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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

**School of Security and Global Studies
IRLS699
Master's CAPSTONE Course
in Intelligence Studies
Credit Hours: 3
Length of Course: 16 Weeks
Prerequisite: All MA Coursework**

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Instructor Information

Instructor Name: [insert name with credentials]

Biography: [insert link from APUS website]

Please contact me through the "messages" tab in the classroom while our class is in session.

After the course ends, please contact me through the university email system:

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[insert mycampus address]

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Course Description (Catalog)

This is a 16-week course that must be taken after all other courses in your program are complete. The Master's Capstone Seminar option includes a thesis, or a major research project or paper. This option is desirable for those students who wish to focus on specific subject matter of an interdisciplinary nature or who would like to continue their education at a higher level.

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Course Scope

The Master's Capstone includes a thesis project that has a substantial research component, presents an original argument using proper academic writing conventions, including carefully documented primary and/or secondary sources, and should be 50-65 pages.

The course is tailored specifically to each graduate program and must be the **last course** students take from APUS. Thus, it can only be taken after the student has completed his/her coursework. It cannot be taken concurrently with coursework. Students must successfully create this requirement before the award of a degree. Students must apply for graduation in order to be able to register for the course.

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Program Objectives

The Master's Capstone Seminar is a course in which students complete a major research project to demonstrate their mastery of the research process, analytical skills, and ability to produce a well-written and properly

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cited paper that contributes to the body of knowledge in their field of study. This 16-week course provides sufficient time and opportunity for students to apply their advanced research and analytic skills to a topic relevant to the Intelligence study program and of sufficient U.S. or international security interest.

In addition to the institutional and degree level learning outcomes objectives, the Master of Arts in International Relations assumes that students have mastered and applied the concepts of the Program objectives and will be able to:

- Analyze classical and alternative theories of international relations, the heritage and development of the discipline, and the major debates concerning world order, diplomacy, and international law underlying its inherent nature as an interdisciplinary study within the field of political science.
- Evaluate the changing role of the state in the context of globalization, regionalism, and security, including the impact of non-state actors, competing interests, and emerging norms within international systems.
- Assess the nature and distribution of economic, political, and military resources in the context of interdependence and delimited by cultural, social, and historical issues.
- Distinguish the interactions of state, non-state, and supra-national actors through a dynamic appreciation of contemporary issues and differing levels of analysis.
- Examine the major theories of conflict and change within the context of globalization and the role of traditional and emerging norms and institutions in the pacific settlement of disputes, human rights, and environmental issues.

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Course Delivery Method

This course, delivered via distance learning, will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be available to

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each student. Online assignments are due by Sunday at 11:55 pm ET and include all written assignments submitted for grading. Weekly Forum questions (accomplished in groups in a Forum) require an initial response by Thursday at 11:55 pm ET, with all other required responses due by Sunday at 11:55 pm ET. The assigned faculty will support the students throughout this sixteen-week course.

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Course Resources

Required Course Textbooks

There are no required textbooks for this course. All resources are delivered electronically and are available in the classroom.

It is highly recommended that students purchase Turabian, Kate.2007. *A Manual for Writers of Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional Resources and Web Sites

Videos and web sites are available within the classroom under the Lessons tabs and through the university electronic library.

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Evaluation Procedures

Students are expected to work with their instructor, following the guidance offered by the structure of the course and the instructor's mentorship as students complete the requisite components of the research project. Students should not expect to submit a final product at the end of the course without having completed each stage of the research process as outlined in the assignments below.

Please note: The language in the evaluation procedures section is a compilation from the APUS *End of Program Assessment Manual for Graduate Studies*. Some passages are *verbatim* from the Manual. For clarity, these passages have not been specifically identified as quoted passages but are

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integrated into the syllabus. The student should read this syllabus in conjunction with the *End of Program Assessment Manual*.

The course grade is based on the following assessments:

Discussion Forums – 1 percent

Discussion questions will be provided and posts should reflect an assimilation of the readings and respond to the assigned topic(s). Students are required to provide a substantive initial post by Thursday at 11:55 pm ET and respond to two or more classmates by Sunday 11:55 pm ET. Forum posts are graded on timeliness, relevance, knowledge of the weekly readings, and the quality of original ideas.

Proposed Research Question and Purpose Statement – 0 percent (this grade will be assigned with the final research question submission)

This element is submitted through Assignments for review by the instructor who will also provide feedback and any “course corrections” to focus the project feedback. The components of this assignment include a research question and a purpose and design statement. It must contain at least eight sources, at least six of which must be peer-reviewed. The specific research question should be of depth and breadth required for a major project. Length: 3 pp.

Final Research Question and Purpose Statement – 1 percent

This element is a revision of the above assignment based on instructor critique and peer-interaction in the discussion forums. The components of this assignment include a research question and a purpose and design statement. It must contain at least eight sources, at least six of which must be peer-reviewed. The specific research question should be of depth and breadth required for a major project. Length: 3 pp.

Thesis Proposal – 1 percent

A formal proposal shall be prepared in accordance with the standards of the academic discipline. The formal proposal must provide a clear and lucid description of a question or problem and a proposed method of answering

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the question or solving the problem. The instructor must approve the proposal before students move on to the next stage of the process.

The proposal should explain the question or problem to be investigated and convince the thesis instructor that the question or problem merits investigation. It should show that the student has read the relevant and recent literature on the subject and it should contain a list of academically appropriate resources consulted during the preliminary stages of research.

