

INS4930: SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Spring 2026 | 3 credits

NOTE: This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "[Academic Policies and Resources](#)" web page.

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: R (3:00 PM – 6:00 PM)

Class location: LEI 0142

Instructor(s):

Name: Onursal Erol

Office Building/Number: Pugh 236

Phone: (352) 846-1575

Email: erol@ufl.edu

Office Hours: T (12:00PM – 2PM, in-person, walk-in or make an appointment)
W (3:30PM – 4:30PM, remote, by appointment only)

Appointment Link: <https://calendly.com/erol>

Course Description

Readings on and discussions of major contemporary international and global issues. Offers students the opportunity to conduct guided research on international topics of their choice that relate to their track(s) and study, internships or work abroad experiences for the international studies major.

This course offers seniors in the International Studies major the opportunity to examine various debates, theoretical interventions, and research methodologies in the field; design and conduct guided research on a topic and region of their choice; and produce an original research paper of approximately twenty pages in length. Throughout the semester, we will switch between mainly two kinds of classes. In about half of our classes, we will focus on global issues selected to represent all regions of the world through materials that happen to be excellent samples of various components of research. We will engage these texts both as readers and as fellow authors. The other half of our classes (predominantly in the latter half of the semester) are designed as workshops, closely akin to a writing group, in which you will participate in two guises. On one hand, you will act as a discussant and a concerned reader of your class fellows' papers, striving to contribute constructive comments to their work. On the other hand, you too will present drafts of your paper to others, expecting their comments and discussion.

Course Materials: All course materials are free and available online on Canvas. Students are required to read/watch/listen to all materials listed in the “Calendar” section of this syllabus before class.

Materials and Supplies Fee: N/A.

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives

In this course we will:

- Examine diverse theoretical interventions and research methodologies within the field.
- Analyze global issues across all world regions using scholarly materials that serve as models for rigorous research.
- Facilitate the design and execution of an independent, original research project focused on a specific region and global topic.
- Cultivate a collaborative workshop environment modeled after professional writing groups to foster constructive peer review.
- Engage in the iterative process of drafting, presenting, and refining an original research paper through a series of cumulative milestones.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Formulate a clear, focused research question and a compelling central argument.
- Synthesize diverse scholarship and theoretical interventions to situate their original project within existing global debates.
- Select and implement an appropriate research methodology to investigate a global topic.
- Execute an original research project that demonstrates the ability to collect, analyze, and interpret evidence systematically.
- Evaluate peer research by providing critical, constructive, and respectful feedback in a professional workshop setting.
- Produce a sophisticated, twenty-page research paper that synthesizes original findings with academic clarity and coherence.

III. Graded Work

Graded Components

Attendance (13%)

Our class meets once a week for a total of thirteen times. Each week, we get one chance – and only one chance – to focus on one important aspect of research production. Our learning goals and deliverables for each week are organized in an indispensably cumulative manner. Although a strong attendance record will always increase the quality of your education in all courses, it is especially crucial in a research seminar like this one. Attendance is graded in three separate

installments at the end of Weeks 5, 9 and 13, and posted on Canvas. A perfect attendance record in each installment will earn students 13 points towards the course grade.

Assignments#1-10 (20%) + Assignments#11-15 (25%)

There is a total of fifteen assignments to be completed throughout the semester. They range from one-sentence/one-slide assignments, to making lists and producing short first drafts of various components of an original research paper. Keeping up with these assignments will save you the stress of looking at an empty page that needs to be – somehow magically – filled with a fully-fledged research paper at the end of the semester. They will also earn you various amounts of points towards the course grade. Assignments#1-10 will earn you 2 points each. Assignments #11-15 will earn 5 points each. All assignments are due on Canvas, by 11:59pm on the designated deadline as marked throughout the course schedule.

