

Honors Seminar V: United States Diplomacy Lab

Professor Brian Fonseca

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Location: Florida International University, Modesto Maidique Campus, Graham Center (GC) 271A

Time: Fall 2016 Tues/Thurs 5-7PM

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Student Assistant: Rudy Constanda, email: rcons011@fiu.edu Rudy will assist the professor in coordinating research efforts, engaging both students and experts at FIU and US Department of State.

Course Objectives and Description:

The U.S. Department of State's Diplomacy Lab at FIU's Honors College affords students the opportunity to explore real-world challenges identified by State Department officials and work under the guidance of FIU faculty members with experience in diplomacy and international relations. Students will conduct multidisciplinary research over the course of the semester and provide the State Department with answers and actionable recommendations that support U.S. foreign policy. Students will be grouped and assigned a research topic of importance to U.S. foreign policy. Throughout the semester, students will progress their research inside and outside of the classroom, engage routinely with State Department officials, and interact with subject matter experts at FIU and around the globe. The semester will conclude with the submission of a final research product and a presentation to the U.S. Department of State. The Diplomacy Lab allows students to contribute directly to the policymaking process, while helping the State Department tap into an underutilized reservoir of intellectual capital.

Required Course Readings:

This is a **directed research effort**. Students must take the **initiative to acquire the knowledge necessary** to answer the research inquiries. In addition to students' research, the professor will assign readings throughout the course using Dropbox.

Course Requirements & Grading Policy:

Academic Dishonesty—all work for this course must be the student's own. Please refer to the Student Handbook, FIU Undergraduate Honor Code. Anyone found cheating/ plagiarizing will receive an "F" (fail) for the course, and may be reported to the administration and be subjected to further serious penalties (including dismissal from the university). Given the research/writing nature of this course, please avoid plagiarizing or recycling your own work—no excuses or exceptions. Issues of ethics aside, the "costs" of engaging in academic dishonesty and getting caught outweigh any so-called "gains."

Attendance/Class Etiquette—Attendance is mandatory. The class will split into 2 teams, each team will meet on different days—Tuesday or Thursday—at different periods throughout the semester in order to focus class time on a single research initiative.

Missing more than 25 minutes of class will constitute an absence. Any missed lectures will result in a reduction in the student's final grade. At this point in your college career, it is your responsibility and prerogative whether or not to attend class. Furthermore, please arrive on time; lateness is disruptive. If you must be late, please enter in an unobtrusive and quiet manner. Once the class has started, students are expected to stay until the end of the class period. Lastly, please be attentive and respectful for the duration of the class period; refrain from talking or making other noise while in class.

Electronic Devices—Use of electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, and cell phones is prohibited in class. Unfortunately, too many students misuse electronic devices in class. Our time together is limited, and so I want your undivided attention and participation in our discussions.

Evaluation/Grade Policy—The exams will be taken in class, and may consist of essay questions and/or short answer, multiple-choice, and/or identification questions based on the material presented in class. Also, in order to be fair to all the students in the class, there will be no make-up exams, unless the student has a bona fide medical excuse supported with proper official documentation from a state-certified medical professional. No other excuse is permissible. Please make a note of this. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any medical emergency that prevents the student

from taking the exam, and to provide official documentation from a certified medical professional (i.e., a medical doctor). Students who must take a make-up exam will either take an oral exam and/or a different written essay exam at the instructor's discretion.

Religious Observances—Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges—Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already.

Course Assignments (Chronologically):

Research Proposal (group)

Each group will produce a detailed plan that includes timelines for research, drafts, reviews, and final reports; distribution of labor; report formats; guiding questions; and research objectives, etc. The purpose of the Research Proposal is to set expectations within the team and among its customers—in this case the Professor and the US Department of State. A research plan can be fluid, but students must establish a point of departure. See Blackboard for sources to help write your research proposal.

Annotated Bibliography (Individual)

Each student is required to complete an annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography is a list of citations followed by a brief description and evaluation of the citation, also known as the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy and quality of the sources cited. It also helps the reader to better understand the available literature out there on the subject.

Students must complete an annotated bibliography that has a minimum of 10 sources. Sources must be primarily scholarly; I will accept some policy reports. News articles and/or blogs not accepted for this exercise. Each annotation should be a minimum of 200 words. The citation should be written using the Chicago manual of style annotation. See the example below.

