New York University SPS
M.S. in Global Affairs
Analytic Skills for Global Affairs
GLOB1-GC3035.002, Spring 2019
Friday, 12:30-3:10 pm, Wool 214

Contact Information
Drew Holland Kinney
Office: TBD
Office Hours: Fridays (by appointment)
Email: dhk4@nyu.edu
Course site: NYUClasses
Course info: 3 credits; 14 sessions; 2hrs and 40min
Prerequisites: there are no course prerequisites.

Course Description
What factors are key to successful post-conflict reconstruction and peace building? When do states cooperate on energy policy? Is religious terrorism more dangerous than other forms? What is the relationship between democracy and development? Is foreign aid effective in preventing conflict? We probably have *beliefs* about the answers to these questions, but what if we really want to *know* the answers to these questions? Put simply, how can we obtain accurate answers to the real-world questions we care about? If one desires accurate answers, careful thought must be given to how evidence will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. In other words, one must have an understanding of *research methods*. Crucially, the research methods that are employed to answer one's question determine the accuracy of the answer one obtains. Thus, a course like this is concerned less with *what* we know, and more with *how we know it*.

Learning Objectives
The goals of this course, therefore, are to introduce students to the research process and the different types of research methods available to answer critical questions about global affairs. We will learn about both qualitative and quantitative methods and will cover the advantages and disadvantages to different types of data collection and analysis. Further, this course will enhance students' ability to analyze arguments, evaluate evidence, and convey key ideas and research findings effectively. By the end of this course, students should be able to design a research project, define and measure key social science phenomena, formulate hypotheses, design tests of their hypotheses through qualitative and/or quantitative methods, and effectively present their research designs. In addition, students will learn how to deconstruct scholarly research into its fundamental components (e.g., the author's research question, variables, hypotheses, sample, research method, etc.) and, as such, become more critical readers of published work and sharper researchers and thinkers.

Course Structure/Method

The course will involve detailed lectures and group discussion. I will provide handouts and/or clarifications via email, NYU Classes, or in class. Class assignments are described in detail below. Please note that class participation represents a substantial component of the final grade. Classes will meet once per week throughout the semester at the specified start time unless otherwise indicated by the syllabus.

Course Readings

The course readings are chosen to convey an understanding of research design, choice of methods and analysis, and a variety of techniques for presenting findings. Although this course provides a brief introduction to statistical analysis, this is not a statistics course and should not be viewed as a substitute for statistical training. Rather, it is an introduction to a range of analytic skills and their tradeoffs as they are applied to the study of global affairs.

Required Texts

The following are required and available for purchase online as well as the NYU Bookstore:

Wheelan, C. 2013. *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread out of Data*. New York, New York: Norton (ISBN: 978-0393347777; new, Amazon: $11.52)

Merriam, S. B., & Elizabeth J. Tisdell. 2016. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey Bass (ISBN: 978-1119003618; new, Amazon: $30.77).

Turabian, Kate, et al. 2013. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (9th ed.). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2013 (ISBN: 978-0226430577; new, Amazon: $15.42).

Not required, but recommended
For help with structuring a research project/paper
Booth, W., G. Colomb, J. Williams, J. Bizup, & W. T. FitzGerald. 2008. *The Craft of Research* (3rd ed.). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press (ISBN: 978-0226239736; new, Amazon: $16.20).

For help with writing/English grammar
Strunk, William Jr., & E.B. White. 2008. *The Elements of Style*. White Plains, New York: Longman Publishers (ISBN: 978-0205309023; new, Amazon: $16.20).

Pre-Course Reading Assignments

Please come to the first class session having completed all of the readings listed under "Session 1" on the course schedule.

Course Expectations/Assessment

Most of your final grade is determined by assignments appearing toward the end of the semester (but please plan for these diligently), so that you gain a firm base of knowledge before being asked to apply and demonstrate your comprehension of course material. I will therefore base my midterm evaluations upon your participation and draft proposals.