In general, the thesis proposal should include background information related to the research topic, purpose of the research, methodology, and analytic procedures to be used. Proposal drafting is considered a learning process and helps students avoid oversights and possible mistakes. The formal proposal should not exceed five (5) pages (proposal title page not included). Length: 5 pp.

Literature Review—2 percent

This document contains a narrative summary of the major sources that inform the research topic. The articles under review must be peer-reviewed articles, scholarly texts, or other appropriate sources and websites. The literature review is not an annotated bibliography or a “laundry list” of reviewed articles. It should capture the issues in the research topic and be organized thematically and be written as a narrative essay. At the end of this review, students should remind the reader that the research question has still not been adequately answered and there is more research to conduct, which is the purpose of the project! The review should include 10-12 sources and include a list of complete citations. Length: 10-15 pp.

Draft Capstone Thesis Project —5 percent

The draft should include all substantive sections of the paper in their entirety as a working manuscript. The draft is not meant to be an outline of what the student *will* write for the final capstone thesis but rather the thesis in its complete form apart from any appendices. It must contain in-text citations in Turabian parenthetical style and include the complete citations in the List of References. Examples of successful capstone papers are available in the classroom to illustrate structures and formats that may vary depending on the research question and methodology of the specific project. Length: 50-65 pp. excluding appendices.

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Final Capstone Thesis Project – 90 percent

Based on prior submission of all assignments in the course, the final capstone thesis project will reflect the substantive elements developed and approved throughout the capstone course, representing a partnership between the student and the instructor. Keep in mind that appropriate stylistic formatting and documentation are the student’s responsibility. Student papers that do not follow the prescribed style rules will not be accepted. All declarations, appendices, metadata, and submission information as outlined in the *End of Program Graduate Assessment Manual* shall be part of the final capstone thesis. Length: 50-65 pp. excluding appendices.

| ASSIGNMENT | Percentage |
|--|--------------------|
| Forum Discussions | 1 percent |
| Proposed Research Question | 0 percent |
| Final Research Question and Thesis Statement | 1 percent |
| Thesis Proposal | 1 percent |
| Literature Review | 2 percent |
| Draft Capstone Paper | 5 percent |
| Final Capstone Paper | 90 percent |
| TOTAL | 100 percent |

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference the University’s [grading scale](#).

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| <u>Weeks</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Readings</u> | <u>Assignments</u> |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| 1-2 | Developing the Capstone Project: Back to the Basics | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your work in Weeks 1-2. | Week One Forum Introduction and Discussion - due Sunday Week One (ungraded). This post requires 250 words for your mandatory introduction Proposed Research Question - Due end Week One Final Research Question and Hypothesis - Due end Week Two |
| 3-4 | Refining the Research Focus and Writing the Thesis Proposal | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your work in Weeks 3-4. | Week Three Forum Discussion (graded – 250 words initial post) Formal Research Proposal – due end Week Four |
| 5-6 | Writing the Introduction and Literature | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your work in | Week Five Forum Discussion (graded – 1000-1250 |

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| | Review | Weeks 5-6. | words for introduction, problem statement, and background) Literature Review – due end Week Six |
| 7-8 | Designing the Research Strategy and Methodology | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your work in Weeks 7-8. | Week Seven Forum Discussion (graded – purpose/rationale statement [250 - 500 words] and methods/project description [750 – 1000 words]) |
| 9-10 | Executing the Strategy: Research and Analysis | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your work in Weeks 9-10. | Week Nine Forum Discussion (graded – open to analysis in discipline] |
| 11-12 | Writing the Draft Thesis Paper | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your work in Weeks 11-12. | Draft Capstone Thesis Project – due end Week Twelve |

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|-------|---|---|---|
| 13-14 | Finalizing the Draft and Adding Necessary Elements | Please see Lessons folder for resources to support your preparation for library submission and/or publishing. | Final Capstone Thesis Project – due end Week Fourteen |
| 15-16 | Awaiting Results and Preparing the Paper for Submission to the Library or Publication Elsewhere | Please see Lessons folder for specific guidance on library submission. | Papers returned. |

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Policies

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked question about policies are listed below.

- [Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Extension Process and Policy](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)

Citation and Reference Style

Attention Please: Students will follow the Turabian/Chicago Style as the sole citation and reference style used in written work submitted as part of coursework to the University.

See <http://www.apus.edu/Online-Library/tutorials/chicago.htm>.

Late Assignments

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Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and may result in points deducted from your final course grade.

Netiquette

Online universities promote the advancement of knowledge through positive and constructive debate – both inside and outside the classroom. Forums on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and “flaming.” Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting – basic academic rules of good behavior and proper “Netiquette” must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the rewards and excitement of learning which does not include descent to personal attacks or student attempts to stifle the Forum of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The Sakai classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and especially satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add “emoticons” to help alert your readers: ;-), :), ☺

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Online Library

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning

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resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to librarian@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.

The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the Open Web and licensed resources on the Deep Web. The following are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:

- Program Portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name, or navigate by school.
- Course Lib-Guides narrow the focus to relevant resources for the corresponding course. You can access the [INTL699 Guide here](#).

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Turnitin.com

Faculty require assignments be submitted to Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com will analyze a paper and report instances of potential plagiarism for the student to edit before submitting it for a grade. The instructor will post information in the classroom on student procedures.