

IS 460W-01: RESEARCH DESIGN FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Course Webpage (CANVAS): <https://vmi.instructure.com/courses/1609>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

IS 460W (Research Design for Political Science) is an advanced, writing-intensive three-credit course in the International Studies curriculum. **The completion of IS 460 is a prerequisite for the pursuit of IS Departmental Honors and a minor in National Security, and it is strongly recommended as a preparatory course for SURI projects.** In general, the course focuses on philosophies of and approaches to social science for the express purpose of facilitating cadets' practical research objectives. As such, the two central goals of the course are (a) to introduce upper-division IS cadets to a broad range of methods traditionally used to design, conduct, and report professional political science research; and (b) to structure and oversee the self-application of these methods to individual cadets' research questions. To these ends, the course will thoroughly address the intricacies of: framing research questions about politics; developing rigorous theories and hypotheses about politics; identifying and operationalizing reasonable measures to test hypothesized relationships; collecting and analyzing political data; and writing research reports that are acceptable by professional political scientific standards. Acquisition of these skills will be gauged by participation, quizzes, and cadets' individual research efforts during the progression of the course, culminating in the development and public presentation of a thorough research design on an approved topic of the cadet's choosing.

PREREQUISITES: ERH 102; IS 201 (C or better)

TEXTS:

Singleton, Royce A., Jr., and Bruce C. Straits. *Approaches to Social Research*, 5th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. (Referred to hereafter as "SS")

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. ("KKV")

Silver, Nate. 2012. *The Signal and the Noise*. New York: Penguin Press ("Silver")

Several additional readings will be posted on CANVAS (Denoted "C" in syllabus).

JSTOR: For several assignments, cadets will be required to access the Journal Storage Scholarly Journal Archive (JSTOR). This search engine is accessible via all VMI-affiliated computers at <http://www.jstor.org>.

CANVAS: Important information for this course will be posted on VMI's new academic interface, CANVAS. This syllabus, lecture notes and readings will be posted on the course's CANVAS home page. Several assignments for this course will also be taken on or submitted to CANVAS. Feel free, also, to post questions about the material or other course-related matters in the "Discussions" section; I will answer them as time permits. We'll go over the operational details of CANVAS in class.

GRADING

1. **Participation (10%):** Participation will include (a) reasoned contribution to class discussions; (b) the demonstrated completion of reading assignments and associated preparatory work; and (c) the demonstrated effort to view and comprehend discussed/read concepts in light of chosen research topics. (24 GRADE POINTS)
2. **Quizzes (20%):** There are four quizzes during the course of the semester, scheduled for **29 January, 17 February, 10 March, and 7 April**. Each quiz will require cadets to answer questions pertaining to material covered since the last quiz. (12 POINTS PER QUIZ; 48 POINTS TOTAL)
3. **Research Question Short Paper (15%):** The requirements for this paper are given on **Page 6** of this syllabus. There are two parts to this assignment: the first draft is due in class on **17 February** and comprises ten percent of the course grade (24 POINTS); a revised version of the first draft is due in class on **3 March**, and comprises five percent of the course grade (12 POINTS). (36 POINTS TOTAL).
4. **Data Collection Short Paper (15%):** The requirements for this paper are given on **Page 7** of this syllabus. There are two parts to this assignment: the first draft is due in class on **7 April** and comprises ten percent of the course grade (24 POINTS); a revised version of the first draft is due in class on **21 April**, and comprises five percent of the course grade (12 POINTS). (36 POINTS TOTAL)
5. **Final Research Design (40%):** The grade for the final research design is divided between two assignments. The first assignment is the ***Written Research Design***. A full listing of the requirements for the Written Research Design is given on **Pages 8-9** of this syllabus. The Written Research Design comprises 25% of the course grade (60 POINTS). The second assignment is the ***Research Design Presentation***, which is a public presentation of the Written Research Design. A full listing of the requirements for the Research Design Presentation is given on **Page 10** of this syllabus. The Research Design Presentation comprises 15% of the course grade (36 POINTS). **The written assignment is due to me, via CANVAS, no later than 8 May at 1700; oral presentations will be conducted in class during Finals Week.** (96 POINTS TOTAL)

