Welcome to Senior Thesis, a hopefully fun and adventuresome “capstone” to your career at UST. This will be your very own research project, largely self-directed. Senior Thesis is the culmination of your development as an International Studies and/or International Development major. To this point, you have attempted to master a variety of skills and knowledge sets in subjects required or selected by the university. Thesis provides the opportunity for your own synthesis - to combine your prior coursework, international experience, methodology, and communication skills into a single, intensive, and directed research project on a topic which you choose because of your interest in that subject or issue.

Thesis is constructed to allow you as much creative freedom as possible, but within a pre-defined structure. Our goal is to direct your inquiry such that the final product is a cohesive and coherent thesis paper of approximately 25-35 pages. This final product is created through an iterative process of revision and resubmission over the course of the semester. Our syllabus is very clear on assignments and due dates.

Students will spend the first week of the course developing a research proposal. This proposal will spell out the topic area, method, and theoretical approaches that the student will take in the coming months. We will then spend time learning how to create and use a literature review, followed by the writing of a literature review. This will be followed by discussion on theoretical modeling and methods. Students will develop their own models (based on the literature) for testing in the empirical portion of their papers. The fourth step in the thesis process is where students carry out data collection, analysis, and present main findings. The fifth step is the conclusion, in which a clear answer to the research question is presented, policy prescriptions provided, and an overall summary of the research is presented.

Students should be aware that individual instruction is most directly conveyed through professor comments on draft papers and individual meetings. Students will address professor comments and make corrections where indicated. Upon doing this, students may realize that previous portions of the paper may be inadequate. The student is then expected to revise and resubmit prior sections. This is the iterative process at work. At a point, the “linear” process of paper writing breaks down and a student may find herself simultaneously addressing corrections/changes to multiple parts of the thesis.
### Schedule for Senior Thesis Fall 2015

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| Aug. 24   | Review Syllabus and Expectations  
Brainstorming and Topic Designation (Context, Observation, Question)  
Assignment 1: 15 relevant citations – Due Aug. 31  
Assignment 2: Two-page Research Proposal – Due Sept. 8 via email |
| Aug. 31   | Discussion of Literature Review (First hour)  
Bring copy of one research paper with lit review sample  
Assignment 3: 8-10 page lit review draft – Due Sept. 14 |
| Sep. 7    | Labor Day Holiday |
| 14        | Discussion of Research Proposals and Lit Review Drafts (First hour)  
Discussion of Theory Section - Theory, Hypotheses, Modeling  
Assignment 4: Theoretical statement, draft hypotheses – Due Sept. 21  
Assignment 5: Illustration of Theoretical Model – Due Sept. 21 |
| 21        | Discussion of Assignments 4 and 5 |
| 28        | Individual Meetings*  
Assignment 6: 3-4 page Theory Section draft and Model – due Oct. 12 |
| Oct. 5    | Individual Meetings (Schedule appointment with professor) |
| 12        | Discuss Methodology Section – Operationalizing, Data, and Method for Testing Hypotheses  
Assignment 7: 2 page Methodology draft – due Oct. 19 |
| 19        | Discuss Methodology Drafts  
Assignment 8: Collect Data – Due Oct. 26 |
| 26        | Discussion of Body Section - Presenting data, conducting analysis, findings  
Assignment 9: Conduct preliminary analysis – write-up 3 findings – Due Nov. 9 |
| Nov. 2    | Individual Meetings*  
Assignment 10: Write first 5 pages of Body Section – Due Nov. 9 |
| 9         | Discussion of Conclusion Section  
Assignment 11: Finish Body Section – Due Nov. 23 |
| 16        | Individual Meetings* |
| 23        | Discuss Body Sections  
Assignment 12: Write Conclusion Section – Due Nov. 30  
Assignment 13: Write Final version of Introduction – Due Nov. 30 |
| 30        | Individual Meetings* |
| Dec. 7    | Group Meeting - Submit final Thesis |

*Individual meetings will be scheduled during class time
Departmental Policy on Completion of the Thesis

It is expected that students will complete their theses by the end of semester. *Only under extraordinary circumstances* will a student be granted an “I” or incomplete grade. An “I” indicates that a significant portion of the required work is done, with only a portion left to complete after the regular term. If an “I” is not converted into a regular grade within one semester, the student will automatically receive the grade of “F.” There will be no “IE” (extended incompletes) granted.