SAMPLE ANNOTATION:

Davidson, Hilda Ellis. *Roles of the Northern Goddess*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Davidson's book provides a thorough examination of the major roles filled by the numerous pagan goddesses of Northern Europe in everyday life, including their roles in hunting, agriculture, domestic arts like weaving, the household, and death. The author discusses relevant archaeological evidence, patterns of symbol and ritual, and previous research. The book includes a number of black and white photographs of relevant artifacts. (*note that annotation is only 63 words).

Report Outline (Group)

Each group must submit an initial report outline on blackboard. The report outline must highlight the general chapters/sections of your report and designate which group member is responsible for building out that particular chapter or section.

Research Summaries and Peer Feedback (Individual)

Students must complete research summaries that illustrate your individual research progress. Your research summaries must be connected to the overall report outline. Research summaries are due every other week, as indicated on Blackboard.

In addition to completing your research summary, students must peer-review at least one other group members' research summary every other week. All students must be peer reviewed—coordinate in advance. This means that on the week that you are not submitting your research summary, you are providing peer feedback. There will be a section in blackboard to facilitate peer feedback.

Class Discussions

Given that this is a research directed class, there are very few lectures. Instead, the professor will use the class time designated for each group to discuss research findings. During the class time, two students from each team will lead the brainstorming sessions. Students' leading the brainstorming sessions should be rotated in order to give everyone in the class and opportunity to lead a segment of our discussion.

Report Draft and Reviews (Group)

The group must submit a first draft of the overall report towards the end of the semester, as detailed in the groups' research proposal. The report must be reviewed by all members of the group. One group member should be designated to manage the draft review process.

Final Report (Group)

Each group must submit a final report at the end of the semester. The details of the final report (length, formatting, etc.) will be detailed in the groups' research proposal.

Presentation Rehearsal (Group)

Each group will conduct a rehearsal presentation with the professor, the other group, and select outside observers.

Final Presentation (Group)

Each group will conduct a final presentation of its report to the US Department of State.

Grade Breakdown

Research Proposal Development (Group)	100 Points
Annotated Bibliography (Individual)	100 Points
Readings Exam	100 Points (75 individual + 25 group)
Biweekly Research Summaries/Drafts	200 Points (100 written + 100 oral)
Biweekly Peer Reviews	100 Points (all or nothing)
Final Group Policy Report & Presentation	300 Points (150 written + 150 oral)
Participation	100 Points (all or nothing)
Maximum Points	1000 Points

Grading Scale

A = 1000-950	A- = 949-900
B+ = 899-850	B = 849-800
C+ = 799-750	C = 749-700
D+ = 699-650	D = 649-600
F = below 600	

All members of the Honors College are expected to be active citizens of the College, the university, and the community at large. To be a committed Honors College student is to take advantage of enhanced learning opportunities and to assume a leadership role in the world. All College members are expected to participate in the community-building activities listed below:

1. Attend one Honors Excellence Lecture per academic year and one Honors Colloquium per semester (fall and spring). (Attendance will be taken).
2. Participate in the Honors College Convocation each fall. (Attendance will be taken).
3. Attend at least three Honors Hour sessions per semester or enrichment events specified by the Honors College as satisfying this requirement. (Attendance will be taken).
4. Perform at least ten hours of Community Service per semester either through the Honors College service partnerships (Sweetwater, Overtown Youth Center, etc.) or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours.

Student Portfolios

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio method allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. You will decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in your portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the student learning outcomes. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment. Each Honors College course includes at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements.

Grading Rubric for Course Written Work (Exams and Policy Writing):

Criteria	Unsatisfactory: 0%	Partial: 80%	Satisfactory: 90%	Excellent: 100%
<p>Critical Analysis (Understanding of Readings and Course Materials)</p> <p>Weight for this criterion: 70% of total score</p>	<p>Written work shows little or no evidence that readings were completed or understood or that research was conducted. Written work is a largely personal opinion or feelings, or "I agree" or "Great idea", without supporting statements containing concepts from the readings, outside resources, and relevant research.</p>	<p>Written work repeats and summarize basic, correct information, but do not link readings to outside references, or relevant research and do not consider alternative perspectives or connections between ideas. No sources.</p>	<p>Written work displays an understanding of the required readings and underlying concepts including correct use of terminology and proper citation.</p>	<p>Written work displays an excellent understanding of the required readings and underlying concepts including correct use of terminology. Written work integrates an outside resource, or relevant research, or specific real-life application (work experience, prior coursework, etc.) to support important points. Well-edited quotes are cited appropriately (no more than 10% of the posting is a direct quotation). Strong analysis.</p>
<p>Etiquette in Dialogue with Peers</p> <p>Weight for this criterion: 15% of total score</p>	<p>Written work shows disrespect for the viewpoints of others.</p>	<p>Written work shows respect and interest in the viewpoints of others.</p>	<p>Written work shows respect and interest in the viewpoints of others.</p>	<p>Written work shows respect and interest in the viewpoints of others.</p>
<p>Quality of Writing and Proofreading</p> <p>Weight for this criterion: 15% of total score</p>	<p>Written work contains numerous grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing does not facilitate effective communication</p>	<p>Written work includes some grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors that distract the reader</p>	<p>Written work is largely free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing generally facilitates communication.</p>	<p>Written work is free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing facilitates communication</p>

