

Brandeis University
The Heller School for Social Policy and Management
Master of Arts in Sustainable International Development

HS338a
SID Advanced Studies Seminar
Syllabus: Fall Semester 2017
Wednesdays, 2:00-4:50 Room G53
Instructor: Professor Joan Dassin
Office: Schneider 105
Phone: 781-736-2207
Email: jdassin@brandeis.edu
Office hours: By Appointment

UNIVERSITY NOTICES

1. If you are a student with a **documented disability** on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

2. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on **academic honesty** is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty are subject to possible judicial action. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about these policies, please ask me.

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world expert or your roommate – without proper acknowledgement of the source. This means you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, data or ideas found in published volumes, on the Internet, or created by another student. If you are in doubt, you must ask for clarification.

This course meets Wednesdays from 2:00 PM to 4:50 PM during Module I on August 30, September 6, 13, 20, 27, October 4 and October 18 (last session during exam week). It continues during Module II on the same day and time. The dates are October 25, November 1, 8, 15 and 29, and December 6 and 13 (last session is during exam week).

This course is required for advanced study students in the MA/SID degree and is open to MA/SID concentration students on campus in the Fall semester. The course is open to SID/MS and SID/MBA students who are writing an SID paper. SIDCO students should work with their COEX advisers on their masters paper. The course is not open to first year students.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course description:

The course focuses on developing the SID Master's paper within the broader framework of strengthening students' research skills, critical thinking and professional writing. It introduces students to scholarly resources and diverse examples of effective writing in the development field, and builds their understanding of how development knowledge is produced and communicated.

All required readings are posted on Latte, available online, or on reserve at the Brandeis library.

Readings and written assignments may be added and/or substituted, depending on the progress of the class. Students will be advised well in advance of any changes.

The class will review the following skills:

Critical Thinking

- Framing a development problem/issue
- Enhancing reading comprehension
- Identifying, presenting, and analyzing ideas, data, evidence and recommendations from scholarly articles, research and policy studies, and organizational reports
- Recognizing underlying assumptions
- Identifying models of argument, persuasion, and demonstration
- Discussing normative approaches, or the distinction between describing what is and arguing what should be
- Acknowledging the legitimacy of diverse opinions and different ways to look at issues while advancing your own position
- Becoming aware of cross-cultural perspectives in international development related to gender, ethnic, and indigenous groups.

Topics in Scholarly and Professional Writing

- Overall structure, cohesion, and coherence
- English grammar and style conventions
- Clarity and concision
- Proper use of quotations and citations, when to cite and how often (guarding against plagiarism)
- Strengthening your narrative voice and not just repeating the ideas and assumptions of other authors
- Timing, or when to introduce certain main points in the paper or within a paragraph
- Presenting your views objectively through the use of data and evidence while advancing an argument
- Standards for academic rigor in case studies and project evaluations
- Elements of scholarly and policy papers and articles, including:
 - Executive Summaries and Abstracts

- *Introduction* – Crafting the opening section or sections of a scholarly paper introducing the development problem or issue; describing the context, study location and other information needed to understand the topic
- *Sources and Methods* – Identifying and explaining how information was gathered and analyzed, limitations of the study
- *Literature Review* – Presenting and analyzing different references and sources, describing the current state of knowledge about the topic; identifying gaps in the literature
- *Discussion* – Distinguishing between literature review and substantive discussion; applying analytical frameworks from the theoretical literature; organizing data and presenting information, including the use of tables, figures, maps, charts, graphics, etc.
- *Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion* – Explaining evidence-based findings and framing policy recommendations to improve sustainable development policy and/or practice; framing concluding arguments
- *Others* – references, acronyms, acknowledgments, etc.

The course will enable students to work on their Masters paper section by section, receiving guidance and critical assessments from the professor and their classmates. The goal of the course is for students to produce a rough draft of their paper by the end of the Fall 2017 semester. Students will then have a solid basis to produce their final paper, due in April for May 2018 graduation.

Core competency statement:

This course teaches concepts and skills that have been identified as core competencies for a degree in SID, particularly in regard to contextual analysis, problem solving, evidence, and communications. Core competencies 4, 5, 6, and 10 are addressed as follows:

- Developing critical thinking skills to improve the effectiveness of arguments, persuasion, advocacy, problem-solving and professional communication, especially written documents;
- Understanding the context surrounding a development issue or problem;
- Building capacity in the interpretation, analysis and use of data and evidence to present information, strengthen arguments and translate research into action;
- Learning methods of critical thinking and professional writing to support, produce, influence and disseminate development policy and practice, recognizing that communications are a powerful engine for social change.

