

---

## DIPLOMA SEMINAR (II+III)

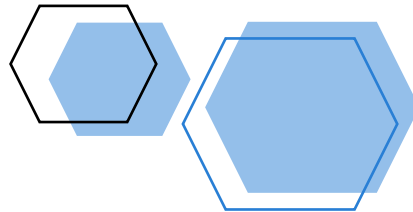
MICHAL SMETANA

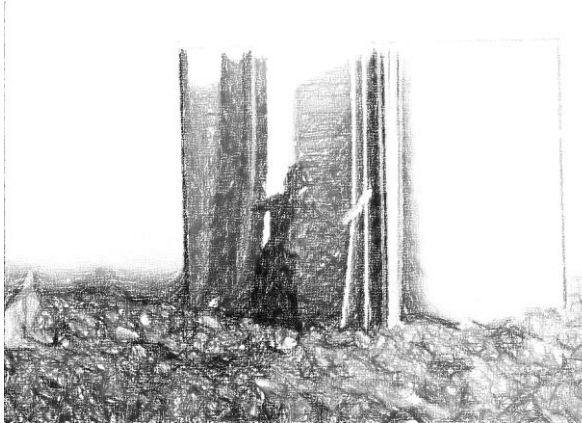
- a course aiming to support you in continuous work on your diploma thesis
- we will meet in class weekly (except for “intense writing weeks”; see the schedule below) to discuss various aspects of academic research, your writing progress, and challenges you encounter along the way
- successful completion of the course requires 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 diploma thesis. Before our second meeting, you will prepare your **detailed writing plan for each week of the semester**, discuss it with your thesis supervisor, have it approved by him or her, and upload it to the [shared folder](#). Remember that even if you do not manage to get approval from your supervisor by the deadline, you still have to upload the preliminary plan (and later update it once you get the supervisor's approval). At the end of the semester, you, your supervisor, and I will **evaluate to what extent you managed to fulfill 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 by January 31 (at least 10 pages of a proper chapter that will be later part of your final thesis). **DS III** students must submit the whole thesis by January 6 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 diploma thesis (see the course schedule below). Most of the time, this means that you will need to write a short text (250–300 words) about one aspect of your thesis—for example, your choice of methodology—and **upload it as a 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.



# COURSE SCHEDULE

***Task (deadline Sep 29):** read the syllabus and prepare a short oral presentation (max. 3 minutes) of your diploma thesis aims (no need to upload anything yet)*

**Week 1 (Sep 30):** Time management, procrastination, useful apps & software, A.I. tools, semester plans

→ ***Task (deadline Oct 6):** prepare your detailed writing plan for each week of the semester, discuss it with your thesis supervisor, have it approved by your thesis supervisor, and upload it to the [shared folder](#). If you do not receive comments from your thesis supervisor by Oct 6, upload the preliminary plan by this deadline anyway, and then update it with the final approved version by Oct 13.*

**Week 2 (Oct 7):** Puzzle & research question, relevance x originality, literature review

→ ***Task (deadline Oct 13):** formulate your research question, write 2–3 paragraphs (250–300 words) justifying how original your question is in your field, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

**Week 3 (Oct 14):** Puzzle & research question, literature review – discussion & feedback

**Week 4 (Oct 21):** Intense writing week –there is no class; instead, work intensely on your thesis

→ ***Task (deadline Oct 27):** submit a short report (200–250 words) summarizing how you are keeping up with your writing plan for this semester so far, identify the main issues/problems you are dealing with, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

**Week 6 (Nov 4):** Theories, concepts, and hypotheses

→ ***Task (deadline Nov 10):** write 2–3 paragraphs (250–300 words) summarizing your theoretical/conceptual framework, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

**Week 7 (Nov 11):** Theories, concepts, and hypotheses – discussion & feedback

**Week 8 (Nov 18):** Intense writing week –there is no class; instead, work intensely on your thesis

**Week 9 (Nov 25):** Intense writing week –there is no class; instead, work intensely on your thesis



**Task (deadline Dec 1):** *write 2–3 paragraphs (250–300 words) summarizing your strategy for data collection and data analysis, and upload it as a Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

**Week 10 (Dec 2):** Research design, methods, and data – discussion & feedback

**Week 11 (Dec 9):** Thesis structure, abstract, introduction, conclusion



**Task (deadline Dec 15):** *provide your thesis structure with titles for each section and a short abstract (200–250 words), and upload them in a single Word document to the [shared folder](#)*