The proportion of the 240 total available grade points that each cadet attains determines his or her final grade. The final grading scale is as follows:

A:	216-240 points.
B:	192-215 points.
C:	168-191 points.
D:	144-167 points.
F:	0 - 143 points.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- Work for Grade Policy regulations are fully applicable and will be enforced for each of the assignments and tests (see pages 11-14).
- Qualified cadets are permitted to take 3.0 cuts with the prior approval of the instructor.
- Exams, quizzes, and other assignments will not be postponed except as provided by Institute regulations. Exams, quizzes, and due dates for assignments will be rescheduled only at the discretion of the instructor, and on his terms.
- Late submission of any written work is graded down six grade points per day.
- Regardless of the incurrence of late penalties, the failure to submit any written assignment by the end of the semester will result in a grade of F for the course.
- Other than water in a closed container, no tobacco products, food, beverages, or gum are allowed in the classroom.
- Obscene language will not be permitted.
- The use of personal electronic devices for purposes not associated with classwork is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, (a) any form of communication (i.e., speaking and texting) with a cellular or “smart” phone; and (b) the use of a laptop or “pad” computer for tasks other than those pertaining to IS 460W. The instructor reserves the right to confiscate devices used in contravention of these policies.

If you are a cadet with a documented disability, who will be requesting accommodations in my class, please make sure you are registered with the Office of Disabilities Services, 2nd Floor, Post Infirmary, 464-7667, and provide me with an Accommodations Letter outlining your accommodations. I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your needs.

COURSE OUTLINE

Section 1: Research Questions, Theory, and Hypothesis

- 1/15: Introduction and Overview
No Assignments
- 1/20: What is Social Science Research? How is it done?
SS, Chapters 1 & 2;
C: Fallibility Exercise
- 1/22: The Social Scientific Research Process: The *Mythbusters*TM Myths?
KKV, Chapter 1
- 1/27: Identifying General Research “Areas”: What Interests You?
Written description/discussion of your general political topic of personal interest (for NATSEC Minors, as developed in last semester’s independent study)
- 1/29: What is Theory?
KKV, Chapter 3;
C: Moore, “Evaluating Theory in Political Science”
In Class: Quiz #1
- 2/3: Surveying Existing Theory: Reviewing the Literature
C: Obenzinger, “What Can a Literature Review Do for Me?”;
*From JSTOR, examine only the literature reviews of **three** pieces directly relevant to your topic*
- 2/5: Enhancing Existing Theory: How Might Your Work “Fill Gaps” in the Literature?
C: Foster, “An ‘Invitation to Struggle’?”
- 2/10: From Theory to Hypothesis: The Basics of Conceptualization
SS, pp. 51-75
- 2/12: **In Class: Discussion of Individual Projects**
- 2/17: **In Class: Quiz #2**
Research Question Short Paper Due

Section 2: Data Collection and Analytical Methods

- 2/19: Hypothesis Construction: The Basics of Variable Operationalization
SS, pp. 41-51, Chapter 4
- 2/24: **In Class: Detailed Review of Suggested Revisions to Research Question Paper**
- 2/26: Data Collection: Experimentation
SS, Chapter 6
- 3/3: Data Collection: Survey and Field Research
SS, Chapters 8 & 10
Revisions to Research Question Short Paper Due
- 3/5: The Use of Existing Data
SS, Chapter 11

- 3/10: Data in Political Science
Silver, Introduction;
 Review only the data description sections of the three JSTOR selections you obtained for class on 2/3
In Class: Quiz #3
- 3/12: Qualitative Methods
KKV, Chapters 2 & 4;
C: Munck, "Canons of Research Design in Qualitative Analysis"
- 3/17-3/19: **NO CLASS – Spring Furlough**
- 3/24: Quantitative Methods
SS, Chapters 14 & 15;
Silver, Chapter 1
C: Sykes, "Regression Analysis"
- 3/26: The Basic Principles of Inference I
*Silver, Chapters 2 & 5; **skim** Chapter 8*
- 3/27: The Basic Principles of Inference II
Silver, Chapters 12 & 13
- 3/31: **NO CLASS – Spring FTX**
- 4/2: **In Class: Discussion of Individual Projects**
- 4/7: **In Class: Quiz #4**
Data Collection Short Paper Due