Workshop Feedback (12%)

The last four classes of our research seminar are designated as workshops. In these sessions, we provide each other with the highest quality of feedback with a mission to help improve individual drafts and to improve together as a group of researchers and writers. To harvest the marvelous synergy of a workshop we must abide by a few rules: When you are submitting a draft, mind that the designated submission deadlines cannot be altered. This is because the timely submission of a draft is mandatory to be respectful of all other students' time, who are serving as readers and editors. All drafts will be submitted the Tuesday before a workshop, and I will be circulating them among the readers on Wednesday mornings, so that we can give the readers the entire Wednesday to work on them.

When you are providing feedback on your peers' work, your task is to put on your editor hat and to provide a close reading, come up with comments to bring to class, and deliver them in a constructive manner. Is this draft doing something superbly that we should all take note of? Is there something that might come across as problematic? Do you have a potential fix in mind? Do you have a good idea that can be added? Did you catch an error? We will diligently share these to propel the quality of our work forward. Each student will act as a workshop responder four times and earn up-to 3 points each towards the course grade for providing quality feedback.

Final Paper (30%)

The capstone of this seminar is an original research paper (around twenty pages). This project requires you to synthesize the skills practiced in earlier assignments: formulating a focused research question, situating your argument within existing scholarship, applying a methodology to analyze a world region, and demonstrating your ability to operate as an independent scholar. Final papers are due on Canvas by May 1, 11:59pm. All academic integrity rules apply. A detailed grading rubric is attached at the end of this syllabus.

TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale

(A) 94-100 (A-) 90-93 (B+) 86-89 (B) 82-85
(B-) 78-81 (C+) 74-77 (C) 70-73 (C-) 66-69
(D+) 62-65 (D) 58-61 (D-) 54-57 (E) 53 & below

IV. Calendar

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
January 15, 2026	INTRODUCTION	Stillman, Jessica. “The 37 Percent Rule: The Mathematical Trick for Making Much Better Decisions.” <i>Inc.</i> , May 12, 2022.	Assignment#1 (due Jan 20): “My Mind, Organized”
January 22, 2026	CHOOSING AND REFINING A RESEARCH TOPIC	<p>*While reading the below items, consider questions like: How did these authors arrive at the topics on which they decided to do research? What strikes you as an interesting/valuable/controversial lesson that might apply to your own process?</p> <p>Mahmood, Saba. “Preface.” In <i>Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject</i>, ix–xvii. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.</p> <p>Scott, James C. “Introduction.” In <i>Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed</i>, 1–8. New York: Yale University Press, 1998.</p>	Assignment#2 (due Jan 27): “I’ve Got... Ideas?”
January 29, 2026	WHAT COUNTS AS PRIMARY SOURCES?	<p>Vik, Alissa. “‘Apagando El Sistema’: Fusion Music as Protest Soundscape in Lima, Peru.” <i>Latin American Perspectives</i> 50, no. 4 (June 13, 2023): 1–17.</p> <p>Barromi-Perlman, Edna. “Visions of Landscape Photography in Palestine and Israel.” <i>Landscape Research</i> 45, no. 5 (2020): 564–82.</p>	Assignment#3 (due Feb 3): “Could Be Fun To Work With This!”
February 5, 2026	INTERROGATING THE DATA	Guberek, Tamy, and Margaret Hedstrom. “On or Off the Record? Detecting Patterns of Silence About Death in Guatemala’s National Police Archive.” <i>Archival Science</i> 17, no. 1 (2017): 27–54.	Assignment#4 (due Feb 10): “Well, This Is Interesting!”

