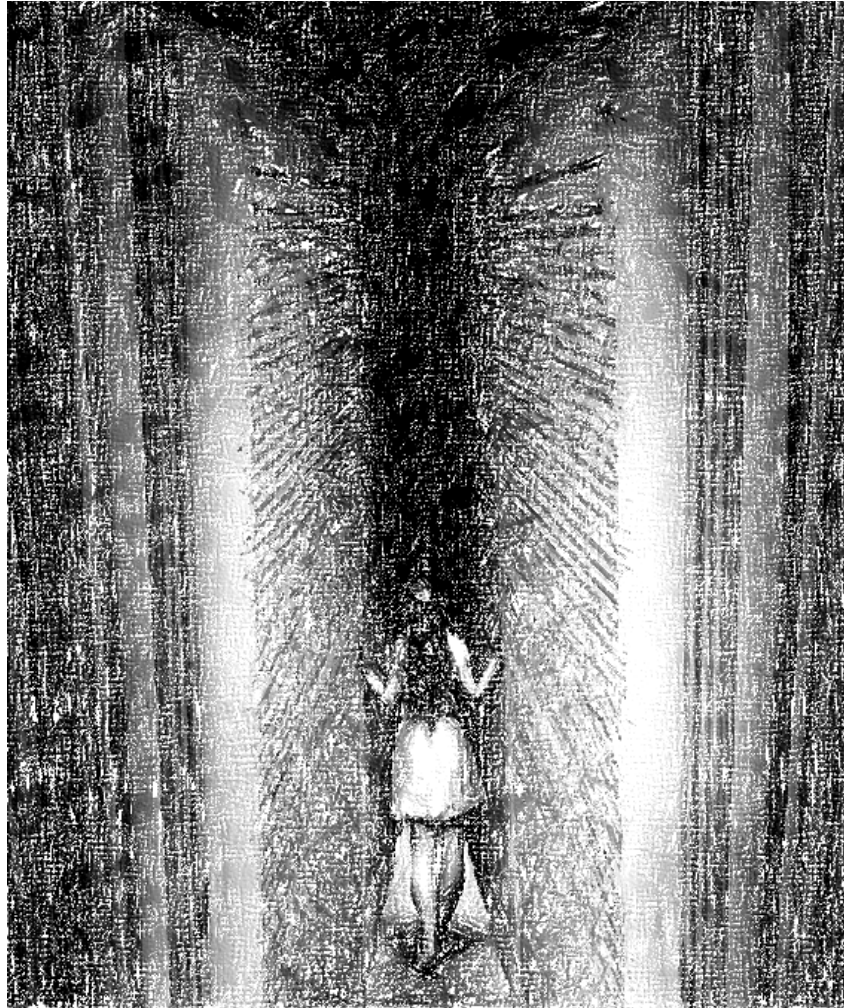


WINTER 2023



Tuesdays
11:00–12:20

C321

DIPLOMA SEMINAR (II+III)

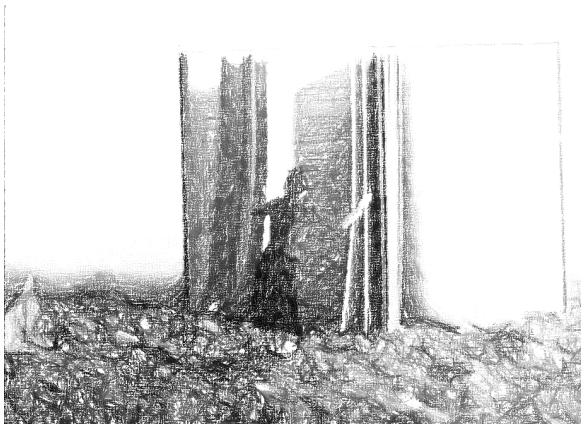
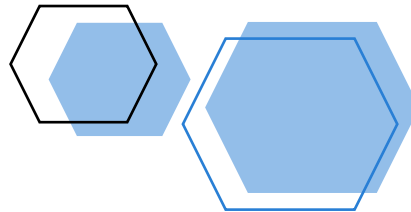
MICHAL SMETANA

- a course aiming to support our M.A. students in continuous work on their diploma thesis
- we will meet in class weekly (except for Oct 24 and Dec 5) to discuss various aspects of academic research, your writing progress, and challenges you encounter along the way
- successful completion of the course requires both active in-class participation and regular work on weekly tasks at home



WHAT DO WE COVER IN THE COURSE?