Class Participation (10%)

Perhaps more than any other course you've taken, the more that you, the student, puts in to this course, the more you will get out of it. As such, students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions. In addition to being present, participation entails being on time, staying focused, and taking an active role in class discussion and activities. To that end, it is important to have prepared by completing the required readings, as well as any homework assignments, before class so that you will be able to contribute to class discussion. *For each required reading, you should jot down a couple of questions or comments that can potentially be discussed in class.* In addition to attendance and being on time, your participation grade will be determined by active engagement that conveys understanding of the required readings and material discussed in class. The success of this class depends upon students' completion of the required readings and participation in class exercises.

Per the SPS guidelines more than 2 absences will likely lead to a need to withdraw from the course or a failing grade. Please make sure your cell phones are turned off during class.

Lastly, while using laptops/tablets is permitted for note-taking, using such devices for other purposes (e.g., checking email, going on social media, et cetera) is strictly prohibited.

Preliminary Research Proposal (10%), due March 15 (03/15)

Using the research question you have selected for your final research proposal, you will submit a short proposal highlighting why your research question is important, how you have chosen to define key concepts (e.g., *genocide, development*) in your proposed study, your hypothesis about their relationship, and the theory underlying this hypothesis. Be clear about the unit of analysis. Although you are not expected to have your research design solidified at this point, you should also be thinking about potential research design(s) options.

Critical Research Reviews (40%)

A key objective of this course is to learn how to better consume, deconstruct and analyze existing research. As such, students will critically review two published

articles from peer-reviewed academic journals. One article will primarily utilize qualitative research methods, and the other will primarily use quantitative methods. The reviews are due by class time and strict 4-page limits will be enforced. Students should be prepared to discuss the articles at length in class.

Select one of the following two options for your *qualitative* CRR (**due 04/12**):

1. Berckmoes et al. 2017. "How Legacies of Genocide Are Transmitted in the Family Environment: A Qualitative Study of Two Generations in Rwanda." *Societies* 7, no. 3: 1-18.

2. Kinney, Drew Holland. 2018. "Politicians at Arms: Civilian Recruitment of Soldiers for Middle East Coups." *Armed Forces & Society*. Online First.

The options for the *quantitative* CRR (**due 05/03**) are as follows (select *one*):

1. Green, David. 2016. "The Trump Hypothesis: Testing Immigrant Populations as a Determinant of Violent and Drug-Related Crime in the United States." *Social Science Quarterly 97*, no. 3: 506-524.

2. Winters, Matthew S., Simone Dietrich, & Minhaj Mahmud. 2017. "Perceptions of Foreign Aid Project Quality in Bangladesh." *Research and Politics.* October-December, 1-6.

For the critical research reviews (CRR), students should identify the research question; the independent and dependent variables, as well as how those variables are evaluated, conceptualized, and operationalized; the data and methods that the researcher(s) used; the findings and implications of the study; and any limitations based on choice of research design and methods. Students should focus on the advantages and disadvantages to the ways in which the researcher has structured the study and the implications of the choices the researcher has made on the validity and generalizability of the findings. For the quantitative CRR, students should dedicate at least a few sentences toward interpreting the author's table(s) and pay close attention to the main study values in which the author is interested.

The CRR *should not* be a summary of your chosen article (i.e., you can assume the reader is familiar with the article). It is a critical (positive and/or negative) assessment of the author's methodological choices and research design. You will ask (e.g.): How well do the methods used actually test the hypothesis(es)? How well does the author's evidence support his/her main argument? What might be some limitations of the evidence? What are some future avenues for research? Having read the article, does any question come to mind that you would like to test or see tested? Where applicable, it is often helpful to read the abstract, introduction, and conclusion prior to reading the theory, methods and results.

Quantitative Analytic Skills Exam (10%), May 3 (05/03)

This brief, in-class exam (held at the start of class on 05/03) will test for comprehension of basic concepts used in quantitative research, all of which we will have reviewed throughout the semester. A detailed study guide will be made available to students prior to the exam.

