## Academic Research and Writing for Master Thesis
## Master Program in Political Science
Lecturer: Dr. Tatiana Kyselova

**Course description:**

2 credits - 30 class hours, all classes are in interactive format (no lectures)

The aim of the course is to transfer a complex set of research and writing skills to students to enable them independently design, conduct and write up research projects in their chosen area of research.

The course will lead students through all steps of research and writing starting from the choice of their topic to submitting the dissertation according to KMA formal requirements and international standards of research in broad area of social studies. All the assignments are based on the topics that students choose for their actual master dissertations, thus allowing to start design and structuring their research projects under guidance of the lecturer and feedback of their peers.

**Course assessment:**

1) Class attendance and participation – 20%
2) Three written assignments (10% each) – 30%
3) Final written assignment (Research Proposal) – 30%
4) Research Proposal presentation – 20%

**Course Outline**

**Part 1. International Standards of Research**

**1. Why to bother with research?**

1. Introduction of the lecturer and students
2. Motivation of researcher; impact of research
3. Soft skills v. "hard" academic skills at the job market
4. Course expectations from students
5. Course introduction from the lecturer

Class work: interactive discussion on motivation of researcher "Should social science researchers care about societal change?"

**Home assignment 1**: essay-reflection "Why do I need to do research and to write a dissertation" (2 pages max)

**2. What is High Quality Research?**

1. Overview of international standards of research and criteria of scientific research
2. Research in globalized world: Does "Ukrainian science" exist?
3. Distinguishing "good" and "bad" research
4. Connecting international standards and KMA requirements for a course work
5. Link between course paper, master dissertation and (possible) PhD thesis

Class work: small group work/competition: students are given two research articles on the same research topic (by Ukrainian and US scholars); and have to compare them against criteria of scientific research

## 3. Plagiarism and Academic Honesty in Research

1. International Standards of Academic Honesty
2. Normative documents of KMA with regards to plagiarism
3. Link between plagiarism and methodology of research

Class work: role-play "Plagiarism Detectors". Students are given an actual piece of writing of the KMA student to detect and qualify plagiarism according to the KMA Plagiarism Guidelines (Nakaz) and international standards (University of Oxford guidelines).

## Part 2. Doing Research

## 4. Logic of Research and Time-Management

1. Spiral dynamics of research
2. Research circles
3. Planning for efficient research – developing "your" plan of action
4. Major techniques and software for efficient time-management

Class work: /small group work: develop a plan for KMA dissertation research and writing, do feasibility check

## 5. Research Design

1. Criteria for choice of focus and topic
2. Internal and external motivation of researcher and choice of topic
3. The goal of the research and the research question
4. Formulating the research question
5. Linking research question and the structure of the text

Class work: group work: feasibility study of the topics and research question that students have already chosen

**Home assignment 2**: 1) give 10 arguments why you have chosen your topic and research question; 2) explain theoretical or practical problem that you research is focused on (3 pages max)

## 6. Working with the Literature

1. Quality of sources – ranking of the sources in English language
2. Quality of sources – ranking of the sources in Ukrainian language
3. Search for sources (search engines – Google Scholar, databases JStor, EBSCO, ProQuest, etc)
4. Systematic monitoring and automated alerts (TOC, Zetoc, alerts for databases and individual journals)
5. Systematization and storage
6. Making notes, effective and ethical use of notes in the text
7. Referencing and bibliography
8. Software: Bibliography managers and their expanded features (Endnote, Mendeley, Zotero)

2 classes:

Class 1: students are required to bring their computers and to follow the instructor in signing up for and setting up required services. Small groups – developing the general list of journals for Political Science.

Class 2: if there is a request from the students, we will invite a KMA chief librarian with the class on the practical use of Mendeley, students will be able to install and to test Mendeley software

**Home assignment 3**: Develop 1) a list of academic journals on your topic (min 10 items in English) 2) a list of most prominent researchers on your topic (min 10 names in English) 3) pick up two most prominent researchers on your topic, explain their contribution and the logic of your choice (4 pages max)

## 7. Research Methods in Master Research Project

1.  Empirical research and its logic
2.  Overview of research methods in Political Science
3.  Experience of qualitative research – how it frames the writing
4.  Writing methodology section in Master dissertation – general tips

Class work: class discussion "How feasible is to conduct high quality empirical research for master dissertation project?"

## Part 3. Writing up Research

## 9. Writing Strategies for Master Dissertation

1.  When and how to start writing
2.  Creative writing and prompts
3.  Technique of "expanded writing"
4.  Rewriting, editing and polishing the paper

Class work: individual work - creative writing exercise and peer feedback

## 10. Literature Review

1. The purpose of literature review

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

3. Identifying gaps and research problems in literature

4. Using quotations in literature review

Class work: small group work – students are given the actual pieces of writing (good examples of literature reviews) and asked to identify purposes of these reviews

**Home assignment 4**: draft an outline of your literature review based on the template provided (2 pages max)

## 11. Writing in English

1.  How writing in English is different from writing in Ukrainian
2.  Major challenges of writing in English for non-native speaker
3.  Editing and proof-reading English texts

Class work: students are given actual pieces of writing in English by non-native speakers, they have to identify the stylistic mistakes and to rewrite the texts in a proper way