Section 3: Prepping the Final Project

- 4/9: **NO CLASS – Monday Classes Meet**
- 4/14: **In Class: Detailed Review of Suggested Revisions to Data Collection Paper**
- 4/16: Writing Research Reports: Formulating the Intro and Presenting the "Road Map"
C: UNC Writing Center, "Literature Reviews" ("Strategies" onward); SS, pp 540-556
- 4/21: Writing Research Reports: The Presentation of the Theory and Hypotheses
C: Faigley and Hansen, "Learning to Write in the Social Sciences"
In Class: Revisions to Data Collection Paper Due
- 4/23: Writing Research Reports: Conclusion, Citation, and Annotation
C: Turabian, "Quick Guide"
In Class: Scheduling of Oral Presentations
- 4/28: Presenting Research Professionally: Effective Strategies
C: Toft, "Oral Presentations at Scientific Meetings";
C: Petterson, "The Use of Visuals in Oral Presentations"
- 4/30: **In Class: Discussion of Individual Projects**
Faculty Evaluations

Research Question Short Paper Assignment

The framing of the research question is the most important and difficult step of the research design. One must arrive at a question that is novel and complex enough to make a contribution to the discipline, yet specific and manageable enough to thoroughly address. The purpose of this assignment is to allow cadets with an initial speculation about a political relationship to familiarize themselves with what has been written on that topic, and to subsequently “whittle down” their hypothesis to the point where they can make a beneficial contribution.

On 17 February, submit via CANVAS a 7-9 page paper that addresses the following questions:

1. **Which general topic of political science interests you most (e.g., international conflict)? What specific area within this general topic interests you most from a research perspective (e.g., domestic institutions and international conflict), and what major question do you have about this area?** In addressing these, you should indicate specifically why others should also “care” about your interest (e.g., “It is particularly timely or important because of the current war on terror, which...”). This exercise represents the initial framing of your **research question (see pages 6-7 of SS)**.
2. **What is your initial hypothesis pertaining to this specific area? (e.g., “If two states have democratic governments, memberships in international organizations, and a high volume of trade, they will be less likely to fight wars against each other”).** To be useful, your hypothesis must be:
 - a. **Variable Specific:** Hypotheses that do not explicitly specify the variables of interest are not testable.
 - b. **Falsifiable:** You must be able to determine whether or not your hypothesis is supported by empirical data (there’s no need at this point to specify those data; you must simply be able to argue that your hypothesis *can* be proven wrong).
 - c. **Relational/Contingent:** Your hypothesis must clearly indicate the direction of causation/correlation (e.g., “if X (independent variable), then Y (dependent variable).”)
 - d. **Logically Supportable:** Your hypothesis must be based on sound theoretical considerations. This means that it cannot entail logical contradiction and must be bolstered by a reasonable argument as to why you expect it to be correct. This does not mean that your argument cannot run counter to conventional wisdom. For instance, one could say that “democracy increases the prospects of war” if one has a logical explanation for why that would be the case.
3. **What conclusions have been reached by previous scholarly contributors to the subject (e.g., “Gartzke (1998) says...; Oneal and Russett (2001) say...”)?** This is crucial to finding your question’s “place.” To accomplish this task, you should:
 - a. Read the relevant pieces of research that you collected for class on 13 September and address additional scholarly work where necessary
 - b. Construct a general, **concise** synopsis of the conclusions reached by these pieces
 - c. Determine where your hypothesis “fits” in this literature. This is very important, because it indicates your understanding of the refinements that might have to be made to original hypothesis.

The first draft of this paper will be graded, and suggestions for specific revisions made. You will be required to submit a revised second draft of the paper on 3 March, which will also be graded. Individual consultation with the instructor during this process is of paramount importance.