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
February 12, 2026	CRAFTING ARGUMENTS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	<p>*Reading the below items, keep an eye on how the authors formulate, present, and unpack the arguments they put forward.</p> <p>*Only pages 1-3 required from: Berlant, Lauren Gail. "Affect in the Present." In <i>Cruel Optimism</i>, 1–21. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.</p> <p>Grzebalska, Weronika, and Andrea Pető. "The Gendered Modus Operandi of the Illiberal Transformation in Hungary and Poland." <i>Women's Studies International Forum</i> 68 (May–June 2018): 164–72.</p>	Assignment#5 (due Feb 17): "Who's Got Two Thumbs and Answers Their Own Question?"
February 19, 2026	WHAT IS YOUR METHODOLOGY?	<p>*Consider how the authors below make use of their data. What is similar about the data they use and the methodological process in which they collect and make sense of it? What is different? What kinds of strengths and shortcomings would you assign to these approaches? What would it mean to consider these strengths and shortcomings with regards to your project?</p> <p>Koster, Martijn. "An Ethnographic Perspective on Urban Planning in Brazil: Temporality, Diversity and Critical Urban Theory." <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i> 44, no. 2 (2020): 185–99.</p> <p>Cowman, Seamus, Anna Björkdahl, Eric Clarke, Georgina Gethin, Jim Maguire, Christoph Abderhalden, Adriana Miha, et al. "A Descriptive Survey Study of Violence Management and Priorities among Psychiatric Staff in Mental Health Services, across Seventeen European Countries." <i>BMC Health Services</i></p>	Assignment#6 (due Feb 24): "Method to My Madness"

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
		<i>Research</i> 17, no. 1 (January 19, 2017): 1–10.	
February 26, 2026	HOW TO IDENTIFY RELEVANT SCHOLARLY DISCUSSIONS AND MANAGE CITATIONS	<p>*No assigned reading.</p> <p>*In-Class Exercise: Methods Survey</p>	<p>Assignment#7 (due Mar 3): “Annotated Bibliography-I (5 items)”</p> <p>Assignment#8 (due Mar 3): “Subject Specialist”</p>
March 5, 2026	LITERATURE REVIEW	<p>*Reading the below material, keep an eye out for the literature review strategies the author is using. How does the author engage with the literature? How would you boil these strategies down to a formulaic structure? Is there anything in this formula that you might want to emulate or avoid in your project?</p> <p>Wedeen, Lisa. “Introduction.” In <i>Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria</i>, 1–32. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.</p> <p>*In-Class Exercise: Literature Review Outline</p>	<p>Assignment#9 (due Mar 10): “Annotated Bibliography-II (5 NEW items)”</p> <p>Assignment#10 (due Mar 10): “Ethical AI Use”</p>
March 12, 2026	ANATOMY OF A RESEARCH PAPER & OUTLINES AND DRAFTS & ETHICAL AI USE	<p>Domosh, Mona. “Those ‘Gorgeous Incongruities’: Polite Politics and Public Space on the Streets of Nineteenth-Century New York City.” In <i>Common Ground?: Readings and Reflections on Public Space</i>, edited by Anthony M. Orum and Neal Zachary, 209–22. New York: Routledge, 2009.</p> <p>Lamott, Anne. “Shitty First Drafts.” In <i>Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers</i>, edited by Paul Eschholz,</p>	<p>Assignment#11 (due Apr 21, but check Canvas now!): “Writing Studio Appointment”</p> <p>Assignment#12 (due Mar 24): “Introduction First Draft”</p>

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
		<p>Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark, 9th ed., 93–96. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2005.</p> <p>Provost, Gary. “This Sentence Has Five Words.” In <i>Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies for Every Writer</i>, by Roy Peter Clark, 10th anniversary ed. New York: Little, Brown Spark, 2008.</p>	
--- SPRING BREAK ---			
March 26, 2026	WORKSHOP (INTRODUCTION)	<p>Workshop Prep: Read all workshop materials (circulated one day prior)</p> <p>*Individual readings that might be useful to consider can be assigned or suggested to students.</p>	<p>*The class provides in-depth feedback on the circulated drafts.</p> <p>Assignment#13 (due Mar 31): “Methodology First Draft”</p>
April 2, 2026	WORKSHOP (METHODOLOGY)	<p>Workshop Prep: Read all workshop materials (circulated one day prior)</p> <p>*Individual readings that might be useful to consider can be assigned or suggested to students.</p>	<p>*The class provides in-depth feedback on the circulated drafts.</p> <p>Assignment#14 (due Apr 7): “Literature Review First Draft”</p>
April 9, 2026	WORKSHOP (LITERATURE REVIEW)	<p>Workshop Prep: Read all workshop materials (circulated one day prior)</p> <p>*Individual readings that might be useful to consider can be assigned or suggested to students.</p>	<p>*The class provides in-depth feedback on the circulated drafts.</p> <p>Assignment#15 (due Apr 14): “Findings First Draft”</p>
April 16, 2026	WORKSHOP (FINDINGS)	<p>Workshop Prep: Read all workshop materials (circulated one day prior)</p>	<p>*The class provides in-depth feedback on the circulated drafts.</p>