Final Research Proposal (30%), due May 10 (05/10)

Building on your draft research proposal presentation and the material learned during the remainder of the semester, you will write a 10-12 page research proposal. The proposal will begin by briefly outlining your research question, its importance, and key findings on the topic from the secondary literature (this means you will need to have some knowledge of the secondary literature on your topic). You will then propose a method(s) for testing key hypotheses related to your research question drawing on the material covered in this course. Your proposal should highlight potential advantages and disadvantages to the methodological approach(es) you have selected and potential problems in data collection and analysis with regard to your specific research question. You should also cover how you will conceptualize and measure your variables incorporating any feedback you received on your draft proposal presentation. Note that you will not actually carry out the designed research project for this course. The aim is for you to think critically about the research question and choices in research design to create a research proposal (similar to the sort that you would submit to a funding agency). Which analytic skills that you have learned are best suited to your research question? What are the potential advantages of disadvantages of different analytic approaches?

You will *informally* present your research proposal in our last class and—time permitting—will receive constructive feedback from your classmates as well as the instructor on your research question and design (this informal presentation will not be graded though this and the feedback you provide to your classmates will count towards your participation grade). This assignment is an excellent opportunity to vet potential thesis topics and design an original research project that can be implemented for your Masters thesis.

All written assignments should be double-spaced with 1 inch. margins and in *Times New Roman* (12pt). Students are free to use any method of in-text citation or footnotes that they choose so long as all sources are properly referenced and the selected citation method is consistent throughout the assignment (though in-text citation is preferable). Unexcused late assignments will be penalized one full letter grade for every 24 hours that they are overdue. Students are expected to use proper grammar and think seriously about the organization and style of their writing. I will deduct points for sloppy, incoherent, or poorly organized writing.

Writing Assistance

Some students may find they need improvement writing academic papers in a clear and

concise manner. Because writing is one of the most important skills for a professional in Global Affairs, we highly recommend that any students experiencing difficulties with writing seek assistance in this area. One free, on-campus resource is the NYU Writing Center, located at 411 Lafayette St., 3rd Floor, Telephone: 212 998-8866 Email: writingcenter@nyu.edu. SPS offers additional resources for international students.

Grading Rubric

Component	Percentage of Overall Grade
Class Participation	10%
Draft Research Proposal	10%
Final Research Proposal	30%
Two Critical Research Reviews	40%
Quantitative Analytic Skills Exam	10%
Total	100%

SPS Standard Evaluation Criteria

- *Research Paper:* Clear evidence of wide and relevant research and critical thinking about the data and sources; a strong thesis or problem to address; effective analysis that leads to a compelling conclusion; good, accurate and persuasive writing.

- *In-Class Exercises:* Contributions of insight to the analysis; raising questions showing insight into the implications of the analysis; accurate work.
- *Quizzes and Exams:* Mastery of the facts and scholarship involved; accurate answers; drawing insightful conclusions based on analysis.

- *Presentation:* Clear understanding of the issues at hand; ability to present them in an interesting, lucid and professional manner appropriate to the audience.

- *Class Participation:* Active, respectful and collegial engagement in class discussion; evidence of reading and preparation; prompt submission of required assignments.

SPS Grading Scale and Policies

Letter	%	Qual. Points	Description
A	95-100	4.0	Exceptional
A-	90-94	3.7	Excellent
B+	87-89	3.3	Very good
B	83-86	3.0	Good
B-	80-82	2.7	Somewhat satisfactory
C+	77-79	2.3	Less than satisfactory
C	73-76	2.0	Unsatisfactory: substantial improvement necessary
C-	70-72	1.7	Unsatisfactory: extensive improvement necessary
F	< 70	0.0	Fail

University Policies

- *Attendance and Lateness policy:* All students must attend class regularly. Your contribution to classroom learning is essential to the success of the course. Any more than two (2) absences (other than for verifiable medical or similar reasons) during the Fall and Spring and one (1) absence during the summer will likely lead to a need to withdraw from the course or a failing grade.