**Grade**
Your grade is based upon the following components:

- Class attendance and Individual meetings………………….20%
- Timely submission of assignments (13 assignments)………………….30%
- Completion and Quality of the Senior Thesis………………………….50%
  - Introduction………………….10%
  - Literature Review………25%
  - Theory and Modeling…..15%
  - Analytical Body ………..40%
  - Conclusion ...............10%
Thesis Template

Papers will be organized in the following manner:

I. Introduction (approx. 3 pp)
   • Present the context of the paper.
   • Present the research question or thesis.
   • Discuss the research question or thesis.
   • Provide a "road map" of the rest of the paper.

II. Literature Review (approx. 8-10 pp)
   • What previous research has been conducted regarding your question or thesis?
   • What were the findings/conclusions of the previous research?
   • What was the method used by others to arrive at their conclusions?
   • Identify key areas of debate and consensus.
   • Identify how your paper will contribute to this literature.

III. Theory, Modeling and Methodology (approx. 3-4 pp)
   • Begins with summary of the theory section.
   • Your discussion of your theoretical approach.
   • Provide testable hypotheses based on your model.
   • Illustrate in a visual model with elaboration.
   • Provide measures for your variables.
   • Identify your data sources.
   • Discuss how you will test this data, i.e., your method.

IV. Results/Findings (approx. 10-12 pp)
   • This section can be quantitative or qualitative. Even if qualitative, however, there
     must be an attempt to be as systematic as possible.
   • Equipped with what you learned from the literature review and theory section, test
     your research question/proposition to find support or refutation for your expected
     finding.
   • The study portion is different from the literature review because the student is
     collecting his or her own data/information about a case or cases and then testing it
     independently.
   • A summary of the major findings should be presented at the end of this section.

V. Conclusion (approx. 3 pp)
   • Summarize the basic goal of the paper and whether it was achieved in the course
     of the paper.
   • Summarize the basic findings and whether or not they were what were expected.
   • Indicate what was learned by the student during the course of this exercise.
   • Provide policy prescriptions, future research suggestions, hypothetical “next
     steps” were this line of research to be continued.

VI. Bibliography

VII. Appendices (if necessary)
Brainstorming a Topic and Developing the Research Question

1) Write on a subject that interests you.
2) Develop a list of questions that arise from this subject area.
3) Be realistic about your ability to find literature and data for this subject.
4) As you develop your idea, check internet for extant literature and data. Based on this search, you may tweak your initial ideas.
5) Develop ideas from reading the paper, journals, and magazines devoted to international affairs.
6) Extend on a subject on which you have previously written. This does not mean add a handful of pages to an old paper, but significantly revise and rewrite.
7) Find a topic, such as “human trafficking” and ask questions related to it, such as:
   a. What are the causes of ….
   b. What are the consequences of ….
   c. How is human trafficking related to something else?
8) Review literature on your subject to identify persistent questions and challenges (usually summarized in concluding chapters/sections).

A poorly or vaguely worded research question will result in a paper that meanders and creates great frustration for the student. Make no assumptions that a reader will “know what you mean” with the wording of a research question. A clear research question is best expressed in a single interrogative sentence. Corollary questions will naturally emerge, and this is standard.

Research Proposal – A Good model is the introductory chapter to any scholarly book.

1) **Paper Topic.** What is the topic that you are going to write about? This paper does not have to state an *a priori* thesis, political position, or any other “pre-determined” statement. It is best to simply approach this paper as a curious scholar. You have a question about the world and this is your chance to answer it.
2) **Establish context for the topic.** What’s going on in the world that makes one want to conduct research on this particular issue? Justify why this is an important issue to address.
3) **Research Question.** What is a specific question that you are going to pose and then answer with this thesis? Obviously, there will be more questions that arise as corollaries, but you must pose a single interrogative sentence that captures the “gist” of the matter. Indicate your primary research question, but also include corollary questions. Elaborate on the theoretical and empirical underpinning for the research question/s. The research question is not only intended to help the reader keep attention to your main thesis, but also helps the author stay on track and on topic. Every page or so, you should ask yourself, “Is what I’m writing speaking to the research question?” If not, you’re on a tangent.
4) **Research Model.** What literatures/authors will you explore to help you answer the research question? Has your question been addressed extensively so that you are going to “wade through the mess” and provide some new organization or conclusions? Are you seeking to “twist” something out there or are you going to provide a new “direction”? How will you synthesize this literature to arrive at your answer? Will you compare and
contrast arguments and logic? Will you collect data and “test” assertions made in the literature? Will you write an intensive case study or include a group of cases to test for the answer to your question?

5) **Contribution.** Ultimately, what do you think that your contribution is going to be? Will you seek to clarify, re-classify, counter existing theses, offer a new thesis, etc.?