Sustainable development statement:

This semester-long course has the immediate practical application of supporting second-year SID students as they develop their Masters paper. Beyond that, the course will develop advanced critical thinking skills, models of logical presentation of information, reading comprehension and advanced writing skills that are essential for development professionals in multilateral and bilateral organizations, foundations, NGOs, intergovernmental and governmental sectors and civil society organizations. The course will also help students to identify online resources that they can use after the course ends to improve their writing skills. Readings will include a variety of texts by key development thinkers and practitioners, adding to students' substantive knowledge in the field.

Gender perspective statement:

Students will be encouraged to incorporate a gender perspective into their Masters papers. In addition, the course will enhance their ability to think critically, present information and write in a manner that is sensitive to differing gender roles and relations in development work, while taking into account value-systems, practices, beliefs and social relations in diverse cultures. Through assigned readings and class discussions, students will enhance their awareness of how development discourses are shaped differently by different institutions, regions, countries, traditions and social groups. The aim is to communicate information in ways that respect diversity and promote tolerance and increase mutual understanding, in order to create more equitable societies and improve the wellbeing of women and other vulnerable groups.

Course requirements:

1. Attendance at all sessions.
2. Preparation of all readings and weekly writing assignments.
3. Participation in class discussions.
4. Helpfulness to other students.

Your **grade** will be calculated as follows:

Attendance, weekly reading assignments, and participation - 25%

Writing assignments - 75%

Specific grading criteria for the writing assignments are:

- For those related to your Master's paper:
 - Is your English grammar correct?
 - Are your sentences complete?
 - Do you have a clear topic sentence in each paragraph or section?
 - Do your ideas and sections flow smoothly, and in logical order?
 - Do you use evidence to support your points?
 - Is your development problem or issue precisely framed and clearly stated?
 - Do you demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts in your sources by putting them in your own words and not just repeating the technical jargon of the references or authors consulted?
 - Do you use citations and quotations properly?
 - Do you achieve an in-depth analysis in your discussion section?
 - Are your conclusions and recommendations a logical outcome of your analysis?

CLASS SESSIONS

Requirements:

Weekly reading assignments from:

- Articles and books on critical thinking and scholarly writing, including academic research and policy studies
- Articles and books on development theory and practice
- Articles from peer-reviewed development journals – *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*; *Development in Practice*, etc.
- Reports from development organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations and various UN agencies
- Past SID Master's Papers and SID Program Guidelines

Writing assignments are due as indicated. Please post all assignments on LATTE by the due date and time and bring hardcopies with you to class, if requested. The instructor will make every effort to return writing assignments within two weeks after they are submitted.

All written assignments should use the following format:

Font: Times New Roman font size 12

Spacing: Single

Margins: 1" on each side

Texts and Resources for the Course:

Scholarly Writing, Case Study Guidelines, and General Reference Works for Professional Writing

Agar, M., *The Lively Science: Remodeling Human Social Research* (2013). Minneapolis: Mill City Press.

Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. (2012). *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 2nd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

MA/SID Handbook: Guidelines, Requirements, & Information for the Second Year (2016-17).

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010). Sixth Edition. Washington, DC: APA.

The Writing Center at UNC – Chapel Hill. <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>

The Purdue Owl (n.d.). Online Writing Lab. Retrieved from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/>

Yin, R.K. (2014). *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Samples of Different Types of Writing Styles, Arguments, and Genre

Acemolglu, D., & Robinson, J. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. New York: Crown Publishing.

Chambers, R. (2013). 'Voices of the Poor' and Beyond: Lessons from the Past, Agenda for the Future. Lecture delivered on 11 October 2012 on the occasion of the 60th Dies Natalis of the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. Retrived:
http://www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Documents/Academic_publications/Robert_Chambers_Honorary_Fellow.pdf

Deaton, Angus (2013). *The Great Escape: Health, wealth, and the origins of inequality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Deneulin, Severine and Lila Shahani, eds (2009). *An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach*. London: Earthscan. <http://web.idrc.ca/openebooks/470-3/>

Escobar, Arturo (1995; 2012). *Encountering Development: The making and unmaking of the Third World* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Klein, Naomi (2014). *This Changes Everything*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Rist, Gilbert (2009). *History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*, 3rd edition. Academic Foundation: New Delhi.

Robeyns, Ingrid (2006). The Capabilities Approach in Practice. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14 (3) 351-376.

Sachs, Jeffrey (2015). *The Age of Sustainable Development*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books.

Stiglitz, Joseph (2016). *The Great Divide: Unequal Societies and What We Can Do About Them*. New York: WW Norton & Co.