- *Incomplete policy:* Incompletes are only granted in extreme cases such as illness or other family emergency and only where almost all work for the semester has been successfully completed and the basis for the Incomplete can be verified. A student's procrastination in completing his/her paper is not a basis for an Incomplete.

- *Submission of work:* All written work must be submitted via the Assignment Tool on NYU Classes. Student work will be scanned by Turnitin.com to detect plagiarism.

   o *Statement on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as though it were one's own. More specifically, plagiarism is to present as one's own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer; a paraphrased passage from another writer's work; creative images, artwork, or design; or facts or ideas gathered, organized, and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing and not providing proper attribution. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student's intention, it is crucial that acknowledgement of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism. Penalties for plagiarism range from automatic failure for a paper or course to dismissal from the University. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please see me or consult this policy.

- *Communication Policy:* Students are strongly encouraged to come to me with any questions or concerns about this course or their program of study at CGA. I am always available by email or we can arrange a mutually convenient time to chat in-person, by phone, or via Skype. Students who are experiencing academic or personal issues that influence their performance in the course should see me as soon as possible. It is much easier to address extenuating circumstances before an assignment is due than after the fact.

- *NYU SPS Policies:* "NYUSPS policies regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Academic Integrity and Plagiarism, Students with Disabilities Statement, and Standards of Classroom Behavior among others can be found on the NYU Classes Academic Policies tab for all course sites as well as on the University and NYUSPS websites. Every student is responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with all of these policies."

    - For the full list of University and NYU SPS policies, follow these links: (1) University Policies and (2) NYU SPS Policies.

Accommodations and Student Resources
- *Accommodations for Disabilities:* Any student who needs a reasonable accommodation based on a qualified disability is required to register with the Moses Center for Student Disabilities for assistance.

- Student Resources

- Virtual Computer Lab

- *Free Statistics Videos:* I recommend the Khan Academy, which has a large volume of free and easy-to-follow video tutorials on statistics.

Course Schedule
The schedule, readings assignments, and course syllabus are subject to change throughout the semester in order to better meet students's needs. Changes will be conveyed in class and/or via e-mail. Required readings, aside from course texts, will be posted on our NYU Classes website under the "Resources" tab or otherwise distributed.

Course Outline

Session 1. February 1 (02/01)

Topics: introduction to qualitative and quantitative research; the need for empiricism; inductive and deductive reasoning; what constitutes good research. Notes & recommended readings.[1]

Popper, Karl R. 1963. "Science as Falsification." *Conjectures & Refutations*.
Shah, Parth, Renee Klahr, Tara Boyle, Jennifer Schmidt, Rhaina Cohen, & Shankar
   Vedantam. "Degrees of Maybe: How We Can All Make Better Predictions."
   National Public Radio: Hidden Brain. June 26 (listen to "Guessing Games").
Kellstedt & Whitten (hereafter: K&W). 2013. *Fundamentals of Political Science*
   Research (ch. 1).
Hancock and Algozzine (pp. 3-11).
Merriam and Tisdell (pp. 1-21).
Babbie (pp. 24-29).
Turabian (ch. 1, pp. 131-132).
Levitin (pp. 152-158).

Session 2. February 8 (02/08)

Topics: turning an interest into a research question; identifying puzzles and refining your research question; defining key concepts and measuring key variables; evaluating graphs; measures of central tendency and variability (Part I). Notes & recommended readings.[2]

UNC Writing Center. 2019. "Fallacies." *University of North Carolina.* Accessed
   December 15, 2018.
The Economist. 2014. "Ranking the Rankings." *The Economist*. November 8.
K&W (pp. 99-109; ch. 12, pp. 273-286).
Levitin (pp. 93-96; 222-231; 26-42).
Wheelan (chs. 2 & 3).
Urdan (p. 4 & pp. 13-18).
Merriam & Tisdell (pp. 73-89).
Turabian (pp. 12-18).

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[1] Please complete these readings before our first class session.

[2] Please come to class with two causal claims (from news editorials/magazines) to discuss as a group.

