



by CHCASC 06/29/22 09:40

## 499Y Honors Research: Contract and Registration Form (Part I of Honors Thesis)

Contract submission deadline dates: April/May for fall semester registration; November/December for spring semester registration.

<b>↓ STUDENT SECTION</b>		
Last Name, First: <b>Sheridan, Elizabeth Catherine</b>		Grad Year: <b>2023</b>
Phone: [REDACTED]	Email Address: [REDACTED]	
Major: <b>BA-POLSCI Political Science(BA)</b>		
Member of Commonwealth Honors College: <b>Yes</b>	Departmental Honors Dept. (if applicable): <b>BA-POLSCI Political Science(BA)</b>	
This is a (check one): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio	<input type="checkbox"/> I need these credits to reach 12 credits for fulltime status for my 499T/P semester.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If necessary, I have obtained overload permission from my Academic Dean so these credits can be added to my SPIRE schedule.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I have read and followed the instructions from the section of this form titled "499Y-SEMESTER PLAN INSTRUCTIONS" <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I understand that the attached plan is binding and part of my permanent UMass record; it may be shown to graduate schools upon request.		
Student's Signature: <b>Elizabeth Catherine Sheridan</b>		Date: <b>04/27/2022</b>

<b>↓ FACULTY SECTION - REVIEW and APPROVAL of 499Y-SEMESTER PLAN and COURSE REGISTRATION REQUEST</b>		
<i>The UMass credit norm is 3 hours of student work per credit per week;          For example: 3 credits = 9 or more hours of work per week for 13 weeks; 6 credits = 18 or more hours of work per week for 13 weeks</i>		
<b>COMMITTEE CHAIR</b> <b>↓ Info and Approval</b>		
<i>I have reviewed and I approve the student's Honors Research Plan (attached), number of credits requested and department for course registration. As Chair, I will take responsibility for guiding lab safety, human subject testing, and/or proprietary issues so the resultant manuscript may be made public through the Du Bois Library archives.</i>		
Part I: 499Y Research: <input type="checkbox"/> 3cr <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4cr	Committee Chair must provide justification: <input type="checkbox"/> 5cr <input type="checkbox"/> 6cr	
499Y Registration Department/SPIRE Subject Area: <b>POLISCI</b>		499Y Registration Semester and Year: <b>Fall 2022</b>
Chair's Name: <b>Musgrave, Robert P</b>		Email Address: [REDACTED]
Department: <b>Political Science</b>	Phone: [REDACTED]	Address: <b>Thompson Hall, Rm 504</b>
Chair's Signature: **** <b>04/27/2022</b> ****		
<b>For DH students:</b> <b>HONORS PROGRAM DIRECTOR of DH department:</b> <b>↓ Approval as DH Requirement</b>		
<i>The credits and course registration department requested above are appropriate to the 499Y-Semester Plan attached, and acceptable for the DH 499Y Part I requirement in my department.</i>		
HPD Name: <b>POLISCI: Musgrave, Robert P</b>		HPD Signature: ****
		Date: <b>04/27/2022</b>
<b>HONORS PROGRAM DIRECTOR of department in which the</b> <b>↓ course is to be registered (as noted above):</b>		
<i>The expectations outlined in the attached proposal do or do not meet the standards of my department. This 499 coursework</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> may <input type="checkbox"/> may not be registered in my department.		
HPD Name: <b>POLISCI: Musgrave, Robert P</b>		HPD Signature: ****
		Date: <b>04/27/2022</b>

\*\*\*\* = electronic signature

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# 499Y Semester Plan

## 1. Statement regarding the goal of the thesis

My thesis project aims to add to the larger national identity scholarship field. I will take an International Relations approach using specific details on historical Russian relations. Through original data collection I will complete a systematic quantitative exploration of film and media paralleled with actual policy approaches adopted by the American government. I will be looking at real world applications of identity theory. Especially in the modern media environment, understanding popular culture's effect on legislation is more important than ever. In my effort to answer this question, I will be looking at the period of 1985 to 2019, splitting this time segment into five eras. I will track changes in relations between the two states and explore how different domestic sentiments are created, and in turn how these relate to foreign policy choices. I will particularly examine the worldviews held by the mass and elite audiences to determine what differences exist and where they originally spawn from.

I will be further using a methodological approach typically applied to domestic, United States topics at an international level which will expand the field as whole. This project will involve original data collection based on a systematic approach of major United States popular cultural properties and their portrayal of Russia and Russians. If I can identify how views on Russia are created, whether through continual exposure to subjective narratives in popular culture or something else entirely, the influence behind foreign policy towards Russia can be determined.

