Course Description
This course is designed specifically for students in the Political Science and HCS tracks of the International Studies major. It lays the groundwork for understanding qualitative research methods in the social sciences.

Students interested in quantitative research methods are urged to take additional courses offered in other departments to augment the material covered here.

This course complements and supplements IN497 Senior Thesis, but the two courses are independent.

Course Requirements
You are expected to attend and participate actively in the class, to have completed the readings before meetings, to submit written work on time, and to contribute ideas and suggestions in class discussions.

A substantial portion of a major research paper is a component of the course. You will be required to submit draft portions of the research during the semester, and a revised and polished version at the end.

Those students writing senior theses are encouraged to submit work for this course based on their thesis research. However, please note that the grade received on these portions of the thesis reflect the grading criteria of this course, and are in no way indicative of the overall quality or worth of the finished thesis. The grade received in this class is distinct from the grade for the finished thesis.

Grading
The course grade is based on in-class exams and submitted written work. There is no final exam.

1) Two exams: 10% each (20% total)
2) Three short papers: 10% each (30% total)
3) Exercises: weight varies (25% total)
4) Research Paper: 25%

Please note that failure to complete any of the above requirements may result in a failing grade in the course. I will grant exceptions if you have a legitimate excuse. However, I must receive a letter from your class dean or academic advisor outlining the circumstances.

Academic Integrity
For all written assignments, you must follow the guidelines set out in the paper topic. In particular, you must follow the rules regarding academic integrity. Asserted ignorance of those guidelines will not excuse any student who violates them. The penalty for plagiarism can include Failure in the course and a report placed in your permanent file with the university. The Boston College statement on academic integrity can be found at the following webpage:
http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html

Texts for the Course:
The following required texts are available in the BC Bookstore. Class sessions will require that you have the readings with you for reference.

2) Diana Ridley, The Literature Review

Additional readings will be made available through Blackboard. You should have the readings in each section completed before each session and bring them to class. Readings should be read in the order listed.

Other Notes
Students must turn off all electronic devices not used directly in the course (e.g., pagers, cell phones, music players, etc.). Students may use notebook computers to take notes; permission must be sought to use other electronic devices, such as tape recorders or video cameras.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

**IMPORTANT DATES**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>FIRST EXAM</td>
<td>Short answer – definitions&lt;br&gt;ID short passages – identify variables, identify causation, identify components of research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>SECOND EXAM</td>
<td>Short answer – definitions&lt;br&gt;ID short passages – identify and explain approaches</td>
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Sept. 8: Syllabus, course content and purpose

Sept. 10: The Ethics of Research
Excerpt from the independent report on Dr. Michael Bellesiles, Prof. of History at Emory, 1-19.
  - The rationales for ethical research (paper 1) (10%)

**II. THE LOGIC OF RESEARCH**

Sept. 15: The Literature Review, Part I: Why Do We Do It?

Sept. 17: The Literature Review, Part II: Finding the Literature

  - First exercise due: defining the research problem (check)

Sept. 24: The Literature Review, Part IV: Presenting the Material

**III. THE LANGUAGE OF RESEARCH**

Sept. 29: Modeling the World
  - Second exercise due: assemble initial literature summary (5%)
Oct. 1: Variables, Operationalization, and Validity

Oct. 6: Causation, Part I
• Third exercise due: Identifying variables (5%)

Oct. 8: Causation, Part II

Oct. 13: First Midterm Exam

IV. GENERAL APPROACHES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Oct. 15: Forms of Explanation

Oct. 20: Rational Choice
• Group discussion: identifying rational choice approaches (paper 2a) (10%)

Oct. 22: Interpretive Theory
• Group discussion: identifying interpretive approaches (paper 2b) (10%)

Oct. 27: Functionalism and Structuralism
• Group discussion: identifying functional and structural approaches

Oct. 29: Institutional and Organizational Theories


- Group discussion: identifying institutional and organizational approaches (paper 3a) (10%)

**Nov. 3: Feminism and other Critical Studies**


- Group discussion: identifying feminist approaches (paper 3b) (10%)

**Nov. 5: Normative and Postmodernist Approaches**


- Group discussion: identifying postmodern approaches

**Nov. 10: Second Midterm Exam**

**IV. THE PRACTICE OF RESEARCH**

**Nov. 12: Case Studies, Part I**


**Nov. 17: Comparative Methodology**


- Fourth exercise due: literature review (10%)

**Nov. 19: Case Studies, Part II**


**Nov. 24: Interviewing and Content Analysis**


**Nov. 26: Thanksgiving – no classes**

**Dec. 1: Research Design – Putting it all together**


**V. WRITING AND RHETORIC**

**Dec. 3: Academese and Jargon, Author and Voice**


Ridley, *The Literature Review*, 131-159.


**Dec. 8: The Art of Writing, Copy-editing, and Re-writing**


- Fifth exercise due: preliminary research design (5%)

**Dec. 10: Conclusion**

No assigned readings

**Research Paper due on scheduled final date** – Thursday, Dec. 17, 2009