

RSC 6000: Research Methods in Regional Studies

Spring 2022, Thursdays, 3:30–6:00 PM

New Cabell Hall 485

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Office Hours: MW 3:00–3:50 PM in NCH 059 or by appointment.

Course Description

Area studies designates an academic approach based on specific geographic regions, rather than one based on disciplinary approaches. As such, scholars of area studies often adopt interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary methodologies and are usually trained in fields that draw on both the social sciences and the humanities.

This course is intended to familiarize M.A. students in the four regional studies programs (European Studies, East Asian Studies, MESALC, and Contemporary Russian Studies) with the intellectual tools and resources to articulate their own research questions and to embark on their own research. Depending on student needs and interests, this course may involve readings in cultural theory, historiography, and sociological methods, as well as exercises in the use of archival documents, the construction of databases, and the interpretation of literary texts. There will be opportunities to engage with UVA faculty working on various geographical regions from a variety of disciplinary approaches.

This is a seminar-based course, so students should expect to be active participants in our conversations. Each meeting will be divided into two parts: a discussion of a theoretical text or set of texts; and a more practical discussion of research and writing practices with in-class exercises.

Course Aims

- By the end of the course students will have a better understanding of different theoretical approaches to area studies and their own intellectual interests.
- They will have learned to work collaboratively with other students and help manage discussion in a seminar setting.
- They will gain a better appreciation for how to draft a research proposal, compile a bibliography, and identify the research materials needed for completion of their M.A. degree thesis.
- They will have written a 15–20 page prospectus with bibliography for their programs.

Expectations

Timely attendance at all meetings is required. We only have one meeting per week, and I will provide a Zoom option if you are too ill to attend in person. This should be arranged in advance of the class meeting. I will expect that you come to each meeting prepared to discuss the materials in depth. I do not expect you to understand every aspect of the readings—our conversations are meant to work through together what can be very difficult texts. I do not expect agreement on all arguments, and part of the course is meant to help us learn to work through valid arguments without taking personal offense. This is not always possible, of course, and we'll talk about that when and if we get to it.

You should complete each set of readings before the class meeting and come prepared to discuss the readings during class. By doing so, you will be better prepared to engage the ideas presented

during the seminar. Students should avoid use of personal electronics for non-course related purposes. This is important! Such behavior is distracting to other students and is disrespectful to the instructor (who notices these things and feels unhappy about it). It is expected that you, as students of the University of Virginia, will adhere to both the letter and spirit of the Honor Code

Assignments and Grading

The purpose of the assignments (see **Homework** in the schedule below) is to promote continuous engagement with the objectives of the course. If you do what you are expected to do in the course, then the grading will be completion-based, which is to say, if you complete all of the assignments in a serious and thoughtful manner, then you will receive full points in the various categories. The highest possible grade in the course is “A.” If you miss assignments and do not make them up, or if you do not show full effort, then points will be deducted accordingly. Percentage values for each homework checkpoint is given after each assignment. The final outcome is a research proposal of 15–20 pages, including bibliography, that will provide a substantial introduction to the project that you intend to carry out for your M.A. thesis.

Learning Needs

I am committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you will want to schedule an appointment at the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC) to request an official accommodation. You can find more information about SDAC, including how to apply online, at sdac.studenthealth.virginia.edu. If you have already been approved for accommodations through SDAC, please make sure to send me your accommodation letter and meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

Required Text

Booth, Wayne, et al. *The Craft of Research*. 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uva/detail.action?docID=4785166>. (You are strongly encouraged to purchase a print copy as we will be working with this throughout the term.)

All other readings will be found on COLLAB.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1 / Thursday, January 20: What Is Area Studies (Part 1)?

For our first meeting, we will begin by getting to know one another. While most of our meetings will start with the theoretical readings, for this meeting we will start by considering the nature of this class, what we individually hope to gain from the time we spend together, whether the syllabus reflects these goals, and what we might wish to add to our conversation. We will talk about our own research projects in relation to the opening pages of *The Craft of Research*. In the second part of the class, we will discuss three short readings on the idea and aims of area studies

that will hopefully introduce us to the intellectual frameworks and problems that are inherent to the area studies model.

1. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 1–26.
2. Edith W. Clowes and Shelly Jarrett Bromberg, “Introduction: Area Studies after Several ‘Turns,’” in *Area Studies in the Global Age: Community, Place, Identity*, edited by Clowes and Bromberg (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2016), pp. 1–12.
3. Mitchell Stevens, Cynthia Miller-Idriss, and Seteney Shami, “The World in US Universities” and “What Is Area Studies?” in *Seeing the World: How U.S. Universities Make Knowledge in a Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 8–38.

Homework: Identify the professional association that aligns most closely with your “area” and be prepared to discuss it at our next meeting. Who does it primarily serve? What disciplines does it include? When was it formed? Is there data on breakdown of membership by country, gender, race/ethnicity? Fill out library survey here:

(https://virginia.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJpI8FOBLoj6zfE). (5%).

Week 2 / Thursday, January 27: What Is Area Studies (Part 2)?

For our second meeting, we continue to explore the question of area studies with particular attention to the historical formations of area studies in the twentieth-century United States and how it was related to state and institutional interests, along with an example from Eastern Europe. For the second part of our meeting, we will discuss the problem of asking questions and identifying research topics.

1. Bruce Cumings, “Boundary Displacement: The State, the Foundations, and Area Studies during and after the Cold War,” in *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies*, edited by Miyoshi and Harootunian (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 261–302.
2. Vicente L. Rafael, “The Cultures of Area Studies in the United States,” *Social Text* 41 (Wint., 1994): 91–111.
3. Bogdan C. Iacob, “Balkan Counter-Circulation: Internationalizing Area Studies from a Periphery during the Cold War,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, edited by Matthias Middell (London: Routledge, 2019), 29–37.
4. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 27–64.

Homework: Following the multi-step model in Booth, et al., try to formulate a potential research question as topic/question/significance. Be prepared to discuss this in the next meeting (5%).

Week 3 / Thursday, February 3: Thinking about Geographic Areas

Our third meeting brings us from more general questions of area studies to the specific question of *area*. We will focus our discussion on the idea of geographic region, beginning with the influential work of Said, and then considering two readings that draw on Said’s insights. For the second part of our class, we will talk about sources and bibliographic notation in preparation for our library visit in the following class.

1. Edward W. Said, “Imaginative Geography and Its Representations: *Orientalizing the Oriental*,” in *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 49–73.
2. Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, “Introduction,” in *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1–19.

3. Willem van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20 (2002): 647–88.
4. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 65–104.

Homework: Identify three or four sources that would be helpful to you in answering your research question. We will discuss these in our next meeting at the University Library (5%).

Week 4 / Thursday, February 10: Thinking about Nation-States

We will begin with a visit to Clemons Library (Room 407) where we will meet together with area research specialists. For the second part of our class, we will address the concept of the nation in this meeting, beginning with the work of Benedict Anderson, whose definition of the nation as an imagined community has shaped much of contemporary theoretical work.

1. Benedict Anderson, "Introduction," and "The Origins of National Consciousness," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 1–8, 37–46.
2. Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" and "The Colonial State," in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3–13, 14–34.

Homework: Start compiling your research bibliography and be ready to present/discuss it at our next meeting. You should have at least ten items in your bibliography, and you should format the bibliography correctly according to your field standards (5%).

Week 5 / Thursday, February 17: Thinking about Disciplines

We will think about the relationship between area studies and disciplinary modes of knowledge, taking political science, literary studies, and anthropology as our case studies. How do each of these authors conceptualize area studies? How do they relate the kind of knowledge found in area studies to their disciplines? In the second part of our class, we'll talk through our bibliographies.

