

New York University
Center for European and Mediterranean Studies

V42.0300 Senior Research Seminar in European Studies

Fall 2009, Wed 9:30am-12pm
CEMS Conference Room, 285 Mercer St, 7th fl

Instructor: Dr. Sylvia Maier
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Course Description and Objectives:

This seminar is designed to introduce you to the principles and methods of qualitative research, the nuts and bolts of the research process, different research methods and methodologies, scholarly writing as well as sources and their use in the field of European Studies. We will discuss how to “do” qualitative methodology, i.e. how to select a topic, how to formulate an exciting and original research question about it, how to choose a suitable research method, how to collect data, and how to make use of the incredible wealth of resources on Europe. An additional goal is to familiarize you with the epistemological and methodological debates about qualitative research, its place in the field of social/political science as well as the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methodology. This seminar is designed as a seminar-workshop--although I will also lecture in the first class meetings--in which you will work collaboratively towards your final research paper by presenting your own project, and, discussing, commenting on and critiquing each other’s project drafts. Needless to say, this requires a high degree of participation and responsibility: it is crucially important that you critically read your classmates’ work and offer **thoughtful** comments and criticism. While this may sound daunting at first, I assure you that you’ll soon find your classmates to be valuable (and honest!) reviewers. We will not meet every week, so you’ll have longer periods for independent research and writing. In the weeks we do not meet, however, I’d like to meet with you individually during the official class period to discuss your progress and address any problems you may have.

Course Requirements, Grading and Important Dates:

There are two principal requirements for this course: (1) regular class attendance and active class participation, and (2) your research paper, at least 25 pages (approx. 6250 words) in length, complete with references and a bibliography due in my mailbox on Wed, December 16, 5pm.

Research Project Outline	5%	Due October 3 (for presentation on October 7)
First Draft	15%	Due October 24 (for presentation on Oct 28)
Second Draft	20%	Due November 14 (for presentation on November 18)
Final Research Paper	35%	Due December 16
Class Participation	25%	

a. Research Project Outline:

3 pages. Every student will give a 5-7min presentation (the so-called “elevator talk”) of his or her project outline for class discussion and comments. Distribute copies to class and me via email by Saturday, October 3, midnight.

b. First Draft (Introduction, complete Literature Review, part of Background, part of Theory):

Approx. 10 pages/2750 words. Every student will give a 10 min presentation (=conference length) of his or her first paper draft for class discussion and comments. Distribute copies to class and me via email by Saturday, October 24, midnight.

c. Second Draft (Introduction, complete Literature Review, complete Theory, part of Background):

Approx. 15-18 pages/3750-4500 words. Every student will give a 10min presentation (=conference length) of his or her first paper draft for class discussion and comments. Distribute copies to class and me via email by Saturday, November 14, midnight.

d. Final Draft (Introduction, complete Literature Review, Theory, RD, and Background):

This should be the final draft of your projects. You may but do not need to circulate your almost final draft to our classmates or me for feedback for class on December 9. However, we will discuss your drafts and any problems you may have in class on December 9.

Attendance Policy:

Class attendance is mandatory. If you have to miss a class for medical, religious or family reasons, please let me and your teammates know beforehand. If you miss more than one class, every additional missed class meeting will result in a one-half grade reduction of your course grade.

Readings:

There are two required readings for this class. They are available for purchase at the NYU Book Center and at any of the larger on-line booksellers.

1. Booth, Colomb and Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago. 0226065669
2. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago. 0226823377

9 September

**Welcome and Introductions. Some Epistemological Questions.
The Problem of “Knowing.” The Nature of Qualitative Research.**
In Class: Critical Analysis Exercise

Recommended Readings: Skim the relevant passages of these works to get an idea of their main points:
Plato, *Theaetetus*, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/theatu.html>
Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. <http://18th.eserver.org/hume-enquiry.html>
Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting The Reason, and of Searching for Truth in the Sciences*. <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdf/descdisc.pdf>
Popper, “Science as Falsification,” in *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. http://www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/popper_falsification.html
Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/Kuhn.html>

16 September

**Qualitative Methodology: Introduction. Research as “Puzzle-Solving.” What Counts as Originality?
The Nuts and Bolts of Research, Part I: Picking a Topic, Doing a Literature Review, Formulating a
Research Question, Hypothesis and/or Argument, Using Theories.**
In Class: Project Exercise

Readings:

Booth et al, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 7, 8; Recommended: Chapters 9 and 10
King, Keohane and Verba (KKV), *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chapter 1 (on BB)
Galvan, *Literature Reviews* (on BB)

23 September

**The Nuts and Bolts of Research, Part II: The (Dreaded) Research Design (RD). Choosing a
Methodology. Selecting a Case. The Comparative Method. Most Similar and Most Dissimilar
Systems Design.**
In Class: RD Exercise

Readings:

Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and The Comparative Method” (on BB)

Landman, *Issues and Methods on Comparative Politics*, Chapters 1 and 2 (on BB)

30 September

Mandatory Library Session with Librarian Andrew Lee: Using Sources and Databases.
Meet in the Atrium of Bobst Library at 9.20am.

Readings:

Booth et al, Chapters 5 and 6.

7 October

In-Class Presentations and Discussion of Project Proposals.

14 October

“Doing” Qualitative Research. Methods of Collecting and Analyzing Empirical Material. Interviews (UCAIHS), Ethnographic Fieldwork, Other Methods. Ethical Concerns.

Assignment 1: Analyzing Interviews; Doing an Interview

Assignment 2: Carefully review NYU’s UCAIHS Website (important policies and procedures)

<http://www.nyu.edu/ucaih/>

Readings:

Booth, sections on plagiarism and ethics in Chapters 13 and 18

Christians, “Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research” (on BB)

21 October

Individual Research and Writing. Meet with SM.

28 October

In-Class Presentations and Discussion of First Drafts.

4 November

New Paradigms. Watching out for Biases. Gender, Ethnicity. Personal Narratives.

Readings:

Addelson, “The Man of Professional Wisdom” (on BB)

Stivers, “Reflections on the Role of Personal Narrative in Social Science” (BB)

Denzin and Lincoln, *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, Chapters TBD.

11 November

Individual Research and Writing, Meet with SM.

18 November

In-Class Presentations and Discussion of Second Drafts.

25 November

Topic and readings will be tailored to your specific research needs and interests.

2 December

Individual Research and Writing, Meet with SM.

9 December

In-Class Discussion of (Almost) Final Paper Drafts.

Final Papers Due Wednesday, December 16, 5pm, in my mailbox