Syllabus

Library Studies 397A: Introduction to Research in International Relations

Instructor:

Helen M. Sheehy

Office Hours:

Wednesday 6:30-8:30 PM and by appointment

C207 Pattee Library

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Requirements

Exercises and Class Participation

40%

Final Project

40%

Final Take Home Exam

20%

You will also be expected to have an **access account**. If you do not already have one, **apply for one immediately** at one of the Center for Academic computing labs on campus. You will need this account to access the internet. I will also communicate with you by e-mail regarding course assignments, etc.

Grades will be assigned on a standard grade scale:

90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

60-69 D

59 or below F

Course Objectives

At the completion of the course you should:

- Effectively plan a research strategy to complete a term paper for an upper division course in international relations;
- Understand the differences between the primary and secondary literature in international relations and the importance of both in your research strategy;
- Understand the relationship between an international organization's mission, structure, and the publications it produces;
- Understand the structure of the information sources and the corresponding indexing tools;

• Effectively choose the most appropriate organizations; indexing tools, and publications to address your research problem.

Introduction

This is a 300 level course and the workload is correspondingly high. Most of the readings will relate to the structure of the organizations we will be examining. You will be expected to come to class having completed the readings, prepared to discuss the material. You will also be expected to turn assignments in ON TIME. Assignments that are not turned in on the due date will not be accepted. This is only fair to the students who do complete their work. It will also keep you on track for completing the final project.

You may find this course different from any other course you have taken. This is not a course on the political aspects of international organizations. Other courses at Penn State address these issues. I will be trying to teach you how to analyze a research topic, how to methodically plan a research strategy, and the structure of the literature generated by international organizations and foreign governments. I am as much interested in how you approach your research problem and why you decide to consult a particular source as I am interested in whether you find the "answer" to a specific question or develop the perfect bibliography. Indeed, you may find that the answer to a particular question is that there is no real answer. In other words, you will be evaluated on how you approach the research problem and the sources that you utilize to locate documents as well as the material that you collect to complete your final bibliography. It is also likely that you will find this a "time intensive" course. As your research skills develop over the semester your efficiency at completing the assignments should improve. There will be 11 assignments during the course of the semester: a topic proposal (preliminary and final versions), term paper outline, 8 exercises, and a final project. You will choose a topic at the beginning of the semester and explore that topic for the remainder of the semester.

Library Research Periods

Spaced throughout the semester will be library research periods. This is your chance to use class time to get help with assignments. Attendance will be taken at these as well as regular class sessions.

Examinations

There will be one examination, a "take home" final. This will be an exercise, to be completed in the library, that will require you to plan a research strategy and then use many of the sources we will talk about during the semester.

Topic Proposal

The preliminary version of the topic proposal is **DUE SEPTEMBER 6** and the final version is **DUE SEPTEMBER 13**. This proposal is a statement of the topic you intend to explore for the remainder of the semester. A detailed description of what I expect and a list of possible topics is included separately in this packet.

Term Paper Outline

To write an effective term paper it is essential that you develop a clear outline of your topic and the points you intend to cover. I will give you further details on this assignment later in the semester. The outline is **DUE NOVEMBER 8.**

Exercises and Research Diary

The exercises are designed to give you hands on experience with the resources we discuss in class. Most exercise questions will be based on your chosen topic and will often be open ended questions intended to make you explore a particular organization and its documentation.

The materials related to your topic that you identify in the exercises will form the core of your final project -- the annotated bibliography. The more thoroughly you work through the exercises the easier it will be to complete the final project..

As you work on each of these exercises you will keep a diary of your research strategy. For each exercise question be sure to include:

- a list of all the sources you have consulted,
- the rationale for choosing the sources,
- search terms and indexes that you use,
- the results of your research strategy.

Since I can not work with each of you as you complete the exercises, this is my way of getting inside your head, understanding what you are doing, and why you make the choices you make. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer in your diary. I expect you to be honest in describing your research strategy. If you pursue a research strategy that gets you nowhere, try to think through why it didn't work and tell me what you might do differently next time. What I am looking for is a critical examination of your own work and evidence that you are beginning to understand the publishing patterns in government information.