Data Collection Short Paper Assignment

As we have seen, there are many means by which to collect data. The purpose of this assignment is to choose the collection method(s) that will allow for the most thorough testing of your hypothesis. Since you are all essentially training to write an important paper, feasibility and practicality are of paramount concern; you should recognize the limitations that you face as a data collector, and operate within those constraints (in other words, you should address how you ARE going to collect data, not how you COULD if resources, time, and access were not issues).

On 7 April, submit via CANVAS a 7-9 page paper that accomplishes the following tasks:

1. **Discuss how the previous literature you've examined has measured the factors you've identified as dependent and independent** (e.g., the Correlates of War Project's measure of war; the POLITY IV measure of democracy);
2. **Determine whether or not these existing data sources "capture" what you want them to capture, and explain why they do or do not.** For example, the COW measure of war ignores conflicts with battle fatalities of fewer than 1000. Does this render it less useful to your hypothesis?
3. **If you believe existing data will allow you to reasonably test your hypothesis:**
 - a. **Choose one source** that you believe best allows for testing, and explain why it is best (i.e., **argue convincingly** for its feasibility in relation to your project);
 - b. Determine and clearly explain what **changes** you will likely make to the data to fit your research design (e.g., constructing variable categories that fit your hypothesis, excluding or enhancing portions of existing measures, etc.), and how you envision making those changes. Some innovation and/or critical reappraisal of your hypothesis are often necessary at this stage
4. **If you do not believe existing data will allow you to reasonably test your hypothesis (or if the factors important to you are generally unaddressed by previous literature):**
 - a. Clearly **describe the measure** you would like to develop, and the form it will take;
 - b. **Choose one of the data collection methods** addressed in the second part of the course that you feel will best allow you to develop your measure. Explain its feasibility, how you plan to employ it, and why it is better than the other collection methods. Some innovation and/or critical reappraisal of your hypothesis are often necessary at this stage.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Though this assignment stresses the benefits of using existing data, among the worst mistakes you can make is choosing useless data simply because they already exist. Doing so will not only set you up for failure in your ultimate project, but will guarantee you a poor grade.

The first draft of this paper will be graded, and suggestions for specific revisions made. You will be required to submit a revised second draft of the paper on 21 April, which will also be graded. Individual consultation with the instructor during this process is of paramount importance.

Final Research Design – Written Assignment

The Final Research Design represents the **culmination, revision, and expansion** of the Research Question and Data Collection Short Papers, and requires the **systematic application of concepts and material covered throughout the course** to your individual research topics. Therefore, again, consistent critical reassessment of earlier work and consultation with the instructor throughout the semester is crucial to success. Your ultimate goal in this assignment is NOT to conduct original research at this point; rather, it is to provide me and yourself with a comprehensive and detailed “plan of action” with which you will conduct research in the near future.

NO LATER THAN 1700 on 8 May, submit via CANVAS a 20-25 page paper that takes the following general form:

1. **Framing of the Research Question:** The discussion of the research question should use the revised first portion of the Research Design Short Paper as its template. It should begin by framing your topic in the larger context of public/discipline interest. It should then develop a specific, substantive question that narrows down the general topic. Again, evidence of refinement from the initial short paper is crucial.
2. **Placing the Research Question in the Existing Literature:** The literature review for the final design must **comprehensively but concisely** address the scholarly work that has been done pertaining to your research question. Thus, though there is no “numerical” requirement concerning how much literature you should address, the **lit review here should be more inclusive than that of the Research Question Short Paper**. Keep in mind that the purpose of the lit review is NOT to simply provide an accounting of what others have said, but to explicitly place your research question in the context of what has been said and, optimally, show how it has not been sufficiently addressed.
3. **Theory and Operational Hypothesis(es):** As with the previous steps, **the construction of theory and operational hypothesis(es) should revisit and expand upon the Research Design Short Paper**. Your theoretical explanation should provide a logical, detailed account of the broader forces that you believe to be at work regarding your research question. Your hypothesis(es) should be clearly stated provide a detailed relational prediction regarding specific variables that are central to your research question (for the difference between theory and hypothesis, refer to class notes and page 19-20 of SS).
4. **Data Collection Method:** The Data Collection Short Paper represented your initial data collection outline; this section of the Final Research Design should clearly explain how it will be done in practice. You will need to both **discuss the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables** and **provide a complete account of the collection method** you’ve chosen, whether it involves the employment of existing data or one of the other collection methods. **As an adjunct to your previous work, you should also briefly address the concept of selection bias and how it effects your data collection efforts (see SS, page 190-195)**. Comparisons to other actual or possible collection methods should be made for the purpose of showing the ascendancy of your chosen method.
5. **Data Analysis Method:** It is at this stage that you will break entirely new ground in your project. Based upon the concepts addressed in the final section of the course, systematically discuss how you plan to analyze the data that you plan to collect. Above all, keep in mind that the analytical method you choose is largely determined by the nature of the data you plan to collect. Thus, you should accomplish the following three goals:

- a. **Determine whether your analysis will be qualitative or quantitative in nature, or both.** This discussion should be accompanied by demonstrated recognition of the **tradeoffs** inherent in choosing one of these methods over the other, and should focus on feasibility and practicality
- b. **Discuss which specific methods within the qualitative/quantitative realm you'll likely employ (e.g., comparative case studies for qualitative, multivariate regression for quantitative).** You should, as with the data collection section, focus on the possible selection bias associated with your choice of model
- c. **Determine which "control variables" are likely to complicate your analysis, and how your method accounts for them.** Again, reference to fundamental tradeoffs such as "internal versus external validity" should factor into this treatment

You do not have to actually conduct the analysis, but you must provide a very convincing argument that the analysis *can and should be* conducted.

6. **Concluding Considerations:** You should conclude by tying together the important parts of your research design and, most importantly, clearly laying out how your conceptualization represents an advancement over previous work and/or fills a gap in the field.

AGAIN - The Written Research Design, along with all papers written for this course, must comply fully with Work for Grade Policy stipulations. DO NOT HESITATE TO COME TO ME WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS POLICY IF YOU ARE AT ALL UNSURE.

Final Research Design – Presentation Assignment

While many students and even academics are very nervous about orally presenting their work, such “talks” are crucial to discussion and advancement within the discipline. As students who have spent an entire semester designing original research, you should be able to make such contributions to the discipline by presenting your research design in a public, professional setting.

Basic Guidelines for the Oral Presentation:

1. Presentations will take place during two or three exam periods (TBD) during Finals Week.
2. Each presentation session will take the basic form of a panel at a major research conference. During each session, each of the presenters will have 20 minutes to present their work; there will be a 10-15 minute cumulative question-and-answer period following each set of presentations. Optimally, presentations will be scheduled on the basis of how well they relate to one another (e.g., Day 1 will be about American politics, Day 2 about international politics).
 - a. Only twenty minutes? Yes. This is actually more time than allotted at most conferences, where people want to get a very quick idea of what innovations are being made in a field in a short period of time, and then ask questions about them. Clearly, this means that you will have to work hard to focus on the important points of your project, while minimizing “fluff” (more on this later). There will be no changes to this time constraint. I will serve as timekeeper and panel chair.
 - b. The panels will be open to both your classmates and the public, and VMI faculty will be strongly encouraged to attend and participate. Stressful? Not as much as going to a conference and seeing huge names in the field at your panel. You should get used to it early.
3. Each presenter will use Microsoft PowerPoint to illustrate his/her presentation.
 - a. I know some folks have issues with PP, but requiring it standardizes presentations and helps force presenters to remain on point. If you need any help regarding PP, consult with me or your classmates.
 - b. College students often think that adding “bells and whistles” to their PP presentations will wow their audiences and guarantee them success. In fact, it often indicates that they don’t have anything important to say. Putting videos and the like into a presentation such as this is a waste of time. Similarly, if you come to your talk with thirty slides, you’re setting yourself up for a fall. Eliminate materials that are not central to your theoretical argument and research design. Keep it simple.
4. The goal of the presentation is to **SUCCINCTLY SUMMARIZE** the important aspects of the cadet’s research project.
 - a. **This means just what it says.** Lay it all out in condensed form: general interest, research question and literature, theory and hypothesis, data collection and analysis methods. The best way to do this is to look at how you’ve addressed each of these issues in the written assignment, and “simmer it down” so that you can present the main points of each issue in a few minutes. Once you’ve done this, *then* start putting together your PP slides.
 - b. **Remember that the “so what” question is generally more important to other people than to you.** You should be sure to stress, at the outset and conclusion, why your work is important from more than just a purely academic perspective.