6) **Conclusion and Roadmap.** Provide concluding remarks and a “roadmap” to the paper that briefly describes how the paper (research project) will unfold toward answering the research question.

**Section I – Introduction**

Your research proposal will be the basis for your introduction. By the time you finish this project, however, what you wrote will need to be revised to reflect the realities of the final product. Chances are, the paper you complete will not look exactly like the one you have proposed. That’s okay. Revising the research proposal into the Introduction will be one of the last things you do.

**Section II: Literature Review**

A literature review is a review of collected works related to your research question. The goal of the review is, broadly speaking, to summarize the “state of the literature” with regard to concepts, definitions, measurement, methods, and findings. This is not just a “review” but also a critique in which the author (you) make statements about the relative levels of consensus and debate within a literature; characterize “progress”; and list the basic findings within the literature.

With a good review, you are equipped to place your research within an extant literature. You draw on what has been done as a foundation for your own research, place your own study within it, and then are able to ascertain what your ultimate contribution has been to the literature. Your research should add to the literature/debate; otherwise one is left to question the utility of so much effort on your part.

The literature review provides: basic background and state of the literature for your own study, provides a “big picture” of the literature so that you will have a better idea as to what your particular contribution is going to be, and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to your own research question. The lit. review is organized topically.

A key difference between the lit. review and annotated bibliography is that the lit. review does not devote considerable space to a single author, rather to groups of thought within the broader literature. Unless you are going to devote considerable space to critiquing a single author as central to your paper, you should focus on groups of thinkers that share essentially the same conclusions, but come into conflict with other groups with different findings. What are the basic arguments, interconnecting theories, method, and conclusions for each “school of thought?” How does this group differ from other groups? Why would one group be “on the right track” while another is “way off base”? This gives you a better since of how your paper will contribute to the larger debate.

**A. Annotated Bibliography**

Each entry in your annotated bibliography should address the following items.
1) thesis/research question
2) basic theory underlying the work
3) Method used to reach conclusions (supporting material, literature reviewed, method)
4) primary conclusions (stick to about three if many)
5) how this work will “fit” into your paper

B. References

**When must one cite a work?** If your own idea or "common knowledge", then no cite. If you use someone else's ideas, words, or data then cite (and quote if borrowing *verbatim* or paraphrasing). Typically, the literature review will be based on published material. The case portion of the paper may call for very current information and, therefore, electronic sources may be used. Do not use “encyclopedic sources”, rely upon primary sources for definitions of terms and concepts.

C. Citation Format:
Your citation format must follow APA Style Manual.

Format for the Literature Review Section

1. **Introduction to the topic**
   a. What is the topic/topics to be covered?
   b. What is the relevance of these topics to your research question?
   c. Road map – how will you assemble this material and how will it culminate in understanding key concepts, language, and linkages relevant to your question?

2. **Review of:**
   a. Key concepts and definitions, methods, and findings
   b. Current findings and debates within the literature
   c. Review of “school of thought”
      i. Attention to relevant individual authors
      ii. Attention to groups of authors

3. **Synthesis and critique of the literature.** This should identify areas of consensus and debate drawn from the reviewed articles in order to provide summary points about the “state of the literature” on your topic.
   a. Are scholars asking essentially the same question or not? Discuss.
   b. Are scholars defining key concepts the same way or are their large differences?
   c. Does everyone use the same kinds of data and measures? Discuss.
   d. Does everyone use a different method or not? Discuss.
   e. Does everyone come up with similar or different findings? Discuss.

4. **Conclusion in which you:**
   a. Summarize the state of the literature
   b. Summarize key findings in the literature
   c. Summarize key groups of thought
d. Discuss and segue into the theory section of the paper

Section III:
A. Theoretical Model

Based on your review of the literature and your own observations, you have developed some expectations about why and how one thing is related to another. There will be contending schools of thought, and your paper will need to present a theoretical position on such relationships.

As you have learned elsewhere, the Scientific Method requires scholars to present theory (that explains connections) and then provide testable hypotheses (that may support or refute the theory). Remember, you are not out to “prove” a thesis. You are to answer a question, which may or may not align with your own worldview. Hypotheses are not “proven,” rather they are tested. The scholar should not introduce her own bias by “making the data fit” her own view.

