule of expected completion dates for the stages of the research project. (Please note: this proposal is separate from the statement of your research question, preliminary outline and bibliography that are due at the time of registration)

3. **OUTLINE**: Consult with your faculty supervisor about the degree of detail he or she wishes in the outline.

4. **ROUGH DRAFT**: Students will submit a rough draft to their faculty supervisor for feedback by the agreed deadline.

5. **FINAL PAPER**: Students must submit the final paper by the deadline specified by the faculty supervisor in order to be eligible to take the oral comprehensive examination in time to graduate that semester. **In addition to submitting a final draft of their SRPs to their faculty supervisors, students must also send an electronic copy of their completed SRPs to the GGPS Program Coordinator at ggps@american.edu.**

IV. SUGGESTED DATES (It's best to plan ahead!)

To complete your SRP in the Fall Semester, please adhere to the following dates:

1. Initial Presentation: second week of September (the week of Labor Day)
2. Proposal: first week of October; check with your academic advisor for the registration deadline
3. Outline: third week of October
4. Rough draft: by early to mid-November (two weeks before Thanksgiving)
5. Final Version: before last day of class

To complete your SRP in the Summer Semester, please adhere to the following dates:

1. Initial Presentation: before the end of the spring semester

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2. Proposal: third week of May; check with your academic advisor for the registration deadline
3. Outline: first week of June
4. Rough draft: third week of June
5. Final Version: Second week of July

To complete your SRP in the Spring Semester, please adhere to the following dates:
1. Initial Presentation: last week of January
2. Proposal: Second week of February; check with your academic advisor for the registration deadline
3. Outline: Fourth week of February
4. Rough draft: by mid to late March (no later than two weeks after spring break)
5. Final Version: before last day of class

Please make sure that you also check the registration deadlines on the University's academic calendar by visiting http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/schedule/academic-calendar.cfm