

INTS 499 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SENIOR ASSIGNMENT (3 CREDIT HOURS)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course INTS 499 International Studies Senior Assignment is designed to provide a capstone experience or conclusion to the International Studies major. Its objective is to provide an opportunity to conduct independent research or application on an International Studies thematic area and a regional area selected by the student, so that she or he integrates the linkages between disciplinary and interdisciplinary topics in the student's specific concentration within the major. Students are also strongly encouraged to include aspects of their study abroad and/or international internship experiences into their senior assignment project.

The International Studies major draws on almost every department in the College of Arts and Sciences to provide students with an understanding of the international arena. Because of the vastness of international topics, students are encouraged to focus in their senior assignment on both a thematic and a regional area of study. In the senior year, students create a capstone project that integrates these areas of study. For example, a student examining the theme Human Rights and Social Movements and the region Latin America might combine the two to focus on the issue of street children in Brazil.

The International Studies Senior Assignment can be an independent research project or applied project in an area of international studies, under the direction of a selected faculty mentor or supervisor. The student should select a mentor or supervisor from among the faculty members who taught courses included in the student's program of study, seek approval from the International Studies Program Director in regards to the selection, and seek approval for mentoring or supervision from this faculty member. The International Studies Program Director is also available to serve as a mentor for students or to help students identify appropriate senior assignment faculty mentors.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, the student will:

- understand, implement, and appreciate the steps required in completing a research or application exercise
- identify, produce, and disseminate deliverables appropriate for a research or application project (for example: writing and presenting a research paper; planning, implementing, and presenting outcomes of a developmental campaign; creating and showcasing a documentary film, live performance, photography exhibit, or art display; creating a historical interactive narrative or a geographic mapping project)
- engage in exploration of concepts learned throughout the International Studies major
- engage in critical, in-depth analysis of International Studies topics
- demonstrate understanding of global affairs and region-specific problems and issues
- improve analytical, professional writing, and public speaking skills
- present project results, manifesting both confidence and knowledge of the chosen area of concentration in international studies

COURSE POLICIES

The research or application project is normally conducted during the last semester of the student major's graduating year.

A research project culminates in a paper that is 20-25 pages long, accompanied by a visual presentation of 20-25 slides. An application project should document an equivalent effort and include, in addition to the application (campaign, documentary film, live performance, photography exhibit, art display, historical interactive narrative, geographic mapping project, etc.), a 2-5 page reflection paper as well as a 20-25 slide visual presentation.

The project will also be scheduled to be presented to the campus community and the public at large, an evaluation of which will also be a part of the final grade.

The student is expected to work on the project for an amount of time equivalent to that of a 3 credit hour course. This corresponds to about 48 hours per credit hour, or 144 hours over the course of the semester. The capstone students work independently outside of scheduled class meetings and consult with the faculty mentor throughout this process (at least four times during the semester, in person or through online means), so they should plan their time accordingly.

PLAGIARISM, i.e., copying or paraphrasing any portion of text or other material directly from another source, without acknowledging that source, will be dealt with as stated in SIUE's Student Conduct Handbook.

Responsibilities of the Student

- The student secures a faculty mentor approved by the program director.
- The student provides a topic statement that integrates the thematic and regional areas, and has a reasonable motivation.
- The student attends at least four meetings with the faculty mentor, being prepared and providing the mentor a reasonable amount of time to review materials before meeting.
- The student makes arrangements with the faculty mentor to review project resources, project deliverables, and presentation materials, at times convenient to the mentor, but within the confines of the course deadlines.
- The student collaborates with the program director to schedule the presentation and publicize it to the campus community and public at large. Failure to hold a public presentation will result in a 1/3 grade reduction.

Responsibilities of the Faculty Mentor

- Mentors provide guidance to students. However, as mentors meet with students approximately four times a semester, faculty mentor effort is not the same as for a regular course. Grades are assigned by course instructor (program director).
- The mentor has expertise related to the student's proposed thesis topic.
- The mentor meets with the student at least four times during the semester.
- At meetings, the mentor reviews initially the student's topic statement, and subsequently project resources, project deliverables, and presentation materials.
- The mentor offers suggestions for improvement of the project throughout the semester.

PROJECT GUIDELINES

Research Project

In case a student chooses to pursue a research project, an appropriate research topic and research method need to be selected prior to collecting research data and reporting research results.

