

**Course Title: Research Seminar "Post-Soviet Eurasia"**

Approved by Academic Council

16 May 2018

**Instructor: Prof. Maxim V. Bratersky**

**Course type: compulsory**

**ECTS 2**

**Total hours 72**

**Educational format                      Without use of online course**

**I.        Aim, Results of the place of the discipline in the structure of the Program**

This seminar is a dissertation seminar designed to help student prepare and complete their MA thesis on a broad range of topics related to various aspects of international relations in Eurasia. This seminar is a multi-disciplinary one and it deals with both the theoretical and practical aspects of designing dissertation and successfully defending it. The purpose of the course is to assist students through the proposal and dissertation writing processes. This seminar is central to the Program and builds on the following courses:

Research Methods of International Relations and Foreign Policy

World Politics and International Political Economy

The student will explore the field of Research proposal development and the conduct of Research projects as applied to their dissertation topic. They will also review the literature relevant to their dissertation topic, design a conceptual framework, develop data analysis plan. Under the supervision of the instructor, students will present their own work to the seminar for discussion, critique, and advice. On occasion, students may also present brief summaries of articles or books from the reading list that they consider particularly relevant or useful.

The research seminar aims both methodological and substantive goals. The first one is to provide students with analytical and research skills required for writing academic articles, essays, reviews, reports, course papers and dissertation research on the public policy analysis, human rights and democratic governance. The second goal is to teach to students contemporary approaches to the research of public policy and human rights issues. Students will learn, explore and practice relevant methods of organization of public policy analysis & monitoring in various fields. They will be able to present their research results in the form of individual course paper or master thesis.

The course tasks are:

- 1) to help students specify the issues of their prospective research and formulate research topic by giving them the opportunity to get acquainted with the professors of the department, particularly with the scope of their research interests, publications, research papers themes of the department;
- 2) to familiarize students with the research and analysis methods, to introduce them the rules of drafting and developing of academic research texts of various genres clarifying the language peculiarities of academic writing;
- 3) to develop professional skills and competences required for the preparation of course papers, master's theses, academic papers, reviews, etc. on public policy & human

rights issues;

4) to develop the students' skills of academic discussion, expert debate, presentation of the research work results to the expert community, critically reviewing the comments and defending their point of view;

5) to examine and discuss in the class the academic literature on the subject of the seminar, to help students choose proper academic references and data sources for their master's theses;

6) to teach students the techniques and skills of scientific analysis of empirical data needed for their further professional activities.

## **2. Learning Outcomes**

As a result of their studies, students should:

Know:

- the requirements to the content and drafting of academic and applied research (articles, essays, dissertations, etc.);
- the criteria of selection and principles of usage of the academic sources relevant for the research and interpretation of the research results;
- the requirements to the quality and quantity of research material/data;
- the requirements to the presentation of research results;
- the main theoretical approaches and methods used in public policy & human rights research;
- the basic theoretical conceptions and categories used for the monitoring preparation;
- the core questions associated with the choice of the research method applicable to public policy & human rights issues investigation;
- the content of the required reading given by this program.

Be able to:

- lay out a scientific research and monitoring from the problem definition to the interpretation of the results;
- monitor public policy & human rights events and processes in the class and independently;
- summarize, compare and interpret data obtained from monitoring or other research methods;
- compose a report on research or monitoring results and suggest recommendations for policymakers;
- use academic literature properly, involving results of previous studies and other sources of data to develop their own research;
- present the results of research or monitoring in accordance with the requirements to academic and applied research (course paper, articles, abstracts, reports, etc.)

Have skills to:

- conduct an independent research in the field of public policy & human rights, both singly and within the group;
- lead the whole process of monitoring or any step of this process,
- develop independently the program of the research in the field of public policy & human rights;
- draft and present in public the results of the academic research in the field of public

policy & human rights;

- use different data, apply different analysis methods in the public policy & human rights research and monitoring.

Students will be able to critique Research proposals of each other & offer constructive advice.