All the sources that you locate and cite in your answers must be cited in the correct bibliographic format as described in Citing Government Information Resources. If you are citing to

international court cases you may also use the Bluebook format for legal citations. Both texts are listed below and are available at the documents service desk.

I will expect you to turn in your "diary" when you turn in each exercise. I suggest you invest in a loose-leaf notebook to compile these materials.

You will be given the opportunity to revise any exercise based on the comments I make. The objective here is to improve your research methodology (and your grade). There are two conditions attached to this

- 1. All revised work must be handed in no later than the due date for the next exercise
- 2. Revised work will be accepted only for questions which you seriously attempted to answer on the original due date. This is not an excuse for doing a shoddy job on the initial assignment, it is to be used to reexamine and revise your research strategy based on my comments.

Final Project

The final project takes you up to the point where you would actually sit down to write a term paper. I also ask you to objectively examine your research strategy and suggest ways it could be improved. Attached is a more complete description of the Final Project The final project consists of 3 pieces.

- An introduction to your topic
- An annotated bibliography of sources you would use to write the term paper
- A synopsis of your research strategy

Texts

There is no required textbook for this course. You will be given reading assignments to materials that have been placed on reserve at the Documents Service Desk or to information that can be located on the libraries' WWW or gopher. Please be considerate of your classmates and return materials promptly to the desk when you are finished.

In addition to the readings you will need to consult the following citation guides. Both are at the Documents Service Desk.

Garner, Diane and Diane Smith. *Citing Government InformationResources*. Revised ed. Bethesda, MD: Congressional Information Service, 1993. Documents Service Desk, Call # J95.G37 1993.

The Bluebook: a Uniform System of Citation. 15th ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law Review Association, 1991.

Documents Service Desk, Call # K.U55 15th ed.

OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesday 6:30-8:30 p.m.

I have scheduled evening office hours. I hope that this will conflict less with your classes and make it easier to contact me. I will announce any changes to the office hours schedule in class and via e-mail.

Unlike other faculty who often choose to work at home and may spend only a limited amount of time in their offices, library faculty spend most of the work week in the library, at their desk. You will, inevitably, be tempted to track me down for help when you get stuck. Please understand that teaching this course in not my only responsibility and that I may not be able to help you on the spur of the moment. I will be glad to set up an appointment that fits both our schedules if you can not come during regular office hours.

One Last Word

I want this course to be both challenging and useful. If you enrolled in this course believing that is would be "easy" because it's "just the library", please think again. While effective library research isn't difficult, it is a skill that takes considerable practice to develop. This is very much a "hands on" course designed to give you that practice. I will do everything I can to make it a worthwhile experience. I hope you will work equally hard. I once had a student tell me this course was one of the hardest but most worthwhile courses she ever took at Penn State. She felt it gave her skills that would last far beyond her academic career. I hope you will feel the same way at the end of this semester.

Schedule:

DATE/TOPIC

August

- 23 Introduction to course,
- 25 Documents Collections and locating government publications in LIAS
- 28 No Class
- 30 Locating Background Information Handbooks, Periodicals, and Newspapers

Sept.

1 U.S. Government Resources in Foreign Relations Research Part 1 -- The President & and Executive Agencies

4 LABOR DAY

6 U.S. Government Resources in Foreign Relations Research Pt. 2. Congressional Role and Resources

First Exercise and Preliminary Topic Proposal Due

- 8 Library Research Period
- 11 League of Nations/Permanent Court of International Justice Exercise 2 Due
- 13 United Nations overview of the organization Final Topic Proposal Due
- 15 Official Records and Mimeo documents of the UN
- 18 Secretariat and subsidiary agencies of the United Nations
- 20 Library Research Period
- 22 International Court of Justice Exercise 3 Due
- 25 Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, pt. 1
- 27 Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, pt. 2
- 29 Internet Resources from the United Nations

Oct.