Reports and Papers from Major International Development Institutions

Alkire, Sabina (2010). *Human Development: Definitions, Critiques, and Related Concepts*. Human Development Research Paper 2010/01. New York: UNDP. Retrieved from:
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdrp_2010_01.pdf

United Nations (2015). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*. Retrieved from:
[http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%2015\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%2015).pdf)

United Nations Development Programme (2016). *Human Development Report 2016: Human*

Development for Everyone. New York: United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf

World Bank (2016). *Global Development Indicators*. Washington D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23969/9781464806834.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

Class Schedule:

Development policies, actions, best practices, and lessons learned are created, initiated, disseminated and replicated through books, scholarly articles, reports, and similar publications. To build students' analytical ability and capacity to communicate about sustainable development, class sessions will focus on three types of texts: (1) guides, manuals or critiques of scholarly writing; (2) sections of books, articles and/or development case studies; and (3) student writing, either written by class members or from other SID Master's Papers. Class sessions will also include workshops by guest presenters on practical skills such as library searches, citation systems, research methods and data presentation.

Week 1 (August 30): Introduction to Critical Thinking and Scholarly Professional Writing

This session will introduce the goals of the course and its expected learning outcomes. We will discuss the tasks involved in researching and writing the SID Masters paper within the broader framework of issues posed by the use of language in development work and common problems with scholarly writing.

Students will be introduced to online resources that can support them during the paper writing process.

Required Readings:

MA/SID Handbook: Guidelines, Requirements, & Information for the Second Year (2017-18). pp. 14-24.

Agar, M., *The Lively Science: Remodeling Human Social Research* (2013). Minneapolis: Mill City Press. Preface, pp. 6-31.

Pinker, Steven (2014). Why Academic Writing Stinks and How to Fix It." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 26, 2014, pp. 1-22.

Online Resources:

The Writing Center at UNC – Chapel Hill. <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>

The Purdue Owl (n.d.). Online Writing Lab. Retrieved from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/>

Written Assignment #1: Frame your development problem or issue clearly and precisely in one or two paragraphs. *Assignment must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tuesday, Sept. 5.*

Week 2 (Sept 6): The Research Process and Framing Development Problems

Students will review aspects of the research process, including conducting research and identifying and using different kinds of sources. We will examine how the human development and capability approach ‘frames’ development.

Required Readings:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

“Overview,” United Nations Development Programme (2016). *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. Pp.1-21. Retrieved from:

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf

Written Assignment #2: In a maximum of 2 pages, discuss how the 2016 *Human Development Report* “frames” the problems of human development. What are the key concepts underlying the UN approach to development? *Assignment must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tuesday, Sept. 12.*

Week 3 (Sept 13) Research, Policy and Practice

What are the general characteristics of research papers, policy analyses and programmatic analyses? What are some of the differences between academic research questions and problems as framed for policy studies or development interventions? How do we meet standards of academic rigor to analyze policy impacts and development practice?

Required Readings:

Online resources:

Walden University Writing Center. “Scholarly Writing: Overview.”

<http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/scholarly>

Purdue OWL. “Writing a Research Paper.”

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/>

Chapter 4, “Caring for those left out – national policy options,” in United Nations Development Programme (2016). *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. pp.105-136. Retrieved from:

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf

Written Assignment #3: Develop a draft of the introduction to your Master’s paper. Introduce your topic and its significance for development. Include background information and context as necessary. Explain the structure you intend to follow in the paper. Text should be 500-750 words, single-spaced. *Drafts must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tues, Sept 19.*

Week 4 (Sept 20) Structuring Your Research Paper

We will discuss students’ draft introductions and continue our analysis of research papers with a policy and/or programmatic focus. We will use examples of case studies to how different

elements are combined to build an argument, present evidence and draw conclusions.

Required Readings:

Center for Global Development (2015). Case Studies. Available online:
<http://www.cgdev.org/page/case-studies>

Written Assignment #4: Identify a scholarly article or case study on your Master's paper topic. In a maximum of 2 pages, analyze how the study is designed and what types of evidence are presented. *Assignment must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tuesday, September 26.*

Week 5 (Sept 27): Workshop on Applied Research Design and Scholarly Research Methods

This session will present diverse approaches to applied research designs, and how they fit particular research questions. We will examine the differences between primary and secondary research, observation and practice, and quantitative and qualitative approaches. Students will identify the types of sources available for research papers and case studies. Examples include secondary data of all types, including policy briefs, organizations' annual reports, scholarly articles and books, census reports and databases. We will also review the types of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed) that are commonly used to identify or generation relevant information for research papers and case studies.