Hypotheses are typically stated in “if-then” format with explicit statement about the direction of the relationship. Please remember that the theoretical story must first be provided. This story is then followed by a “summary hypothesis” such as:

You have spent the last several pages explaining one cause of human trafficking – poverty. Human trafficking sources tends to be highest in contexts of socio-economic stress and sourcing tends to be lower in wealthier settings. So, a natural hypothesis would be:

H1: If per capita income increases (by some amount), then the level of human trafficking sourcing will decrease (by some amount).

Over the next several pages, you have discussed how destinations for trafficked people tend to be in higher income settings. So, although trafficked people tend to originate in poor countries, they may end up in higher income countries as exploited labor. So, a next natural hypothesis might be:

H2: If per capita income increases (by some amount), then the country is more likely (by some amount) to be a destination country for trafficked people.

These are “testable” because per capita income can be measured and levels of human trafficking can be measured (to some extent). You will provide the data sources for each in the next section on Methodology.

Once theory has been discussed and hypotheses presented, the next step is to provide a visualization of your theory, known as a model. This is a one-page graphic (usually a flowchart) that summarizes your explanation into a visual.

You will use different shapes, lines, and connections to illustrate variables and their relationship to each other. For example, a major variable could be illustrated as a large, bold square, whereas
a minor variable could be a smaller square with no bold lines. A bold line would indicate strong connections to another variable or a dashed line could illustrate weak connections.

**B. Methodology**

Think of the methodology section as the instructions for a recipe. Your prior theory section has presented the ingredients and amounts. The methodology section provides the mixing and “baking” instructions. As in baking a cake, one might have all the right ingredients, but if not mixed or cooked properly, the result will not be credible.

This section provides the reader with a step by step process in which you have taken the ingredients (variables) and tested (cooked) them in a way that best represents your intention. Remember, method is driven by theory. Theory is driven by the research question.

Your first section is a discussion of the method to be used. This could be statistical (involving coefficients) and/or descriptive (data tables showing patterns). Even qualitative methods require a systematic way of putting the components of a story together in a logical manner and one that the reader will understand. You will have learned a variety of such methods in your Research Methods in International Studies course.

Secondly, you will discuss your sample of cases. For example, as part of your method, you will need to decide if you want to conduct a:
- cross-national study – every possible country or a sample of countries from around the world
- regional study – includes only those countries from a certain region (wealthy, poor, etc.)
- case study – a single case

Third, you will want to determine the years of coverage. Will you select only the most recent years for analysis or draw from multiple years over time?

Fourth, you will need to discuss the sources for the data you will use to test the hypotheses. Standard data sources from the web are listed below.

**C. Data Sources (just a couple of examples)**


*Elections*
- Elections around the World: [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org)
- Liiphart Election Archives: [www.dodgson.ucsd.edu/lij/](http://www.dodgson.ucsd.edu/lij/)

*Female representation across the world*
- [www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm)

*Constitutions*
- [www.confinder.richmond.edu](http://www.confinder.richmond.edu)

*World Values Survey*
- [www.worldvaluessurvey.org/](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/)

*Comparative Democratization Project*
- [www.democracy.stanford.edu](http://www.democracy.stanford.edu)

*Political regimes, rights, and case studies*
- Freedom House: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)
- POLITY Data: [www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/](http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/)
Section IV: Results/Findings

The body of the paper is considered “the meat” of the paper. This is where the author connects the hypotheses, data, and method to begin a line of discussion that leads to answering the research question. While content of the body will vary from paper to paper, the basic structure of the body will not vary so much. How to write this section?

Part I.
- a. Review where you’ve been and where you’re at in the paper at this point.
- b. Remind the reader of the research question and its relevance.
- c. Provide a roadmap to this section of the paper.

Part II. Descriptive/ Historical Material
- a. Take this opportunity to provide narrative about the cases studies, phenomena at work.
- b. Provide plenty of anecdotes (examples) that illustrate the problem being addressed.
- c. Present descriptive graphs and tables.

Part II. Body Sections
- a. Arranged by hypothesis.
- b. Present hypothesis tests, including the “numbers” as well as graphs and tables.
- c. Explain “the numbers” and whether the data support or refute the hypotheses.

Part IV. Conclusion
- a. Summary findings of your research.
- b. Sometimes, presenting the summary findings in a single table is helpful.

Section V: Conclusion

The Conclusion performs four basic functions:

1) Summarize the study findings by answer the research question.
2) Discuss the findings with reference to any surprises, lessons learned, etc. This is where you demonstrate the learning process as it unfolded with this project.
3) Prescriptions – How can your findings be applied to resolving the issues addressed in the paper?
4) Future research – What were some weaknesses in the paper that can be addressed in the future? If given more time, how would you change your study? What new research questions has this project revealed to you?