

**IDS 4911: Introduction to Undergraduate Research**  
Spring 2025  
January 13 – April 30, 2025  
Mondays & Wednesdays, Period 5 (11:45 AM -12:35 PM)  
Matherly, Room 13

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### **Course Description**

The Spring 2025 Civic Scholars course will introduce students to issues about the pressing issues facing global communities through an interdisciplinary social science lens. With instructor guidance, students will design an original research project related to a global public policy issue. Potential areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, climate challenges, economics, social welfare, health and wellbeing, sustainable cities, and democratic governance.

The Graham Center Civic Scholars program provides undergraduate students with an entry-level opportunity to conduct an original research project. The course will introduce interdisciplinary social science research design and methods, and students will learn the components of the research process through hands-on learning activities, including forming research questions and theory development, identifying data sources and testing hypotheses, and interpreting and communicating results. Students will learn to critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of methodological approaches used in research. Overall, this course is designed to instruct students on the appropriate way to conduct interdisciplinary research. To meet the objectives of this course, we will explore (1) the interdisciplinary research perspective, (2) the elements of the empirical research process, and (3) research design, and (4) how to appropriately communicate research findings. Students will develop an original research project related to the topic of global public policy issues and present their research at the Annual Bob Graham Center Research Symposium on Saturday, April 19, 2025, from 8 AM - Noon.

Course Objectives. Students will:

1. Describe the interdisciplinary social science research perspective;
2. Understand central concepts related to the research process;
3. Develop appropriate and meaningful research questions;
4. Develop a research design appropriate to the research question;
5. Produce an original research project (individual & collaborative components)
6. Develop a deeper understanding of critical public policy issues impacting global communities.

## Readings

There are no required textbooks for this course. Texts will consist of scholarly articles, current news articles, policy papers, and online resources. These will appear in the online Canvas course shell.

Scholarly articles are listed in the course schedule below, under the weeks for which they are assigned. All scholarly articles can be accessed through the [UF Libraries website](#), if you need help navigating the library website, [tutorials are available here](#). From your computer, you will need to be on the [UF VPN Network](#).

## Grading Policy

Your grade in this class will be based on four components: class attendance, & participation, Perusall Readings, research drafts, and a final research paper. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas or in class. Late Assignments will not be accepted without a university-approved excuse and instructor approvals. Every component is worth 100 points, the weight of each is listed below:

Attendance, Participation and In-Class Assignments	25%
Perusall Readings	15%
Research Paper Drafts	20%
Final Research Paper	40%

Attendance, Participation and In-Class Assignments: You are required to attend class. By acceptance into this program, the expectation is that you will be present in class and willing to participate. Attendance will be taken daily. In extreme circumstances, we reserve the right to waive an attendance/participation grade; but will only do so if provided documentation of a university-approved excuse (military service, documented illness, jury duty, university-approved activity, etc.). In-class assignments will allow you to engage with the material and your classmates to deepen your understanding of the public policy topic and/or the research process. Readings will be provided on Canvas and in class.

The instructors will grade your participation based on your observed behaviors in class, using the following guidelines:

- Poor Participation (D-F): The student rarely or never offers comments and questions in class, and/or does not appear to be regularly paying attention to lectures, presentations, or in-class activities. The student may only participate if prompted;
- Fair Participation (C): The student occasionally offers comments and questions in class, and/or is mostly engaged in class, paying attention to lectures, presentation, and in-class activities. The student may occasionally have to be prompted to participate;
- Good Participation (B-A-): The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than surface level understanding of course material, and/or the student regularly pays attention to lectures, presentations, and in-class activities. The student rarely requires prompting to participate;

- Excellent Participation (A): The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than a surface level understanding of course materials, and the student regularly pays attention to lectures, presentation, and in-class activities. The student never requires prompting to participate.

Perusall Readings: All readings must be annotated on Perusall, an interactive software that allows you to read and annotate a text along with your peers. While you are expected to review material prior to class, Perusall *annotations* must be completed no later than the Friday of the week they are assigned at 11:59 PM. You can highlight, ask questions, and respond to your classmates' comments and questions.

A good Perusall annotation engages with the material, and/or your peers' comments. We are looking for something more than "that's interesting." That being said, we are also not looking for paradigm-shifting comments. There is no minimum or maximum number of annotations per reading, but we do expect quality, thoughtful (and respectful) comments on the readings.

Civic Scholars Research Project: You will complete a research paper over the course of the semester. The research paper is 12-15 pages (typed, double spaced), and will address a topic of your choosing pertaining to global public policy. To assist in this task, the research paper is broken up into five separate assignments, worth 20% of your grade, with the final product worth 40% of the grade. Further, you may choose to either write a paper on your own, or co-author with no more than one other student in the class (no groups larger than 2). Co-author groups will be required to complete a short contract outlining roles and responsibilities. The due dates of each component are listed below. Instructions and the rubric are available on Canvas.