- 2 European Union overview of the organization Exercise 4 Due
- 4 The Commission of the European Union pt. 1
- 6 The Council of the European Union
- 9 European Parliament
- 11 European Court of Justice
- 13 Online Resources from the EU
- 16 Online Resources from the EU -- Internet
- 18 Library Research Period

- 20 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Exercise 5 Due
- 23 North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- 25 Internet Resources from NATO
- 27 Library Research Period
- 30 Organization of American States Exercise 6 Due

Nov.

- 1 Specialized IGO's
- 3 Regional IGO's
- 6 Library Research Period
- 8 Treaties

Term Paper Outline and sample annotations Due

- 10 Library Research Period
- 13 Special Topics: Statistical Information

Exercise 7 Due

- 15 Special Topics: Lexis/Nexis Country Information
- 17 Introduction to Foreign Government Information
- 20 Canada -- Executive Agencies
- 22 Canada -- Parliamentary Materials
- 24 Great Britain
- 27 Australia
- 29 Internet Resources from Foreign Governments

Dec.

1 Library Research Period

4 Class evaluations Exercise 8 Due

6 Library Research Period

8 Final Project Due Final Take home exam due no later than scheduled exam period.

TOPIC PROPOSAL

You will prepare two versions of your topic proposal.

Preliminary Version: DUE Sept. 6, 5 p.m..

The preliminary version of the topic proposal will be a 1-2-paragraph statement of the research problem you will work with throughout the semester. It is a brief statement of what you want to explore. You may choose a fairly broad area to explore at this point. You will need to do some background reading to outline the proposal. Over the first few weeks of the semester as we begin to examine some sources you will have the opportunity to refine and narrow your topic I will read these and return them to you with suggestions. At this point I want to be sure that you choose a topic that will lend itself to completing the various exercises I will be giving out. This can be hand written.

Final Topic Proposal: DUE Sept. 13, 5 p.m..

This is a 1-2 page statement of your research problem. By the time you turn in the final topic proposal you should have completed a substantial amount of background reading on your topic and have a clear idea of the focus of your paper. I will be looking for a coherent statement of the issues involved and how you propose to address these issues in your paper. This will ultimately be converted into the INTRODUCTION portion of your final project. I will read these and return them to you with comments. This should be typed.

Attached is a list of suggested topics. Please feel free to suggest others.

Because you will be working with this topic for the entire semester I recommend that you: Choose something that interests you!

Choose a topic that you can use to write a paper in another International Relations class either this semester or in an upcoming semester. You will not write the term paper in this class but you can use this class to put together a bibliography you can use later. I think you will find this class less abstract and more interesting if you have a concrete project in mind. You will also make maximum use of your time if you can use your research in this class to prepare a paper for another class. You may want to consult with the faculty who teach other political science courses for ideas for topics.

Choose a topic with fairly broad (i.e. global) implications. You will be looking at materials from a wide range of organizations and attempting to find materials they have produced, so choose a topic where several countries (including the US) and IGOs might be involved. If your topic is too narrow you will have difficulty completing the exercises. I recommend issues that are of interest to European countries and organizations as these are most likely to be covered by the EU, which is one of the major organizations we will explore.

Term Paper Outline and sample annotations -- Due November 8

The only way to write an effective term paper is to develop a framework for the issues to be covered and organize them in a logical manner. The best way to achieve this is by outlining your term paper. This exercise is designed to force you to do this! Once you outline the issues involved you can then proceed to locate sufficient materials to address each item in your outline. You can adapt your outline as you locate more information. There should be no last minute scramble for a piece of missing information.

In addition I will expect to see citations to 4 or 5 of the major sources you will use in the term paper and the annotations that explain their usefulness in your term paper.

I will expect your outline to be in standard hierarchical form and annotations in standard bibliographic style. Both should be typed. At this point I am checking to see that you understand exactly what I expect in the final project. The outline will ultimately become your Table of Contents for your final project. Annotations should be included in your final project.

FINAL PROJECT

DUE: No Later than December 8 at 5 p.m.

All term papers should have the following elements

Cover Page

Outline /Table of Contents: Before you ever begin to write a paper you should have completed your outline (table of contents) and collected and read all the resources you will use to write the paper. The final project for this class takes you to the point where you would begin writing the body of your term paper.