1. Robert J. Bates, "Area Studies and Political Science: Ruptures and Possible Synthesis," *Africa Today* 44, no. 2 (Apr.-Jun., 1997): 123–31.
2. Vilashini Cooppan, "Net Work: Area Studies, Comparison, and Connectivity," *PMLA* 128, no. 3 (May, 2013): 615–21.
3. Jane I. Guyer, "Anthropology in Area Studies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 499–523.
4. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 105–31.

Homework: Time to think about your argument! Write a one paragraph version of the argument that you think you'll pursue for your research project. Don't worry if the argument changes as you start your research or if you change your mind later. This is practice. Use the claim/reason/evidence model found in Booth; don't worry now about warrants (5%).

Week 6 / Thursday, February 24: Thinking about Difference

We are going to take a famous debate between two major literary/cultural theorists as a case study for how assumptions arising from area studies inform other fields and speak to the asymmetrical distribution of various forms of capital across global modernity. We will also be

starting to shift our focus from theoretical readings to the work that each of you have started to imagine.

1. Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (Aut., 1986): 65–88.
2. Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory,'" *Social Text* 17 (Aut., 1987): 3–25.
3. Arif Dirlik, "Spectres of the Third World: Global Modernity and the End of the Three Worlds," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 131–48.
4. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 132–72.

Homework: Start an outline of your prospectus. Consider what kinds of evidence you will need to support your arguments. Don't worry that your outline isn't fully fleshed out; just take note of what you don't yet know or have at hand, what you do know, and what you will need to work out. Be prepared to discuss this next class (5%).

Week 7 / Thursday, March 3: Thinking about Race, Gender, Ethnicity

Even though it seems obvious that area studies should consider the question of race, it has often been the case that the concept of race has been omitted from area studies, or perhaps made implicit in ways that erases race even as race informs the project. We'll consider the current attempt to rethink area studies through its potential relationship to ethnic studies. In the second part of the class, we'll talk about your research project outlines and work through how to get from "here" to "there."

1. Shu-mei Shih, "Racializing Area Studies, Defetishizing China," *positions: asia critique* 27, no. 1 (Feb., 2019): 33–65.
2. Richard H. Okada, "Areas, Disciplines, and Ethnicity," in *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies*, edited by Miyoshi and Harootunian, 190–205.
3. Ella Shohat, "Area Studies, Gender Studies, and Cartographies of Knowledge," *Social Text* 72, vol 20, no. 3 (Fall, 2002): 67–78.
4. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 175–213.

Homework: Start working on a draft of your prospectus! Have something concrete to share for our next meeting, ideally five pages of writing that moves us from the research problem to an overview of the field and what's been done (10%).

Week 8 / Thursday, March 10: SPRING BREAK: March 5–13. No meeting!

Week 9 / Thursday, March 17 /: Quantitative Methods and Visualization

We are going to shift gears this week and discuss the use of data visualization (focusing on network graphs). We'll be joined by a guest colleague, Prof. Worthy Martin (Computer Science, Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities), who will help us weigh the advantages and disadvantages of graphic modes of argument. In the second part of our class, we'll discuss your partial drafts.

1. Claire LeMercier and Claire Zalc, "Introduction" and "Quantification, Networks, and Trajectories," in *Quantitative Methods for the Humanities*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 1–5, 101–25.

2. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 214–31.

Homework: Have an early draft of your prospectus ready by our next meeting! The draft should be about 5–7 pages with 1–2 pages of bibliography (20%).

Week 10 / Thursday, March 24: No class meeting.

Continue reading, though the section on introductions and conclusions will be less pertinent for our particular outcome. Most importantly, continue writing!

1. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 232–47.

Week 11 / Thursday, March 31: Oceans

One of the major weaknesses of the area studies approach is incapacity to conceptualize non-terrestrial regions, the most significant of which is the oceanic. We will be joined by Professor Fahad Bishara of the History Department. In the second part of class, we will discuss prospectus drafts and how to think about revision (and what the goals of revision might be).

1. Kären Wigen, “Introduction (AHR Forum: Oceans of History),” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (Jun., 2006): 717–21.

2. Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, “The Mediterranean and the ‘New Thalassology,’” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (Jun., 2006): 722–40.

3. Games, Alison, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (Jun., 2006): 741–57.

4. Matsuda, Matt K. “The Pacific,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (Jun., 2006): 758–80.

5. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 248–67.

Homework: Based on the discussion from class, continue to work on your drafts, keeping in mind issues of clarity and effectiveness of argument (5%).

Week 12 / Thursday, April 7: Comparative/World/Global

As we near the end, we will consider methodological approaches that work at scales above the nation or region: we might term these the comparative, the world, and the global. Much has been written on each of these rubrics, so the readings below represent a sample of the kinds of arguments one might encounter, from the summative (Conrad) to the polemical (Mufti) to the cautionary (Mignolo). In the second part of class, we will assess how much progress we have made from the start of the term to the present moment, and talk about strategies for how to present our research.

1. Sebastian Conrad, “Global History as a Distinct Approach,” in *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 62–89.

2. Walter Mignolo, “On Comparison: Who Is Comparing What and Why?” in *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*, edited by Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 99–119.

3. Aamir R. Mufti, “Where in the World Is World Literature?” in *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 56–98.

4. Wayne Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed., pp. 271–80.

Homework: Turn your research prospectuses into 30 minute talks and be prepared to present your work using whatever presentation media you prefer (15%).

Week 13 / Thursday, April 14: Research Projects, Part 1

We will hear and discuss presentations from members of the class on their research projects. We will cover three presentations (30 minutes each) with 15–20 minutes for discussion following each presentation. We will be joined by Professor Edith W. Clowes.

Week 14 / Thursday, April 21: Research Projects, Part 2

We will hear and discuss presentations from members of the class on their research projects. We will cover three presentations (30 minutes each) with 15–20 minutes for discussion following each presentation. We will be joined by Professor Manuela Achilles.

Week 15 / Thursday, April 28: A Last Word on Area Studies?

We end the term with some final reflections on area studies

1. Harry Harootunian, "Tracking the Dinosaur: Area Studies in a Time of 'Globalism,'" in *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 25–58.
2. Chua Beng Huat, et al., "Area Studies and the Crisis of Legitimacy: A View from South East Asia," *South East Asia Research* 27, no. 1 (2019): 31–48.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828X.2019.1587931>
3. Gavin Walker and Naoki Sakai, "The End of Area," *positions: asia critique* 27, no. 1 (Feb., 2019): 1–31.

Monday, May 9, 5 pm: Final Prospectuses due (30%).

Slightly Random Other Bibliography

Baucom, Ian. *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Bhabha, Homi K., ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Bishara, Fahad Ahmad. "The Many Voyages of *Fateh Al-Khayr*: Unfurling the Gulf in the Age of Oceanic History." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52, no. 3 (Aug., 2020): 397–412.

Blum, Hester. "The Prospect of Oceanic Studies." *PMLA* 125, no. 3 (May, 2010): 670–77.

- Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Translated by Siân Reynolds. 2nd rev. ed. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.
- Chaplin, Joyce E. "The Atlantic Ocean and Its Contemporary Meanings, 1492–1808." In *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, edited by Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, 35–51. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso, 1993.
- Hofmeyer, Isabel. "Universalizing the Indian Ocean." *PMLA* 125, no. 3 (May, 2010): 721–29.
- Jackson, Peter. "Southeast Asian Area Studies beyond Anglo-America: Geopolitical Transitions, the Neoliberal Academy and Spatialised Regimes of Knowledge." *ARI Working Paper Series* 263. Singapore: Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 2018.
- Kottmann, Nora and Cornelia Reiher, eds. *Studying Japan: Handbook of Research Designs, Fieldwork and Methods*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2020.
- Lazarus, Neil. *The Postcolonial Unconsciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Lockman, Zachary. *Field Notes: The Making of Middle Eastern Studies in the United States*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Matsuda, Matt K. *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Szanton, David L., ed. *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*. Berkeley: GAIA / University of California Press, 2002.