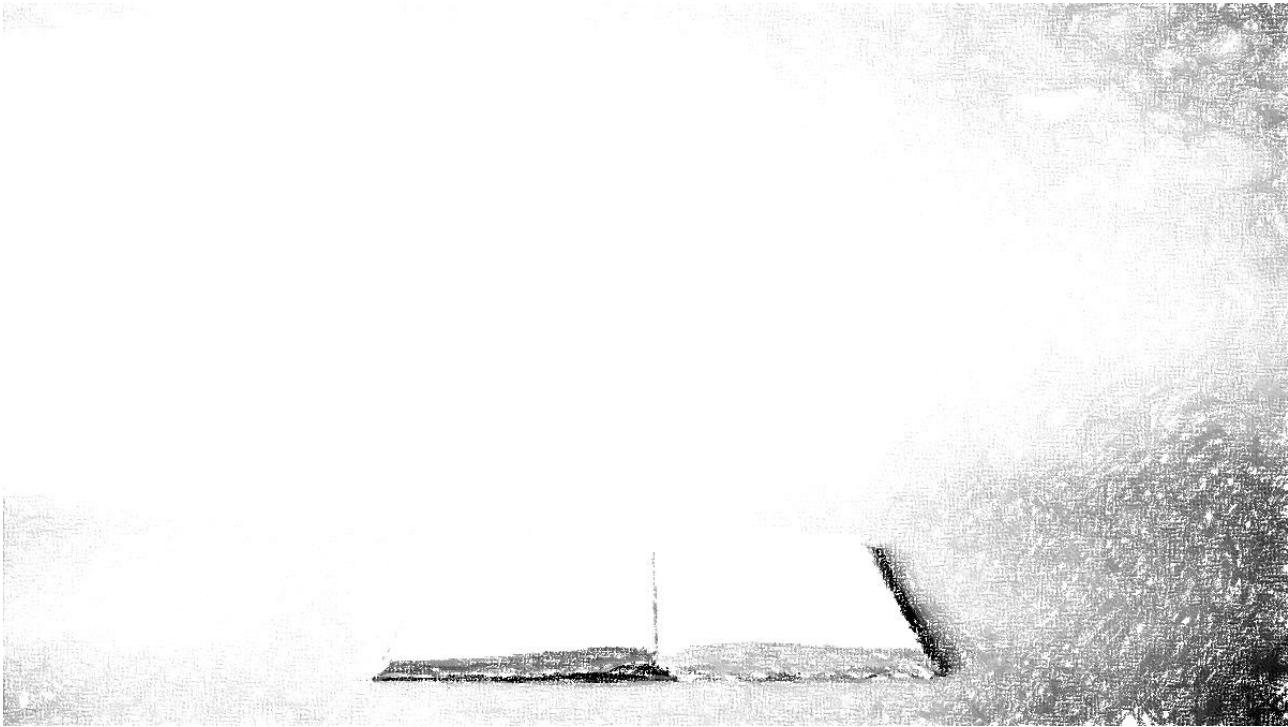
**Week 12 (Dec 16):** Thesis structure, abstract, introduction, conclusion – discussion & feedback



**Task (deadline Dec 22):** *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](#)*

**Final task (deadline Jan 31) – DS II students:** *upload your revised thesis outline and at least one chapter of your thesis to the [shared folder](#)*

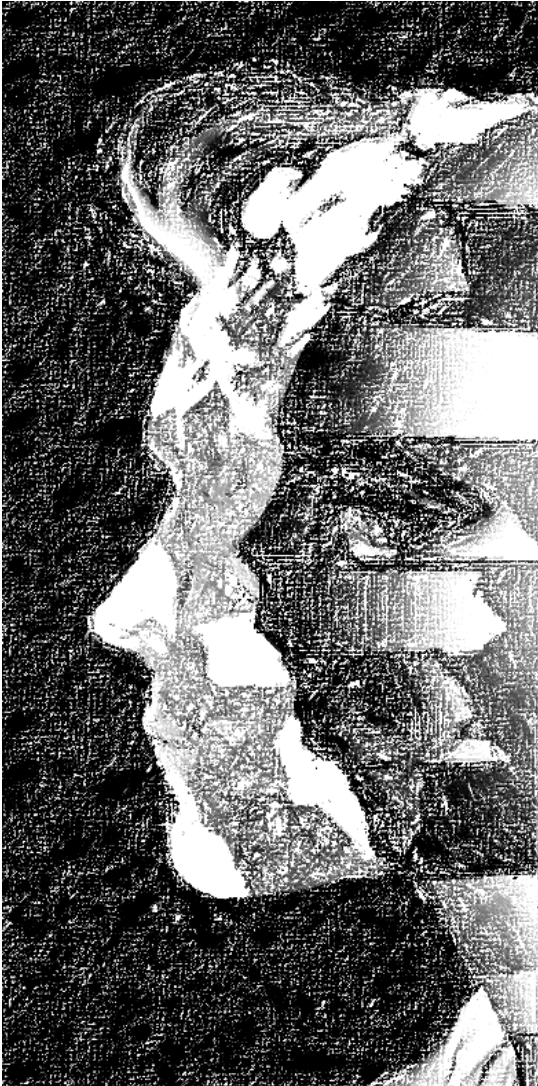
**Final task (deadline Jan 6) – DS III students:** *upload your final thesis to the shared folder*



## 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](#)
-



## 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 individual consultations, you can contact me at [smetana@fsv.cuni.cz](mailto:smetana@fsv.cuni.cz)