The main information that I have found thus far is that the existence of national identity in fictional narratives will shape real world relations. The main gap in current international relations study is the insistence on only using 'high-brow' forms of literature and ignoring mass media. By doing so, scholars tend to ignore what the mass public are viewing and how their perceptions of an event are changed. By analyzing what the mass public sees in their daily lives the underlying influence placed on the state can be pinpointed. This influence can lead the population to lobby their officials to act in a certain way. At a larger scale, when politicians absorb information through fiction, policy changes can become evident, as when President Bill Clinton created an entire biohazard policy plan inspired by the novel *The Cobra Event* (Hall 1998).

Theorists take this idea of national identity in the media a step further, stating that it can justify real world action. If long-term narratives paint a topic as important it can be placed on the agenda. If people and leaders identify with an area due to this narrative, acts of aggression become legitimized (Kearns & Young 2018). State media control gives a country the ability to control such narratives and the increased privatization of said publications can allow the government to legitimize its desired actions or outcomes. The media is inherently influenced by political outcomes, and in Russia there was a gradual change in the level of state control to total, a period of brief independence, and now returning to the state dictated model (Jensen 1993).

I will determine how national identity is shaped by information presented in popular culture by reviewing a systematically gathered sample of popular culture, mainly in the form of TV and film, to identify common tropes and relate them to foreign policy actions and population sentiments portrayed by the two states. I will develop a causal relationship between fictional narratives and foreign policy discourse. General variations in media over time based on content type will allow me to identify any substantial changes.

I expect to see popular culture and fictional narratives having a large impact on national identities and to see policy decisions portray clearly visible fictional tropes.

## 2. Key readings

Allan, Bentley B., Srdjan Vucetic, and Ted Hopf. "The distribution of identity and the future of international order: China's hegemonic prospects." *International Organization* 72.4 (2018): 839-869.

Bassin, M., & Kelly, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*. Cambridge University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511894732>

Bleiker, R. (2001). *The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory*. 25.

Bleiker, R. (2018). *Visual Global Politics*. Routledge. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Roland-Bleiker/publication/328381146\\_Visual\\_Global\\_Politics/links/5bc94d73a6fdcc03c793a639/Visual-Global-Politics.pdf?origin=publication\\_detail](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Roland-Bleiker/publication/328381146_Visual_Global_Politics/links/5bc94d73a6fdcc03c793a639/Visual-Global-Politics.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

Clunan, A. (2014). Historical aspirations and the domestic politics of Russia's pursuit of international status. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.09.002>

Daniel III, J. Furman, and Paul Musgrave. "Synthetic experiences: How popular culture matters for images of international relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 61.3 (2017): 503-516.

Delehanty, Casey, and Erin M. Kearns. "Wait, There's Torture in Zootopia? Examining the Prevalence of Torture in Popular

Movies." Perspectives on Politics 18.3 (2020): 835-850.

Hall, S. (1998). Science-fiction policy. Technology Review, 92.

Holland, Jack. Fictional Television and American Politics. Esp. Chapters 4, 5, 7, 8.

Hopf, T. (2005). Identity, legitimacy, and the use of military force: Russia's Great Power identities and military intervention in Abkhazia. Review of International Studies, 31(S1), 225-243. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026021050500687X>

Hopf, T. (2012). Reconstructing the Cold War: The early years, 1945-1958. [https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs\\_download\\_interval/j098zb659?chapter\\_index=0&locale=en&title=Frontmatter](https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs_download_interval/j098zb659?chapter_index=0&locale=en&title=Frontmatter)

Hopf, T. (2013). Common-sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics. International Organization, 67(2), 317-354. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000040>

Hopf, Ted. Social construction of international politics: identities & foreign policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999. Cornell University Press, 2002.

Horvath, R. (2005). The Legacy of Soviet Dissent: Dissidents, Democratisation and Radical Nationalism in Russia (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis Group. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uma/detail.action?docID=199897>

Jensen, L. (1993). The Press and Power in the Russian Federation. Journal of International Affairs, 47(1), 97-125.

Jones, C. W., & Paris, C. (2018). It's the End of the World and They Know It: How Dystopian Fiction Shapes Political Attitudes. Perspectives on Politics, 16(4), 969-989. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718002153>

Kearns, Erin M., and Joseph K. Young. "Self Torture Is Wrong, What About 24? Torture and the Hollywood Effect." Crime & Delinquency 64.12 (2018): 1568-1589.

Kirby, Paul. "Political speech in fantastical worlds." International Studies Review 19.4 (2017): 573-596.

McCracken, Trevor, and Christopher Moran. "James Bond, Ian Fleming and intelligence: breaking down the boundary between the 'real' and the 'imagined'." Intelligence and National Security 33.6 (2018): 804-821.

McFaul, M. (2020). Putin, Putinism, and the Domestic Determinants of Russian Foreign Policy. \ International Security, 45(2), 95-139.