Session 3. February 15 (02/15)

Topics: reviewing the literature; identifying primary and secondary sources and potential data; theory-building; measures of central tendency and measures of variability (Part II). Notes & recommended readings.[3]

Taylor, Dena. 2005. "The Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It." *University of Toronto*.
Urdan (ch. 3: pp. 19-28).
Turabian (chs. 3 & 4).
K&W (ch. 2).
Levitin (pp. 129-149).
Merriam & Tisdell (pp. 89-95).

Session 4. February 22 (02/22)

Topics: developing hypotheses, choosing a research design; assessing causality and alternative explanations; probability and sampling. Notes & recommended readings.[4]

Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics 44*, no. 4: 823-830.
Levitt, Steven D. & Stephen J. Dubner. 2009. "Where Have All of the Criminals Gone." In Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics* (pp. 115-145). New York, New York: William Morrow and Company.
Squire, Peverill. 1988. "Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed." *Public Opinion Quarterly 52*, no. 1: 125-133.
Merriam and Tisdell (pp. 95-103; ch. 2).
K&W (ch. 3; ch. 4; & pp. 82-88).
Turabian (ch. 2: pp. 18-22).
Wheelan (chs. 5 & pp. 51-52).

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[3] Your draft research questions are due in class & will be discussed in small groups.

[4] There are *two things* to note for this week: (1) *ungraded homework assignment* (submit hard copy in class): quantitative skills practice set; and (2) after reading Levitt and Dubner, you should be prepared to identify the author's research question, the independent variable, and the dependent variable.

Session 5. March 1 (03/01)

Topics: hypotheses (continued); central limit theorem; inferential statistics and statistical significance; time for questions and catch-up. Notes & recommended readings.[5]

McGrew, John H., & Richard M. McFall. 1990. "A Scientific Inquiry into the Validity of Astrology." *Journal of Scientific Exploration 4*, no. 1: 75-83.
Urdan (chs. 1, except p. 4; ch. 4; & ch. 7, pp. 61-67).
Turabian (ch. 13).
Wheelan (chs. 8 & 9).
Babbie (pp. 459-464).

Session 6. March 8 (03/08)

Topics: experiments & experimental design; statistical significance (continued). Notes & recommended readings.[6]

Fearon, James D., Macartan Humphreys, & Jeremy M. Weinstein. "Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion after Civil War? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Post-conflict Liberia." *American Economic Review 99*, no. 2: 287 -291.
Carroll, Aaron E. 2018. "Workplace Wellness Programs Don't Work. Why Some Studies Show Otherwise." *The New York Times*. August 6.
Hyde, Susan D. 2015. "Experiments in International Relations: Lab, Survey and Field." *Annual Review of Political Science 18:* 403-424.
K&W (pp. 70-82; 147-50).

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[5] There are *two things* to note this week: (1) your revised research questions due via NYU Classes (ungraded, with comments); and (2) you have an *ungraded homework assignment* (be prepared to discuss in class): after reading McGrew and McFall, identify the independent and dependent variables; the research question; the hypothesis (i.e., the prediction); the theory underlying the hypothesis. Also, briefly explain—as if you were talking to an eight year old—how the authors tested their hypothesis.

[6] You have an *ungraded homework assignment* (submit via NYU Classes): for the Fearon *et al.* reading, be prepared to identify and describe: (1) the research question; (2) the independent and dependent variables (as concepts as well as how they are operationalized); and (3) the sample and the population of interest.

Session 7. March 15 (03/15)

Topics: library session & assessing primary and secondary sources; visit from Bobst Library personnel; catch-up; avoiding plagiarism; content analysis. Notes & recommended readings.[7]

Binder, Martin, & Monika Heupel. 2015. "The Legitimacy of the UN Security Council: Evidence from Recent UN General Assembly Debates." *International Studies Quarterly 59:* 238-250.
Merriam and Tisdell (ch. 7).
Babbie (pp. 320-330, esp. pp. 328-30).
Johnson & Reynolds (ch. 9, & esp. pp. 266-72; 282-94).