Research Projects:

Blue Team

Tackling Poverty and Illicit Coca Cultivation in Peru: Analysis of Economic Dynamics among Households in Post-Eradication Communities

U.S. Embassy Lima, Alternative Development (AD) Office, USAID/Peru

Overview:

Coca farming in Peru is a poverty trap. Families that grow coca do so because they live in poverty. Growing coca ensures that they remain poor. The Human Development Index (HDI) – which factors in health, education, and economic status – in districts where coca farming is not practiced is 60 percent higher than in those with coca farming. Even within coca growing regions, the HDI of coca-farming districts is lower than the HDI of non-coca-farming districts.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)/Peru's Alternative Development (AD) program aims to break the poverty trap associated with coca farming. USAID's strategy is based on the following hypothesis: If the Government of Peru (GOP) provides integrated rural development assistance to targeted coca growing communities in coordination with forced eradication, with viable options to earn a living, then more communities will organize themselves and pursue licit economic opportunities, leaving coca cultivation behind. To test this hypothesis, USAID needs to understand the economic dynamics among households in post-eradication communities. Specifically, this research project will focus on understanding and articulating: (1) a baseline of household incomes and/or assets in coca-growing communities; (2) the impact on household incomes and/or assets immediately before and after eradication; and (3) the kinds of coping strategies that families employ subsequent to eradication. USAID expects that this analysis will require the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, and likely involve extensive interaction with Peruvian farmers, GOP representatives, and private sector institutions. USAID Peru will work with Peruvian partners on data collection. The U.S. institution will be responsible for background research, project design, and data analysis.

Format of Final Product:

The AD office would like an executive summary with specific recommendations, as part of a 20-page research paper. The paper and findings/recommendations should be based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis, and also summarized in a PowerPoint presentation. A short video would also be useful.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Academic Discipline: Economics/International development

Expertise/Skills: Quantitative and qualitative analysis; communications

Language: Spanish

Comments:

<https://www.usaid.gov/peru/our-work>

Gold Team

Assessing Security Assistance and Security Cooperation Programs

Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Plans and Initiatives (PM/PI)

Overview:

Helping Allies and partners develop and improve their security is an essential tenant of the United States' foreign policy. The Department of State supports these efforts via various security assistance programs. State also provides foreign policy inputs into the Department of Defense's security cooperation programs. Outside of the U.S. Government, the United Nations, the European Union, and others have similar security-focused programs. These security sector programs have a variety of objectives, but most are generally focused on improving capabilities and capacity. For example, funding may help police departments build forensic programs or establish emergency communications networks. Border security teams may receive training on how to search vehicles that have hidden contraband. Military-focused programs can help

foreign partners learn how to fuse different sources of intelligence in order to create a better understanding of the threat. The challenge is to understand which of these initiatives is most effective and how the plethora of efforts can be smartly integrated.

This project aims to develop a comprehensive assessment on security assistance programs. Specifically, students should analyze: which programs are the most effective, what metrics are best, where are there synergies, and which efforts provide the best return on investment?

Format of Final Product:

The final paper should be 10 – 15 pages in length and incorporate qualitative analysis. PM/PI will welcome a final presentation.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Applying Monitoring and Evaluation tools to International Studies

Comments:

Useful readings are: President Obama’s announcement of the Strategic Governance Initiative (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-security-governance-initiative>) and the Center for a New American Security report (August 2015) on Security Cooperation & Assistance: Rethinking the Return on Investment, by Dr. Dafna Rand and Dr. Stephen Tankel (www.cnas.org). RAND has also done some research in this area.