McNair, B. (1991). Glasnost, perestroika, and the Soviet media. Routledge.

Neumann, Iver B., and Daniel H. Nexon. "Introduction: Harry Potter and the Study of World Politics." In Harry Potter and International Relations (2006), Rowman & Littlefield.

Neumann, Iver B. "Discourse analysis." Qualitative methods in international relations. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2008. 61-77.

Payne, Rodger A. "Grappling with Dr. Strangelove's 'Wargasm' Fantasy." International Studies Review 22.3 (2020): 464-481.

Sostaric, Mia. "The American Wartime Propaganda During World War II." australasian journal of american studies 38.1 (2019): 17-44. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26926687>

Stent, A. E. (2014). Chapter Six The Munich Speech. In The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century (Updated Edition (pp. 138-158). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv7h0twn>

The Politics of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (forthcoming, ed. Lily Goren)

Valeriano, Brandon, and Philip Habel. "Who are the enemies? The visual framing of enemies in digital games." International Studies Review 18.3 (2016): 462-486.

Von Eschen, Penny. Paradoxes of Nostalgia: Cold War Triumphalism and Global Disorder Since 1989. Duke UP. 2022

Zubok, V. (2022). Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union. <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/9780300268171/collapse>

### 3. Communication

We will meet once per week for half an hour virtually via Zoom. Prior to each meeting, I will send a detailed email recounting what I have accomplished up to that point, any questions that have arisen, next steps, and reflections as needed. Professor Musgrave expects me to make significant progress each week and to be able to clearly explain what I have found.

#### 4. Specialized training

Not applicable

#### 5. Methods or agenda

In my methodological approach, I will draw on approaches to understanding the study of national identity politics and foreign policy (Hopf & Allan 2016), politics and popular culture (Kearns & Young 2018) (Daniel & Musgraves 2017), and aesthetics in international relations (Bleiker 2001).

My study will examine how American images of Russia construct domestic views that affect the larger foreign policy with Russia. This study takes a few key factors into account. Firstly, American media is not state controlled. Much of Hopf's work looks at media in times and places where it was still centrally limited, such as state dictated media. The body of literature and data I will be reviewing is much more diverse than seen in previous studies. The pieces I interact with will take a 'bottom-up' approach to culture, rather than something dictated by a higher media power. Thus, if I discover a mass elite convergence in opinion, it acts as even stronger evidence for the emergence of ideas occurring in said entertainment industry.

Another key point for this work is that realistic depictions are not always recognizable. Rather, common tropes portrayed in media can be completely diverged from reality but still understood by the mass audience as having a subliminal meaning. This allows for the study of entertainment industries such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe to be particularly enlightening. If fictional realities maintain the same views on the real Soviet Union and Russia, it is more likely to be present in overall popular culture.

Hopf and Allan's book "Making Identity Count: Building a National Identity Database" (2016) is a foundational text for the actual data analysis and interpretation that will take place in my thesis. His method involves taking a series of speeches, textbook articles, letters, and films that are produced by various state and private actors and picking out their interpretations of identity. He starts by identifying Themes and Facts present, before assigning them each to various Identity Categories. These categories are made into Discursive Frameworks that he uses to understand the overall identities held in his studied states (p. 26).

Hopf and Allen (2016) look at various sources to pick out common phrases. These include "Developing," "Catching Up," and "Patriotic" in the case of China. The two authors then break down whether each term is considered in the pieces to be positive, negative, neutral, or ambiguous. In doing so they are able to conclude that the elite speeches and textbooks hold different views than the mass publications, with the elite state using terms that are based on state intervention more frequently and positively than the mass. They are able to compare and contrast the two camps to see which discursive frameworks display differences and why (Hopf and Allan 2016, 63-82).

Kearns and Young (2018) adopt a similar approach. Multiple hypotheses are determined prior to the study to account for the various possible outcomes. They determine ways that media portrays the topic of torture (effective, ineffective, or no effect as the control), and provide various clips to viewers that provide one of these outcomes. Post viewing, all participants were asked to give their opinion on the use of torture. They were also given the opportunity to act upon their position on torture. The piece's finding states that "We found that participants who saw torture depicted as effective were more likely to support torture—showing torture as ineffective did not reduce support for the practice" (Kearns & Young 2018, 1580-1582). This finding gives evidence that consistent media depictions can influence mass sentiments towards a topic relevant in international relations.

My methodology continues this tradition. The first step of the work is to review the data and work completed by past theorists, as mentioned in the Background & Significance section. I will take these previous pieces and apply them to period-appropriate sentiments for each era that I plan to study.