The seminar will develop the following skills and competencies:

<b>Competency Code</b>	<b>Competence Definition</b>	<b>Professional tasks that require this competence</b>
YK-3	Able to master new research methods and to adjust the academic and business profile of his work	All professional tasks
ОПК-2	Able to apply modern information techniques and software to establish the goals and resolve the problems of professional activity	All professional tasks
ПК-2	Able to critically analyze issues in the professional sphere systemically and to develop a strategy for their solution	All professional tasks
ПК-4	Able to develop a concept of a research project, formulate the goals, expected results and the possibilities of the practical application of results	All professional tasks
ПК-5	Able to plan and organize research projects	All professional tasks
ПК-7	Able to develop proposals and strategies to carry out applied research and consulting projects	All professional tasks

### **3. Composition of the Seminar**

The seminar will be composed of two parts

**The First part** will remind the students of the basic approached used in preparing dissertation proposals and will be run along the following lines:

#### **Topic.1 Dissertation proposal structure**

Essential elements of the dissertation proposal include:

statement of problem

delimitation of topic

statement of purpose (personal motivation / interest in topic) conceptual framework (theoretical approach used and literature review) formulation of the research questions  
clear description of methodology including methods of data collection & data analysis  
statement of the scholarly significance of the dissertation proposal  
possible implications of the dissertation (expected contribution to knowledge and/or practical implications) dissertation chapter outline

## **Topic 2. Preparing for the research. Literature Review, Research Design, Working with Data**

Doing a Review of Literature. Citation Rules. Reference Rules. Plagiarism

## **Topic 3. Qualitative methods: Applications for the term paper**

Building a system of classification. Analysis: identification of the specific boundaries (start, end) of the events and event phases. Bearing in mind political context, social situation and cultural patterns. Content Analysis: identification of themes/topics.

## **Topic 4. Academic writing: composition, structure and arguments**

Nature of academic writing. Guidelines for academic writing in different genres with a focus on abstract, essay, literature review, MA thesis. Laying out the composition of research after specifying research data and choosing methods of data analysis

**The second part** of the seminar will involve presentations by students of their dissertation outlines, research question, choice of methodology, ideas on collecting data and, finally, upon the completion of their first drafts, “test defenses” of their dissertations to the seminar leader and their peers.

The second part of the seminar will also involve individual consultations and semi-structured work with smaller group of students who develop their thesis in adjacent scholarly fields.

### **4. Literature**

BA/BSc Dissertation Handbook

[http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/studying/undergraduate/courses/coursehandbooks/A\\_RCL3024\\_DissHandbook.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/studying/undergraduate/courses/coursehandbooks/A_RCL3024_DissHandbook.pdf)

Writing and Presenting Your Thesis or Dissertation

<http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/> Finding a Topic and Beginning Research

<http://www.cs.umd.edu/~oleary/gradstudy/gradstudy.html>

Writing Thesis and Dissertation Proposals

<http://www.psu.edu/dept/cew/WritingProposals.doc>

How to Prepare a Research Proposal

<http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/phd/PhDproposal/> Writing a Research Proposal

<http://nottingham.ac.uk/business/phd/Proposal.html> Steps Towards a Thesis Proposal

### **5. Assessment:**

Participation in the seminar will be marked 40% by attendance and 60% by the progress in

the preparation of the master's thesis.

$Q_{\text{final module accumulated}} = 0.4 * \text{participation} + 0.6 * \text{dissertation progress}$

## **6. Software and equipment**

1. Microsoft Windows Professional RUS Microsoft Windows 10  
Microsoft Windows 8.1 Professional RUS From the university's internal network  
(contract)

2. Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010 From the university's internal network  
(contract)

3. Professional databases and reference systems.

- Consultant Plus From the university's internal network  
(contract)

- URAIT Electronic library system URL: <https://biblio-online.ru/>

- Internet resources (electronic educational resources)

- Open Education URL: <https://openedu.ru/>

## **7. Material and technical support**

Classrooms for lectures on the discipline provide for the use and demonstration of thematic illustrations corresponding to the program of the discipline, consisting of: PC with Internet access (operating system, office software, antivirus software); multimedia projector with remote control.