- Research Question and Description of Topic: **January 24 at 11:59 PM**
- Annotated Bibliography: **February 12 @ 11:59 PM**
- Literature Review and Theory: **March 5 @ 11:59 PM**
- Research Design Draft: **March 31 @ 11:59 PM**
- Research Symposium Slides: **April 19 @ 12:00 PM**
- Bob Graham Center Research Symposium: **April 19 @ 8:30 AM**
- Final Paper: **April 28 @ 12:00 PM**

Your final paper is due by **12:00 PM on Monday, April 28 via Canvas**. The paper should include all parts listed above (and outlined in the final paper instruction guide). Your final paper should incorporate feedback from your previous drafts. Grades will be based on substance and style. Use proper grammar, appropriate language, and proofread and spell-check your paper!

Extra Credit: If you make an effort throughout the semester, you should not need extra credit. HOWEVER, there may be occasions when we will offer extra credit to the ENTIRE class to attend a guest lecture, view a program, etc. We will not offer individual extra credit.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will only be accepted with instructor approval and may be subject to a 1-letter grade deduction per day late, up to a maximum of three days late. After the assignment is 3 days late, we will no longer accept it.

### **Grading Scale**

We adhere to the University letter-to-grade conversion chart for all exams, papers, assignments, quizzes, and final grades. Grades ending in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole percentage point.

93 or above=A	90-92=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76=C	70-72=C-	67-69=D+	63+-66=D	60-62=D-	0-59=F

Grade Changes: We are certainly open to and actively encourage you to challenge us both in class as well on disputed assignment grades – sometimes, we make mistakes and sometimes, it is possible that more than one answer or perspective is correct. If you present an empirically defensible case as to why your answer/assumptions are also correct (for which we originally took off points), we will gladly give back partial or full credit, depending on the quality of your argument.

However, at the end of the semester, there are inexorably a handful of students who send a late-night email requesting (and sometimes incoherently demanding) that we raise their final grade, whether from a D+ to a C-, or a B+ to an A- or anywhere in between. Two remarks on this rather bold and questionable strategy.

1. We try to be charitable in terms of the grading scheme already – both the attendance and participation grades (25% of your final grade) are designed to give your grade a “cushion.”
2. Secondly, the “But I NEED a/an (insert grade here)”, or “can you *just* raise my grade x-number of points” arguments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of grades. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that grades are capriciously handed out on the instructor’s whim or fancy and are not based on the student’s demonstrated mastery of the material. Grades reflect your mastery of the course material. There are many things YOU can do to enhance your mastery of the material, and consequently, your grade.
  - Attend class regularly
  - Be present – pay attention in class and participate regularly
  - Read assigned materials
  - Ask questions – either in class or during office hours or over email
  - Do not procrastinate on assignments

We will not respond to emails asking for extra points, or for grades to be bumped up. If a student wishes to dispute a grade on an assignment or test, the student must request an appointment or come during office hours and present a compelling case as to why extra points should be awarded.

## **Email Policy**

Please include your first and last name and course information in the subject line of your email. Please copy both instructors. When we receive your email, we will make every effort to respond in a timely manner, usually within 48 hours. Though you may receive a reply sooner than that, you should not expect an immediate response. Please treat all email correspondence with your instructor as you would treat any other professional exchange. Accordingly, we expect emails to be respectful and polite, to use correct grammar and complete sentences. We reserve the right to summarily delete rude, disrespectful, and/or poorly written emails without reply. Please note that we have structured the course and office hours to best assist you in mastering the materials. Please utilize office hours,

in-class time, and your syllabus to answer any doubts you may have. Finally, we will contact you via your UF designated email address via Canvas, so please see to it that your account is set such that you are able to receive these communications.

## **Technology Policy**

The use of technology in the classroom can be a wonderful way to directly engage with materials. From time to time, we may utilize YouTube clips and social media because it can be a fun way to keep us all motivated and engaged with the real world of politics. That said, cell phones and laptops are generally a distraction and detrimental to the classroom experience. They have the potential to take students “away” from the lecture and impede active engagement with their peers. While we do permit the use of laptops and tablets for note-taking, we encourage you to give your eyes a rest and take notes with paper and pen. Given the time and effort, we invest in course planning, we are hard pressed to see a reason why you would need to be on your phone during class. Please turn your phones off or on vibrate.

## **Academic Honor Policy**

UF students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. Requirements, expectations, and violations can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>. It is your responsibility to know university policies and procedures, and to hold yourself to the highest standards.

## **Academic Accommodations**

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University of Florida policy, students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Resource Center; and 2. Bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. The syllabus and other materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to UF students with disabilities, contact the: [Disability Resource Center](#).

## Other Helpful Links

[UF Counseling and Wellness Center](#)

[UF Writing Center](#)

## Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [this link](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [this link](#).