An introduction to your topic (3-4 pages). This is essentially the table of contents (which you would draw from the outline you completed earlier in the semester) and introduction to your term paper. In it you will outline the scope of your topic and the primary points you intend to cover. I will be looking for a well organized table of contents and coherent statement of the problem you intend to examine in your paper To do this you will need to do some background reading on your topic.

The annotated bibliography of sources you would use if you actually wrote this paper. All citations should be in proper bibliographic format. The annotations should consist of 3-4 sentences that describe each publication and the reason you chose to include it in the bibliography, i.e. why is it an appropriate source for the topic you have chosen. I will be looking at the sources to be sure that they fit within the scope of the table of contents and introduction above. The sources should adequately address all the points in the introduction -- i.e. there should be no holes in your research.

The term paper you are doing the research for would be an upper division paper of 20-25 pages in length. Please DO NOT ask me how many citations you need! You need enough to cover the topic. The background reading you do should tell you the points you need to cover.

A synopsis of your research strategy.(3-4 pages) Hopefully by the end of the course you will have learned to effectively plan a research strategy. In this portion of your project I want you to objectively examine how you approached your research for this topic and tell me what you feel you did well, where you feel you went astray, and how in retrospect you feel you could improve your research plan.

You will need to read some background material on your topic in order decide what to include in your term paper. You MUST EXAMINE each of the sources that you include in your bibliography. You will examine far more sources than you will ultimately include. You will be looking for the BEST sources, not the first ones you stumble on.

We will talk more about the Final Project as the semester progresses.

Remember, as soon as you begin working on the exercises you begin looking for sources for your final project. The more thorough you are with the exercises the further along you are with the final project.

Possible Topics -- these topics are just to get you thinking, there are many more possibilities.

Peacekeeping: The role of peacekeeping the in "new world order" or a case study of peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, Somalia, etc.

Sanctions: The use of sactions as an instrument of foreign policy or a case study of the use of sanctions in a particular case. When can the use of military force be justified?

Case studies: Iraq, Haiti, Greneda, Panama, Somalia, etc.

Arms Control and Disarmament Issues

Nuclear arms and the Non-proliferation treaty

Control of Conventional Weapons

Europe after the Collapse of the Soviet Union. What happens to the former soviet satellite nations? Should they be integrated into the EU

Expansion of NATO

Expansion of the EU

Environment and Development Issues

Sustainable Development and International Relations

Agricultural Policies and International Trade issues

Population, national policies, and IGO's

Social Issues

Role of Women in Development

Human Rights Issues

War Crimes -- international organization responses

Political Prisoners --

Family Planning/Abortion

International Trade

The GATT vs. Regional Trade Agreements

US and WTO, if GATT is so good why were we talking about a trade wars?

Economic issues

What is the role of the OECD in promoting economic stability. World Bank? Regional $\,$

Development Banks?

A typical exercise: To be turned in with a research log. Depending on their topics they might not be able to answer all questions in an exercise. If they were unable to find an appropriate source I asked them to talk about why this might be true in their diaries.

Exercise 3: United Nations Documents

- 1. Using some of the background sources discussed in class, try to identify the agencies and sub-agencies within the UN that are most likely to be publishing on your topic. What is the role of background resources in helping you develop your paper?
- 2. Locate an article in the UN Chronicle on your topic. Give me the complete citation? Does it cite you to specific UN documents? What are they? Locate them and provide me with a complete citation and a brief annotation
- 3. Using the UN Yearbook, locate a discussion on your topic. Give me a complete citation to this entry. What are some of the documents cited. Locate at least one of these and give me a complete citation and annotation.
- 4. From the records (mimeo and/or official records) of the UN locate at least one of each of the follwing
 - Debate related to your topic. Identify who spoke and summarize their discussion
 - Letters or other supporting documents related to your topic
 - Report of an agency, subsidiary agency or committee related to your topic
- 5. Locate a document from the secretariat that is related to your topic.