I will then conduct a review of popular culture and fiction to identify which tropes are present and how they are applied to each genre of fiction. Tropes will include bellicosity, use of subversion, depiction of the Russian state or people as criminal, presence and/or use of mercenaries, existence of autonomous Russian characters, the depiction of Russia's economic climate, societal decay, degree of trustworthiness, depicted level of hostility & willingness to cooperate, positive relevance to the overall plot, and perceived societal 'exceptionalism' & inter-State cooperation. I plan to apply said tropes to a range of fictional pieces and examples of popular culture. Examples of my chosen sources are the MCU and DC Universe, NCIS and similar police procedural series, movie series such as the Bourne films, and books such as those by Tom Clancy that take hard and easily understood stances on foreign policy, such as United States-Soviet Union relations (Daniel & Musgraves 2017). By quantitatively evaluating each of these tropes, I will be able to determine the various narratives present in American popular culture. Placing

the use of said narratives on a timeline I can see the rises and falls of the perceptions.

As done in "Making Identity Count," I will decide key phrases that will act as signals for my identity categories and then place these into larger discursive relational frameworks. In line with my overall topic, I will apply these frameworks to the foreign policy decisions made in related legislative sessions.

One such example of completing a quantitative breakdown of a television clip is through The Simpsons episode "Simpson Tide," depicting a hypothetical return of the USSR (Gray, 1998). Under Hopf's process, this clip would be understood as representing American fears that the Soviet Union could reform. Containing images of massive war machines, the rising of Lenin from the dead, and maniacal laughing from the Russian UN representative the clip is extremely negative and lies under a discursive framework that views Russia as the enemy.

The next phase of my research will review the divergence and convergence between mass and elite perceptions and see if there is an independent change that will betray the existence of given sentiments in the population. I will compare these to official primers and informational documents of the Pentagon, White House, and State Department such as the Quadrennial Defense Reviews or National Security Strategies and congressional hearings and testimony. To find the necessary information I will perform basic key searches and reviews of the existing information, applying my chosen phrases to pick out larger themes. The goal of this systematic study is to decipher whether the elite and mass cultural portrays of Russia are the same or have a major divergence. This will act as a continuation of the work already put forth on the Sino-Soviet split (Hopf 2009) in that I will be exploring how the presence of the relatively free media in the United States influences as opposed to the state-controlled Soviet media. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the pieces I will be reviewing will contain a much greater distinction between mass and elite views due to the lack of censorship. This knowledge can be beneficial to the foreign policy field because it will show how greatly the United States' policy is pushed by the elites or the masses, or if it's a synchronized effort between the two.

The final steps in the thesis study will be the comparison of pop culture and elite foreign policy discourse to see where Russian leaders identify influences to have a final point of contrast.

I also plan to attend a conference, such as the International Studies Association annual meeting in Spring 2022, to speak with working professionals in the field of national identity and understand domestic uses of the term. The larger field of national identity can act as an immense contribution to the research and allow me to fully contextualize my independent work. The numerous publications sponsored by the International Studies Association bring together a collection of experts who will present their work at the conference. I also plan to attend the Undergraduate Research Conference. Combined with the access to popular culture texts, I will be able to complete a full analysis of national identity contributing to Russian relations. Along with the thesis, this project is also intended to be a part of a scholarly article to be submitted to a peer-review journal, as a co-authorship with Professor Paul Musgrave. Thus, attending such an event will benefit me both in the immediate project and our future collaborative work.

The combination of these factors and traditional methodologies will influence the bulk of my research and allow me to answer my driving question.

## **6. Timeline and Grading**

### **6.1. Describe a graded assignment due by the W (withdrawal) date.**

By September 15 I will submit a draft codebook for review by Professor Musgrave.

### **6.2. Describe and give dates for other first-semester assignments.**

September 15th: Submit Draft Codebook for review October 15th: First Draft of Literature Review and theory Section November 1st: Second committee member chosen November 15th: 499T Proposal Draft for review

### **6.3. Give the date by which second committee member will have been selected. Give the name, if known.**

November 1st

### **6.4. Give the date by which a first draft of your literature review will be submitted to your advisor.**

By October 15, 2022 the first draft of the literature review and theory section will be submitted to Professor Musgrave. This submission which will also form the basis for the upcoming 499T proposal

### **6.5. Give the dates by which (a) a draft of your 499T/P proposal will be submitted to your advisor, and (b) your 499T/P proposal will be uploaded to PATHS (this deadline should be before the end of the 499Y semester).**

By November 15, 2022 I will submit a draft of my 499T proposal to Professor Musgrave. We will spend the next two weeks editing the proposal and finalizing plans for the second semester, submitting the finalized proposal to PATHS by December 1,



## COMMENTS

Academic Standards Committee (Acad Stds Comm) | Student+Faculty | Acad Stds Committee - Approved | 06/29/22 09:40  
The ASC has read and approved this proposal.

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