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
		*Individual readings that might be useful to consider can be assigned or suggested to students.	Reminder: Did you complete Assignment#11 (due Apr 21)? Final Paper (due May 1)

V. Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Tim Karis, International Studies Undergraduate Coordinator (tkaris@ufl.edu, (352) 273-1087) or Marianne Vernetson, Graham Center Interim Director (mvernetson@ufl.edu, (352) 846-1575). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

VI. Final Paper Grading Rubric

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Rudimentary</i>	<i>Insufficient</i>	<i>POINTS</i>
<i>Research Articulation</i>	Demonstrates profound knowledge of the cultural correlates and global issues being studied; extensive knowledge of theories applied to research question in an insightful way; provides well-structured arguments or accurately analyzed evidence to support conclusions [14-11 points]	Demonstrates considerable knowledge of the cultural correlates and global issues being studied; competent knowledge of theories applied to the research question in an insightful way; provides acceptable arguments or analyzed evidence to support conclusion [11-8 points]	Demonstrates some knowledge of the cultural correlates and global issues being studied; knowledge of theories is applied to the research question with some accuracy; provides some arguments analyzed evidence but conclusions are only vaguely supported [7-4 points]	Demonstrates only piecemeal knowledge of the cultural correlates and global issues being studied; knowledge of theories is applied to the research question in a hit-or-miss way; arguments or evidence lead only tangentially to conclusions [3-1 points]	Unable to demonstrate coherent knowledge of the cultural correlates and global issues being studied; knowledge of theories is inadequately applied to the research question ; arguments or evidence presented do no lead to any coherent conclusion [0 points]	
<i>Knowledge of World Region</i>	Excellent command of global issues in a region of the world; mastery in applying knowledge of a global issue and its relevance to understanding a country or society with an excellent level of proficiency in referencing and analyzing materials focused on a region of the world [8-7 points]	Good command of global issues in a region of the world; above average in terms of applying knowledge of a global issue and its relevance to understanding a country or society with a good level of proficiency in referencing and analyzing materials focused on a region of the world [6-5 points]	Only moderate command of global issues in a region of the world; and moderate knowledge of a global issue and its relevance to understanding a country or society with a moderate level of proficiency in referencing and analyzing materials focused on a region of the world [4-3 points]	Minimal command of global issues in a region of the world; and, applying knowledge of a global issue and its relevance to understanding a country or society with a minimal level of proficiency in referencing and analyzing materials focused on a region of the world [2-1 points]	Shows no command of global issues in a region of the world; and, applying knowledge of a global issue and its relevance to understanding a country or society with no proficiency in referencing and analyzing materials focused on a region of the world [0 points]	
<i>Communication</i>	Articulate arguments on global issues with excellent coherence and clarity of arguments. Presents topic referencing materials with confidence and ease; answers questions with ease and appropriate register [8-7 points]	Above average level of coherence and clarity of arguments; presents topic referencing materials with confidence but may falter on occasion; answers questions competently with appropriate register [6-5 points]	Only moderate level of coherence and clarity of arguments; occasionally lacks confidence in referencing materials in presenting topic; answers some questions but , may not maintain appropriate register [4-3 points]	Arguments are vague and lack coherence but still understandable; shows little confidence in ability to present topic when referencing materials; has difficulty answering questions on topic and does not use appropriate register [2-1 points]	Arguments are not clear or impossible to follow; unable to present to audience in coherent way in referencing materials; cannot answer questions related to topic [0 points]	
TOTAL						/30