No class, March 22 (03/22)—Spring Recess (03/18-03/24)

Session 8. March 29 (03/29)

Topics: interviews and fieldwork; difference-of-means *t*-tests. Notes & recommended readings.

Rockman, Bert A., & Joel D. Aberbach. 2002. "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews." *PS: Political Science & Politics 35*, no. 4: 673-676.
Kang, Susan. "What the Documents Can't Tell You: Participant Observation in International Relations." *PS: Political Science & Politics 50*, no. 1: 121-125.
Babbie (pp. 303-314).
Urdan (ch. 9: pp. 93-94; 100-104).
Merriam and Tisdell (chs. 5 & 6).

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[7] There are *two things* to note for this session: (1) your *preliminary research proposal* is due (submit via NYU Classes site); and (2) if possible, it would be useful to have a laptop with you during the demonstration on the library resources.

Session 9. April 5 (04/05)

Topics: case selection, case studies, and fieldwork (continued); qualitative data analysis; survey research; chi-square test of independence. Notes & recommended readings.[8]

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis 2*: 131-150.
Kennedy, Courtney. 2018. "How do you write survey questions that accurately measure public opinion?" *Pew Research Center*. March 21 (watch video).
Ashman, Greg. 2017. "Selecting on the Dependent Variable." *Filling the Pail*. June 14.
Merriam & Tisdell (pp.191-236).
Creswell & Cresswell (pp. 190-99).
Urdan (ch. 14; pp. 161-62; 165-66).
Levitin (pp.161-64).
Babbie (pp. 245-54).

Session 10. April 12 (04/12)

Topics: qualitative CRR discussion; correlation analysis; catch-up. Notes & recommended readings.[9]

Berckmoes, Lidewyde H., Veroni Eichelsheim, Theoneste Rutayisire, Annemiek Richters, & Barbora Hola. 2017. "How Legacies of Genocide Are Transmitted in the Family Environment: A Qualitative Study of Two Generations in Rwanda." *Societies* 7, no. 3: 1-18.
Kinney, Drew Holland. 2018. "Politicians at Arms: Civilian Recruitment of Soldiers for Middle East Coups." *Armed Forces & Society*. Online First.
Urdan (ch. 8: pp. 79-81; 83-84; & 89).
Wheelan (ch. 4).

Session 11. April 19 (04/19)

Topics: regression analysis (Part I); introduction to bivariate and OLS multiple regression. Notes & recommended readings.

Urdan (ch. 13: pp. 145-46; 152; pp. 156-69).
Wheelan (ch. 11).

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[8] Come prepared to indicate which qualitative article you plan to read for your CRR.

[9] Qualitative *Critical Research Reviews* are due. We will discuss them during class.

Session 12. April 26 (04/26)

Topics: ethical considerations in the conduct of research; regression (Part II): OLS multiple regression (continued); interpreting statistical output (presentation using STATA). Notes & recommended readings.[10]

Milgram, Stanley. 1963. "Behavioral study of obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 4*: 371-8.
Wheelan (chs. 12 & 13).

Session 13. May 3 (05/03)

Topics: we will take the quantitative analytic skills exam. Notes & recommended readings.[11]

Session 14. May 10 (05/10)

Topic: final research proposal presentations and discussion. Notes & recommended readings.[12]

Callen, Michael, Adnan Khan, Asim I. Khwaja, Asad Liaqat, & Emily Myers. 2017. "These Three Barriers Make It Hard for Policymakers to Use the Evidence That Development Researchers Produce." *The Washington Post: Monkey Cage*. August 13.
Miller, Beth, Jon Pevehouse, Ron Rogowski, Dustin Tingley, & Rick Wilson. 2013. "How To Be a Peer Reviewer: A Guide for Recent and Soon-to-be PhDs." *PS: Political Science & Politics 46*, no. 1: 120-123.

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[10] Be prepared to indicate which quantitative article you plan to read for your CRR.

[11] Quantitative *Critical Research Reviews* are due. We will discuss the CRRs in class.

[12] Final Research Proposals are due.