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## THESIS METHODOLOGY SEMINAR in Spring 2021 (PO5099)

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|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Course Code</b>    | PO5099                     | <b>Professor(s)</b>     | Philip Golub       |
| <b>Prerequisites</b>  | None                       | <b>Office Number</b>    | G-L17              |
| <b>Class Schedule</b> | R: 10:35-11:55 in<br>G-113 | <b>Office Hours</b>     | By appointment     |
| <b>Credits</b>        | 2                          | <b>Email</b>            | pgolub@aup.edu     |
| <b>Semester</b>       | Spring 2021                | <b>Office Tel. Ext.</b> | cell: +33674575820 |

## Course Description

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### Course Summary

The MAIA Methodologies Seminar is concerned with theory and methodology in social scientific research. It is designed to assist students in developing a viable MA thesis question/topic and prepare them for thesis writing through advanced discussions of social scientific approaches and methods: analytical frameworks, research methods and the actual written format. This seminar is the cornerstone in the process of building a research design for a 12,000-word thesis (15,000 for MAIA). Students from the Global Communications and Business graduate programs will follow instructions from their respective program directors. The seminar will focus on qualitative methods in social science research. That means that students will be working with a small number of cases, use fairly basic units of measurement or statistical testing, and rely upon detailed knowledge of chosen cases, interviews, and policy or legal analysis (when relevant). Students will meet with the Professor individually and in small groups to further encourage intellectual risk taking and monitor progress. Each student will be expected to complete an 8-10 page thesis prospectus by the end of the semester that fully articulates her/his thesis topic and proposed methodology.

## Course Learning Outcomes

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A clear understanding of the concept of causality  
Succinct analytical thinking  
Articulate, well-organized oral expression  
A lucid, well-structured written Prospectus  
Demonstrated initiative in seeking out resources and research opportunities

## General Education

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### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND THE COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

These objectives are part of the graduate program's aim to provide rigorous intellectual preparation in the social sciences that, combined with professional training in other courses, will give graduates the tools to contribute to the global dialogue and effectuate change in the twenty first century.

## Course Outline

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### CLASS SCHEDULE:

Please note that we will be as flexible as possible in the scheduling to make room under current conditions for creative teaching interactions and solutions.

#### January

#### Week 1 – 21 Jan

Course Introduction: What's an MA thesis all about? General outline of Thesis development and structure, course materials, course requirements and grading.

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## **Week II – 28 Jan**

Social science or social *interpretation*? What distinguishes social studies from the natural sciences, or how to be rigorous without trying to be an experimental physicist. The epistemological and methodological problems of intersubjective subject-object relations, and how to deal with this in qualitative research.

Readings: Luker, Chap.1

Jan 24 – last day to drop/add courses online

## **February**

**Structuring research: research interests, questions and design**

## **Week III – 4 Feb Course Summary**

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Research interests, research problems, and research questions. Defining and justifying the research problem/question(s): what is being investigated and why is it significant? Working out a research design (strategy to address the research problem effectively and identifying the kind of evidence required to fulfill the research).

Readings: Luker Chapter 4; Yin, Chapters 1&2

#### **Week IV –11 Feb**

Literature reviews. Research questions and theory building. Situating the research problem in relation to the current state of development and the gaps of the literature in your field. In what theoretical matrix does the research problem/question fit? What gaps, if any, does it address? Addressing the problem of literature selection in the age of infoglut.

Reading: Luker, Chapter 5; Baglione extracts

#### **Research methodologies**

#### **Week V – 18 Feb**

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Case studies: from the micro to the macro or how case studies can lead to generalization. Examples of contemporary case studies in International Relations and Global Political Economy. Examples of historical sociological methods in International Relations.

Readings: Yin, Chapter 1; Baglione extracts

### **Week VI No Class**

February 24th – 28th, Mini break 2, (no classes)

March

### **Week VII – 4 March COURSE DESCRIPTION: Course Summary**

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Specification of research goals and narrowing of research topic (building the logical architecture of your case). Is a new hypothesis being proposed, or are you testing or advancing another author's work? What kind of logical and empirical test(s) will be used to validate hypothesis of your work, and against what alternative theories will it be tested? In the case of historical analysis, how will you found and unfold your argument?

Reading: Luker Chapter 8; Yin, Chapter 3

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### ***Learning Goals:***

- Understanding and mastering social science methods
- Developing critical skills and analytical thinking
- Articulate, well-organized oral expression

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- A lucid, well-structured written Prospectus

### **I – 11 Mar**

Data collection: Using and interpreting primary and secondary sources.

### ***March 17 Mid-Semester***

### **Week IX – 18 March**

Student presentations: Thesis topic, thesis question(s), core arguments and theory, methodology and structural outline (30-40 minute presentations)

### **Week X – 25 March**

Student presentations: Thesis topic, thesis question(s), core **Course Summary**

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***Learning Goals:***

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- A lucid, well-structured written Prospectus

arguments and theory, methodology and structural outline (30-40 minute presentations)

**2 April, last day to withdraw from a course**

**last day to choose credit/no credit option**

**April**

**Week XI -- 1 April**

Presentations

**Week XII-- 8 April**

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Individualized Work on prospectus with Professor (groups of 3)

***Week XIII -15 April***

Individualized (groups of 3)

***Week XIV – 22 April***

Individualized Work on prospectus with Professor (groups of 3)

**April 28 last day of classes,**

**December 29 -May 2, reading days**

**May 12 Prospectus due**

**May 26, all grades due**

## **Textbooks**

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This course doesn't have any textbook.

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## Attendance Policy

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### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, in person or via video conference. In case of absence, they should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

### Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to special circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending some classes online either in a synchronous or asynchronous format. In general, students are expected to attend at least one class a week in a synchronous format by either being physically present or logged in via the TEAMS online platform during class. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of

excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an

"F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it

impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during

the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University

of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the graduate level. Most courses

require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are

expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end,

professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students

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to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments.

## Grading Policy

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### Grading

Please note that the filing of your thesis registration form with Elizabeth Guinel (Office of Academic Affairs) is obligatory in order to receive your grade for this course. Grade will be based on class presentations and prospectus.

## Other

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