## Final (and perhaps reiterative) Notes on Course Protocol:

- Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to all of us who made it a priority to get to class time and be here. Please enter and exit the classroom quietly within minimal interruptions and take a seat close to the door.
- Please keep private conversations private. Discussions with your neighbor are distracting for me as well as other students. If you have a thought on course material or a question, speak up! Please feel free to share your thoughts on the lecture topic with all of us.
- We reserve the right to dismiss individual students from the classroom for disruptive behavior and report them to the Dean of Students.
- We do not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form and will pursue the full penalties for violations thereof. For your reference, the University of Florida Academic Honor Policy is listed above.

## Syllabus Change Policy:

Except for changes that substantially affect the parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. We will provide you with advance notice in class and via your university registered email contact.

## Course Schedule:

*\*\*\*Generally, Mondays will focus on topical areas and feature guest speakers. Wednesdays will focus on the research process.*

Part I: Introduction to the Course & Research	Topics	Readings/Assignments/Plan
January 13	What is research? What are global public policy issues? How do we pick a policy theme?	Syllabus Policy Themes - <a href="#">UNSDGs</a> Research Icebreaker Read: UN Primer on UNSDGs Companion Piece

January 15	Global public policy issues, cont. (what are the research questions out there?)	Read: Craft of Research, Chapter 1 & Lens of Science, Part 1 & 2 <i>Assignment: News Article Exercise</i>
<i>January 20 MLK Holiday/No Class</i>		
January 22	Guided Research and Themes of Global Public Policy  Developing a research question	Workshop your research questions Read: Craft of Research, 3.1 – 3.4 & Turabian, Chapter 2 <b>Step 1 due – Friday, January 24</b>
<b>Part II: Finding &amp; Using Sources to Guide Research</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments/Plan</b>
January 27	Applied Global Public Policy	Guest Speaker: Francesca Tomasino Read: UNDESA Report, Ch. 5 - Strengthening Governance and Capacities of National Institutions
January 29	Bibliographies and Sources	Watch: Bloomberg- Maternal Health Read: Maternal Health Tanzania
February 3	Sources and Annotations	Read: Turabian, Ch. 4
February 5	Types of Research	Read: Agbiboa, Counterinsurgency in Nigeria <b>Assignment: IRB Exercise – Due Friday, February 7</b>
February 10	Ethics of Research	Read: Lens of Science – Research Methods Guest Speaker: Anna Hamilton
<b>Part III: Theorizing – Making Your Contribution</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments/Plans</b>
February 12	Annotated Bibliographies	Workshop and Peer Review Step 2 <b>Step 2 due – Wednesday, February 12</b>
February 17	Literature Reviews	Read: Baglione, Ch. 4 & Purdue Owl Article
February 19	Literature Reviews	Read: Grillo et al Annual Review Political Science, Democratic Backsliding
February 24	Theory Building	Read: Dankasa – Developing a Theory In-class Theory Recipe Exercise
February 26	Theory Building	Read: Review of 1998 World Bank Development Aid Report Read: Bican & Coban, Development Aid
March 3	Theory and Hypotheses	Review Theory Building and Hypotheses Workshop and Peer Review Step 3
<b>Part IV: Testing your Theory with a Good Research Design</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments/Plans</b>
March 5	Research Design	Read: Lens of Science: The Scientific Method <b>Step 3 due – Wednesday, March 5</b>
March 10	Research Design	Read: Thessaloniki Report Bring: Op-Ed for class discussion

March 12	Research Design	Read: Lavric & Bieber, Authoritarianism and the Western Balkans
<b>Spring Break: March 17 – March 21</b>		
March 24	Review Research Design	Workshop Step 4
March 26	Workshop Research Design	Peer Review Step 4
<b>Part V: Putting it all Together and Communicating Your Research</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments/Plans</b>
March 31	Introductions & Conclusions Framing Research	Read: Baglione, excerpts from Ch. 9 <b>Step 4 due – Monday, March 31</b>
April 2	Presentation Tips and Tricks	Presentation from Andrew Kassnove, 2023 Civic Scholar and Class TA Assign: Presentation Slide Template and Review Instructions
April 7	Peer Reviewing – Slides	<b>Presentation Titles Due – Due Monday, April 7</b>
April 9	Practice Presentations	Class meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210
April 14	Practice Presentations	Class meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210
April 16	Practice Presentations	Class meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210 <b>Symposium Slides Due – NOON, Friday, April 18</b>
<b>Bob Graham Center Research Symposium – Saturday, April 19 beginning at 8 AM</b>		
April 21	Symposium Debrief and Peer Review	Read: Turabian, Chapter 16 In Class Peer Review of Paper
April 23	Peer Review Day and Finalizing Your Paper	In Class Workshop
<b>Final Paper Due at 12 PM: April 28</b>		