Required Readings:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/>

Written Assignment #5: Develop a list of the types of sources that you will use for your paper and consider the methods you will use to analyze them. Based on this information, prepare your Sources and Methods section (500-750 words). *This assignment must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tuesday October 3.*

Week 6 (Oct 4): Literature Reviews

To understand a problem, development practitioners must be able to research and situate their development problem in the context of previous work on the problem, including how it has been understood in various contexts and settings, and what has been learned over time. A literature review situates a problem in a framework of writings by other authors, analysts and experts. We will discuss techniques for preparing literature reviews.

Required Readings:

Mongan-Rallis, H. (2014). *Guidelines for writing a literature review*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.duluth.umn.edu/~hrallis/guides/researching/litreview.html>

The Writing Center (2010). Literature Reviews. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>

SID Masters Papers, as examples

Written Assignmen #6: Begin gathering sources for your literature review (1500 to 2000 words). You will have approximately three weeks to complete the first draft of your literature review.

The literature review section of your paper must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tuesday, October 31.

Week 7 (Oct 18): Reflections on First Module: Student Presentations

This session will look back at the first half of the course, to clarify any unresolved issues and review students' progress on their MA papers. We will also review progress on the literature review section.

Continue work on your literature review.

Week 8 (Oct 25): Finding Your Own Voice: Critical Analysis of Evidence and Discussing and Presenting Results

We will learn the purpose, structure, and form of the discussion section and how it differs from previous sections, particularly the literature review. The discussion is where results including data, evidence, and perspectives, based on the literature review but focused on your development problem, are presented and analyzed in relation to the topic. We will study examples of effective presentation of results and examine texts characterized by distinctive authors' voices.

Chambers, R. (2013). 'Voices of the Poor' and Beyond: Lessons from the Past, Agenda for the Future. Lecture delivered on 11 October 2012 on the occasion of the 60th Dies Natalis of the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. Retrived:
http://www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Documents/Academic_publications/Robert_Chambers_Honorary_Fellow.pdf

Written Assignment #7: Begin drafting the discussion section of your paper (3000-4500 words). The discussion section is due in approximately four weeks, and must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tuesday, November 28.

Week 9 (Nov 1): Discussion Session Clinic

Students will discuss challenges in drafting their discussion sections.

Required Readings:

Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. (2012). *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 2nd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton. Part 3. "Tying it All Together." pp. 99-133.

Continue work on discussion section of papers.

Week 10 (Nov 8): Critical Analysis of Evidence and Presenting Results: Using and Presenting Quantitative Data

This session will focus on how to understand, analyze and present quantitative data in scholarly and professional writing.

Required sources:

Tufte, Edward R. (2006). *Beautiful Evidence*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press. Selections.

Alkire, S. et al (2015). Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2015. Retrieved:
<http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Global-Multidimensional-Poverty-Index-2015-8pp-Digital.pdf?6b8d26>

Students continue work on discussion section of papers, adding tables, figures, maps, charts, photos and other graphics, as needed.

Week 11 (Nov 15): Formulating Policy Recommendations

This session focuses on examples of policy recommendations as found in different types of research articles and organizational reports. How are effective recommendations formulated?

Required Readings:

Poverty and Economic Policy. Guidelines for Writing a Policy Brief.

http://www.pep-net.org/sites/pep-net.org/files/typo3doc/pdf/CBMS_country_proj_profiles/Philippines/CBMS_forms/Guidelines_for_Writing_a_Policy_Brief.pdf

Results 4 Development. *How to Produce a Policy Brief.* (On Latte)

Written Assignment #8: Students have approximately two weeks to finalize their Findings and Recommendations (750-1000 words). *This section must be posted on Latte by 11:55pm on Tues Dec. 5.*

Week 12 (November 29): Transforming Policy Research into Action

Students consider strategies for transforming policy research into action.

Young, John et al. (2014). *Rapid Outcome Mapping Approach: A guide to policy engagement and policy influence.* Read Chapter 1, "Introduction" (pp. 1-8) and Chapter 2, "Developing an engagement strategy to influence policy" (pp. 23-42). Overseas Development Institute: London. Available online: <http://www.roma.odi.org/introduction.html>

Students complete their Conclusion section (500-750 words). Begin drafting the Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, Abstract, Acknowledgments, List of Acronyms and Abbreviations, Appendices and other remaining sections of papers.

Week 13 (Dec 6): Documenting and Communicating Social Change: Creating Compelling Development Narratives Using Digital Media

This session provides a brief introduction to digital media tools that can be used to document development issues and advocate for specific solutions.

Resources available on:

<http://ticobelda.wix.com/dmcd-proseminar>

Written Assignment #9: Complete drafts of the papers are due on Latte by noon on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

Students prepare presentations on their Master's papers.

Week 14 (Dec 13): Reflections on Critical Thinking and Professional Writing

Students reflect on course and present drafts of their Master's papers.