I have designed the course primarily as a **“writing support” group** – that is, the focus is on helping you with your research and writing process rather than on learning new stuff. That said, I still want to give you some **tips & tricks on the practice of academic work**: how to organize time and avoid procrastination, what software to use to make your life easier, how to structure your thesis, how to justify your choice of a research question, theory, and method, and how to summarize and present your findings to the broader audience.



YOUR SEMESTER WRITING PLAN

The most important thing is that you keep working on your M.A. thesis. Before our second meeting, you will prepare your **detailed writing plan for each week of the semester**, discuss it with your thesis supervisor and have it approved by him or her, and upload it to the [shared folder](#). At the end of the semester, you, your supervisor, and I will **evaluate to what extent you managed to fulfil your plan**. The minimum for **DS II** students is to update and finalize their thesis outline and submit at least one chapter of their thesis. **DS III** students must submit the whole thesis at the end of the semester to pass the course.

WHAT DO WE DO BEFORE, IN, AND AFTER EACH CLASS?



For some classes, you will need to do **small tasks** related to your M.A. thesis (see the course schedule below). Most of the time, this means that you will need to write a paragraph or two (max. 250 words) about one aspect of your thesis – for example, your choice of methodology – and **upload it as Word document to our [shared folder](#)**. Remember that you must **complete all these tasks and not miss more than two deadlines to pass the course**. In the class, you will then present it to others and get feedback from me as well as other students. Your **active participation** in in-class debates and discussions is critically important and you should be ready to provide feedback to your peers. There is **no online module** for this class, and you **should not miss more than three sessions** during the semester.

“NO-ELECTRONIC-DEVICES” RULE


In this course, we observe a **strict no-laptop / no-tablet / no-phone policy**; in other words, the students and lecturers are **not allowed to use electronic devices** during the class. Please note that the motivation for this rule is not to discipline the students or to make it harder for you in any way – on the contrary. Using laptops for notetaking during class has, according to the latest evidence-based studies in neuroscience and pedagogics, very high cognitive costs; it is a constant distraction for your brain, which is unable to focus on the seminar itself. This ‘no electronic devices’ policy has been tested at many renowned universities abroad, and the results are very good indeed. I encourage you to just listen to the lectures, pose questions whenever something is unclear or worth further elaboration, actively engage in the in-class debates, and make a note on paper when you feel it is something you would like to follow up on at home.

COURSE SCHEDULE


*Note that there is no class on Oct 24 and Dec 5

***Task (deadline Oct 2):** read the syllabus and prepare an “elevator talk” (max. 1 minute) about your M.A. thesis (no need to upload anything yet)*

Week 1 (Oct 3): Time management, procrastination, useful apps & software, A.I. tools, semester plans

 ***Task (deadline Oct 9):** prepare your detailed writing plan for each week of the semester, discuss it with and have it approved by your thesis supervisor, and upload it to the [shared folder](#)*


Week 2 (Oct 10): Puzzle & research question, relevance x originality, literature review

 ***Task (deadline Oct 16):** formulate your research question, write 1–2 paragraphs (max. 250 words) justifying how original your question is in your field, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

Week 3 (Oct 17): Puzzle & research question, literature review – discussion & feedback


*** Week 4 (Oct 24):** Intense writing week –there is no class; instead, work intensely on your thesis *

Week 5 (Oct 31): Theories, concepts, and hypotheses

 ***Task (deadline Nov 6):** write 1-2 paragraphs (max. 250 words) summarizing your theoretical/ conceptual framework, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*


Week 6 (Nov 7): Theories, concepts, and hypotheses – discussion & feedback

Week 7 (Nov 14): Research design, methods, and data

 ***Task (deadline Nov 20):** write 1-2 paragraphs (max. 250 words) summarizing your strategy for data collection and data analysis, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

Week 8 (Nov 21): Research design, methods, and data – discussion & feedback

Week 9 (Nov 28): Thesis structure, abstract, introduction, conclusion

 ***Task (deadline Dec 4):** provide your thesis structure with titles for each section and a short abstract (max. 250 words), and upload them in a single Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