WORK FOR GRADE POLICY

Development of the spirit as well as the skills of academic inquiry is central to the mission of VMI's Academic Program. As a community of scholars, posing questions and seeking answers, we invariably consult and build upon the ideas, discoveries, and products of others who have wrestled with related issues and problems before us. We are obligated ethically and in many instances legally to acknowledge the sources of all borrowed material that we use in our own work. This is the case whether we find that material in conventional resources, such as the library or cyberspace, or discover it in other places like conversations with our peers.

Academic integrity requires the full and proper documentation of any material that is not original with us. It is therefore a matter of honor. To misrepresent someone else's words, ideas, images, data, or other intellectual property as one's own is stealing, lying, and cheating all at once.

Because the offense of improper or incomplete documentation is so serious, and the consequences so potentially grave, the following policies regarding work for grade have been adopted as a guide to cadets and faculty in upholding the Honor Code under which all VMI cadets live:

1) Cadets' responsibilities

"**Work for grade**" is defined as any work presented to an instructor for a formal grade or undertaken in satisfaction of a requirement for successful completion of a course or degree requirement. All work submitted for grade is considered the cadet's own work. "**Cadet's own work**" means that he or she has composed the work from his or her general accumulation of knowledge and skill except as clearly and fully documented and that it has been composed especially for the current assignment. No work previously submitted in any course at VMI or elsewhere will be resubmitted or reformatted for submission in a current course without the specific approval of the instructor.

In all work for grade, failure to distinguish between the cadet's own work and ideas and the work and ideas of others is known as **plagiarism**. Proper documentation clearly and fully identifies the sources of all borrowed ideas, quotations, or other assistance. The cadet is referred to the VMI-authorized handbook for rules concerning quotations, paraphrases, and documentation.

In all written work for grade, the cadet must include the words "**HELP RECEIVED**" conspicuously on the document, and he or she must then do one of two things: (1) state "none," meaning that no help was received except as documented in the work; or (2) explain in detail the nature of the help received. In oral work for grade, the cadet must make the same declaration before beginning the presentation. Admission of help received may result in a lower grade but will not result in prosecution for an honor violation.

Cadets are prohibited from discussing the contents of a quiz/exam until it is returned to them or final course grades are posted. This enjoinder does not imply that any inadvertent expression or behavior that might indicate one's feeling about the test should be considered a breach of honor. The real issue is whether cadets received information, not available to everyone else in the class, which would give them an unfair advantage. If a cadet inadvertently gives or receives information, the incident must be reported to the professor and the Honor Court.

Each cadet bears the responsibility for familiarizing himself or herself thoroughly with the policies stated in this section, with any supplementary statement regarding work for grade expressed by the academic department in which he or she is taking a course, and with any special conditions provided in writing by the professor for a given assignment. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the correct interpretation of a policy, the cadet should consult the instructor of the course. There should be no confusion, however, on the

basic principle that it is never acceptable to submit someone else's work, written or otherwise, formally graded or not, as one's own.

The violation by a cadet of any of these policies will, if he or she is found guilty by the Honor Court, result in his or her being dismissed from VMI. Neither ignorance nor professed confusion about the correct interpretation of these policies is an excuse.

2) Faculty members' responsibilities

Each academic department will publish an official statement of supplementary departmental policies regarding work for grade, titled "Departmental Statement Concerning VMI's Policies Regarding Work for Grade." Each departmental statement will include explicit policies on the following: (a) tutoring* [e.g., Writing Center, Learning Center, athletic tutors, private tutors], (b) peer collaboration*, and (c) computer aids, including calculators, translators, spelling, style, and grammar checkers. Individual course assignments that deviate from the departmental work for grade policies must be approved by the department head in advance and must be explained to cadets in writing.