Sample research project ideas include:

- Fair Trade: A Vehicle for Economic, Social, and Environmental Change
- The Emphasis on Culture in French Cinematography
- The Sounds of Gaita: A Call Toward Nationalism and Celtic Identity in Galicia
- A Case Study of the Artisans of the Barefoot College Rajasthan, India
- Structural Adjustment Programs and Rural Livelihoods in Global Senegal

The specification of the research method needs to be included in the final deliverable. Students may pursue as research methods:

- Case studies
- Content analyses of documents (literature, photography, film, media, social media posts)
- Fieldwork or participant observation
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups

A senior assignment research paper shall conform to the following criteria:

Mechanics:

- Typed
- Printed on one side of the page
- Stapled
- 10-12 point font size
- Pages numbered
- 1 inch margins
- Cover page including:
student name and program affiliation;
paper title;
course number and title;
faculty mentor name, title, and department affiliation;
date
- An abstract of 75-100 words and an acknowledgments section, together on one page
- 20-25 full pages, double-spaced (excluding cover page & bibliography)
- References cited section or bibliography. All source materials referenced in your paper must be properly cited, using the referencing style appropriate to your faculty mentor's discipline. Please consult faculty mentor for the appropriate style guide.
- Print out your paper and proofread it. Correct any mistakes you find and print out a new version for submission.

Guidelines for organizing the research paper:

For majors working with faculty from social sciences and humanities disciplines, the research paper may include the following sections (or you may use your own, unique sub-heading titles):

Introduction: Tells the reader what the topic of your paper is, and may include a brief statement of why you chose that particular topic (your personal interest in it) Consult your faculty mentor on whether or not the use of “I” is acceptable.

Background/ Literature Review: Summarize the context and academic literature engaged by your research topic. Emphasize the relationship between context, academic literature, and your paper topic. Convey a clear understanding of the “who, what, where, when, and how” of the reading materials.

Method: Inform the reader about the methodology used to collect data. If your research is based on secondary sources, discuss the means by which they were collected, their reliability, and their representativeness. If you are using primary data, specify your method. For example, if you conducted interviews, describe the characteristics of your subjects and the scope of the study (how many people were interviewed, when and where you interviewed them, what their demographic characteristics were, why you selected them for the study). Additionally, give a sample of the questions you asked.

Findings: Present your research data and the meaning of the collected data, for example a detailed discussion of the content of your interviews.

Analysis: Compare and contrast the findings from your research with those you learned from your library research, drawing conclusions about the most significant similarities and differences that you find.

Conclusions: Succinctly summarize what you have done, while simultaneously bringing out the most original, interesting or intriguing aspects of what you learned. Your conclusion should not include new data. Also, consider suggesting future directions in which you might continue researching this topic.

Prepare an oral presentation for your paper, which will be delivered to a larger campus and broader community audience. In this presentation, make sure that you adequately address all sections of the research paper, with a stronger emphasis on the original findings of your research. Make sure that you allow for ample time for questions and answers at the end of your presentation.

Grading standards:

- Not submitting your research paper and set of slides on time (week 14 of the semester, to allow for a presentation in week 15) will cause point reductions.
- Inadequate research paper length and formatting will cause point reductions.
- You will be graded on grammar, spelling, and English mechanics. If you are uncertain about these, use the Writing Center’s assistance.

- You will be graded on integration of a thematic and a regional area of study in your research paper. Please consult with your faculty mentor and the program director to ensure appropriate international studies and global issues content.

Application Project

A student who chooses to pursue an application project as the capstone experience must first secure a commitment from a faculty members who has the expertise to guide the student through the progression of this final cumulative experience. Since an applied project requires a specific set of knowledge and skills in order to execute it at the necessary level of production and expression (e.g. campaign organizing; filming; performance, photography, or art display creation; historical interactive narrative or geographic mapping project configuration), it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that she or he is capable to carry out the project on her or his own with the proper guidance of a faculty member.

The project should result in a final product that is in a deliverable format (for example: campaign report including documentation of activities, materials, evaluation; documentary film, live performance, photography exhibit, or art display; historical interactive narrative or geographic mapping project). The project should also result in a 2-5 page reflection paper and a 20-25 slide visual presentation. An oral presentation for your project will be delivered to a larger campus and broader community audience.

Grading standards:

- Not submitting your project deliverables, reflection paper, and set of slides on time (week 14 of the semester, to allow for a presentation in week 15) will cause point reductions.
- Your deliverables, reflection paper, and slide should document effort equivalent with that needed for a research project and knowledge and skills proficiency
- You will be graded on integration of a thematic and a regional area of study in your project. Please consult with your faculty mentor and the program director to ensure appropriate international studies and global issues content.