*** Week 10 (Dec 5):** Intense writing week – there is no class; instead, work intensely on your thesis *

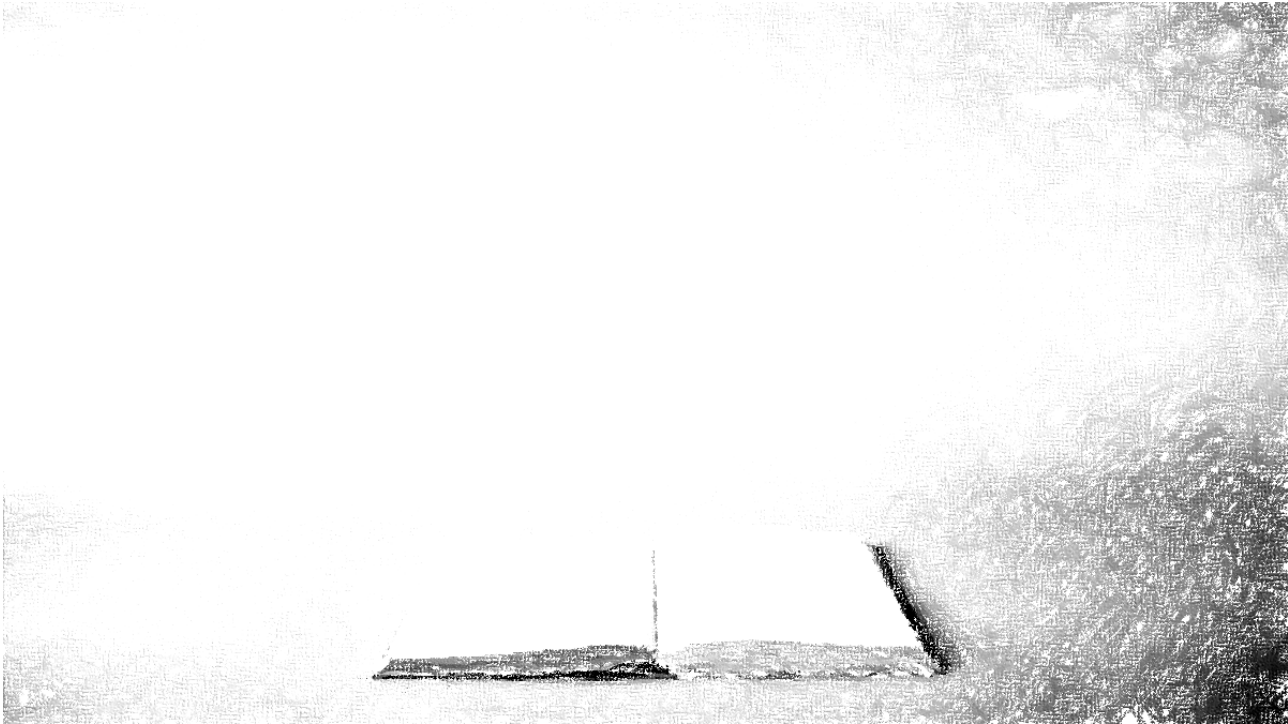
Week 11 (Dec 12): Thesis structure, abstract, introduction, conclusion – discussion & feedback

→ **Task (deadline Dec 18):** *use the original detailed writing plan from weeks 1-2, add a short commentary (max. 250 words) on what you have managed to achieve during this semester and what you have not, and upload it as a single Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

Week 12 (Dec 19): Evaluation of your writing progress – discussion & feedback

→ **Task (deadline Jan 3) – DS II students:** *upload your revised thesis outline and at least one chapter of your thesis to the [shared folder](#)*

Task (deadline Jan 3) – DS III students: *upload your final thesis to the shared folder*



LINKS TO FACULTY REGULATIONS

Below you can find some useful links to faculty regulations concerning M.A. theses.

- [Recommended citation norm at IMS FSV UK](#) (remember, though: you can use any common academic citation style as long as you use it consistently in your thesis!)
 - [A.I. and plagiarism rules](#)
 - [Dean's Provision on B.A./M.A. Theses](#)
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ABOUT ME

I am an Associate Professor at the IMS FSV UK, Director of the Charles University's Center of Excellence [Peace Research Center Prague \(PRCP\)](#), and a Head Researcher at the [Experimental Lab for International Security Studies \(ELISS\)](#). My main research interests revolve around nuclear weapons in world politics, but I am also very interested in applying social, behavioral, and experimental psychology in IR, studying the dynamics of international norms, theorizing deterrence models, and examining frozen conflicts in Europe and Asia. You can visit my [academic website](#) and my [Twitter page](#). For consultations, you can contact me at smetana@fsv.cuni.cz