No departmental or individual assignment policies may contradict or compromise the Institutional principles expressed in the Academic Regulations, particularly notions of academic integrity and the requirement to document borrowed material and help received. Each departmental statement must be approved by the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty following review by the Academic Policy Committee of the Academic Board. A copy of the document must be filed with the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, and the Superintendent's Representative to the Honor Court. Such a statement must be signed by the department head and must be posted in each classroom used by the department.

As an essential part of the duty of teaching and a matter of professional citizenship, faculty are expected to adhere to established work for grade policies and to communicate clearly and regularly with their cadets about the values and practices of academic honesty and integrity. Each faculty member must therefore include work for grade policies in a syllabus for every course he or she teaches. Each syllabus must include an exact transcription of the section titled "Cadets' Responsibilities" from "Work for Grade Policies" in the VMI Academic Regulations and a full statement of the established departmental policies regarding work for grade, plus any approved course-specific policies.

Furthermore, all faculty members are responsible for discussing with all of their students the details, definitions, and implications of (1) the entire section of the Academic Regulations entitled "Work for Grade Policies"; (2) the relevant sections on quotations, paraphrasing, and documentation in the current VMI-authorized handbook; and (3) the departmental and any approved course-specific policies regarding Work for Grade. This discussion must take place before any work is submitted for grade, and it should be treated with the gravity and level of detail that it merits.

Faculty must also review the Institute policy regarding the discussion of quizzes and exams with their classes. Specifically, faculty must remind cadets that they are prohibited from discussing the contents of a quiz/exam with anyone except the professor until it is returned to them or final course grades are posted.

If a member of the faculty believes that a cadet has violated one or more of VMI's, the department's, or the instructor's work for grade policies, he or she should report the evidence to the head of the department. The department head will decide whether the collected evidence justifies referral to the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty. If the department head decides that the evidence does not justify referral, then he or she will conclude the investigation. Otherwise, the department head will submit a written report to the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty. The report must contain both

a recommendation for action and all relevant documents, including a statement signed by the faculty member who reported the violation.

The instructor will assign a grade of “I” following a formal charge of an Honor Court academic violation in his or her course until the issue is resolved.

* Departmental policies must include a statement on whether tutors and peers may offer cadets **critical comments** on their papers. Offering **critical comments** means giving general advice on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. It does not include proofreading or editing.

Proofreading means correcting errors (e.g., in spelling, grammar, punctuation). It is the last step taken by the writer in the **editing** process. In addition to the corrections made in proofreading, **editing** includes making such changes as the addition, deletion, or reordering of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words. **A cadet may not have his or her work proofread or edited by someone other than the instructor.** [Instructors may grant exceptions to this rule only if they have received written permission from the department head for a particular assignment.]

Department of International Studies & Political Science
Work for Grade Policy

Work for Grade in this department is generally of the following types.

1. Written quizzes, tests, or examinations
2. Book reviews
3. Research Papers, policy memoranda, briefing papers, and discourse analysis--
identification and analysis of the critical differences in the findings and opinions of
scholars on issues of interest to the discipline.

1. Cadets are permitted and encouraged to study with their peers to prepare for quizzes, tests and exams. However, when a cadet takes either written or oral quizzes, tests, and examinations, answers must be his/her own work without help from any other source including notes or consultation with others.

2. In the case of book reviews, research and other papers, as described in "2" and "3" above, research and composing of such works must be done by the cadet alone. Cadets are permitted to use spell and grammar-checking facilities.

IS cadets are encouraged to make use of all VMI tutoring services to receive critical comments (defined above). Cadets who do so and mark "Help Received" will not receive a lower grade on an assignment. Cadets are also permitted to seek critical comments on their written work from their peers. However, proof-reading and editing (**defined above**) of a cadet's written work is not permitted.

Any exceptions to these rules, including the use of tutors, collaboration among cadets, and the use of computer style, spell and grammar checkers; must be explained in writing by the course instructor. Instructors are at liberty to stipulate exceptions only with the written approval of their department head.

If you have any questions about the application of these rules, consult your instructor. Do not leave anything to chance.

Colonel James J. Hentz
Professor and Head