

**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**

«__» _____ 2018

Research Designs, Methods and Contexts

Course Syllabus

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

Instructor _____ Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mikhail Troitskiy

Director, MGIMO Library _____ Marina Reshetnikova

This syllabus is approved by Department of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Russia on " " _____ 2018

Department Chair _____ Prof. Dr. Boris Martynov

Syllabus developed by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mikhail Troitskiy, 2018

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The undergraduate workshop on “Research Designs, Methods, and Contexts” provides advanced training in research and writing 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—presenting the project methodology. 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 methodology of the thesis in the making.

In the second part of each session students and the instructor will discuss required readings on research goals, designs and methods. It is essential for the students to read the assigned literature before the class and think how its ideas can apply to their thesis research projects.

The course will help students to:

- 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.

Two classes in the Spring 2018 Semester will feature guest lecturers from the Georgia Institute of Technology. They will present scenario planning and network analysis as methods of applied research in Political Science and International Affairs.

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:

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

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

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

Spring 2018 Semester schedule

	Date / Time	Topic	Required Readings
1.	March 5, 12:10	The interplay of education and policymaking: The role of theories and concepts	Stephen Walt, "America's IR Schools are Broken," Foreign Policy, February 20, 2018, http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/02/20/americans-ir-schools-are-broken-international-relations-foreign-policy/
2.	March 5, 14:30	What is theory? What makes a good or bad theory?	Van Evera, pp. 7-21
3.	March 12, 12:10	Making and testing theories	Van Evera, pp. 21-43
4.	March 12, 14:30	Myths about theory validation	Van Evera, pp. 43-48
5.	March 19, 12:10	Guest presenter Dr. Adam Stulberg, GaTech "Network Analysis for International Security with Applications to the Geopolitics of Energy"	
6.	March 19, 14:30	Guest presenter Dr. Jennifer Jordan, GaTech "Scenario Planning"	
7.	March 26, 12:10	Formulating a research question: Part I	Baglione, pp. 15-40
8.	March 26, 14:30	Formulating a research question: Part II	Baglione, pp. 15-40
9.	April 2, 12:10	Descriptive concepts	Gerring, pp. 107-131
10.	April 2, 14:30	Causal arguments	Gerring, pp. 197-217
11.	April 16, 12:10	Case studies I: Creating and testing theories	Van Evera, pp. 49-88
12.	April 16, 14:30	Case studies II: Selecting cases	Van Evera, pp. 49-88
13.	April 23, 12:10	Distilling the argument	Baglione, pp. 93-108
14.	April 23, 14:30	Revising and editing	Baglione, pp. 109-119
15.	April 30, 12:10	Bringing the paper together: Part I	Van Evera, pp. 123-128
16.	April 30, 14:30	Bringing the paper together: Part II	Baglione, pp. 175-190

Student presentations schedule – Spring 2018 Semester

Session number	Date / Time	Presenters / Topics	
		Argument	Method
1.	March 5, 12:10	Kumar	
2.	March 5, 14:30		Kumar
3.	March 12, 12:10	Wollny	
4.	March 12, 14:30	Melnikova	Kravtsova
5.	March 19, 12:10		Chubchenko
6.	March 19, 14:30		Wollny
7.	March 26, 12:10	Porret Sidor	
8.	March 26, 14:30	Mullayanova	Melnikova
9.	April 2, 12:10		Porret Sidor
10.	April 2, 14:30	Rykunov	Mullayanova
11.	April 16, 12:10	Venev	Rykunov
12.	April 16, 14:30	Park Chubchenko	
13.	April 23, 12:10	Safin	Venev
14.	April 23, 14:30	Aziz	Park
15.	April 30, 12:10	Kuprenaite	Safin
16.	April 30, 14:30	Kravtsova	Aziz