

Senior Thesis
PSC 31549-F
Spring 2016
Wednesday 11:00-1:30
SH-209

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Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00-10:45
NAC 4/143B
Other Times by Appointment

Description: This course presents an introduction to the thesis writing process and is intended for students who will be writing a senior thesis in political science during the spring semester.

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn how to formulate a research question, develop a literature review, and complete research to answer that question. Additionally, students will learn how to give constructive, critical feedback to other students on their work and receive similar feedback from their peers. Lastly, students will learn how to give professional presentations of their proposed work to an audience.

Course Assignments: There are three primary types of assignments for this course: 1) written; 2) critical feedback; and 3) oral presentations.

- 1) **Written Assignments:** The primary writing assignment for the course is to produce a final thesis suitable for publication in an academic journal. To achieve this goal, students will produce discrete parts of the thesis throughout the course of the semester.
 - a. Assignment 1: Write an Introduction
 - b. Assignment 2: Write a Literature Review
 - c. Assignment 3: Write a Research Design
 - d. Assignment 4: Write an Empirical Chapter
 - e. Assignment 5: Submit a Complete Thesis

Each assignment must be submitted to the entire class by email one week prior to the presentation date (e.g. if you are presenting on February 3 your assignment is due January 27).

- 2) **Critical Feedback:** Additionally, students will be required to read and critique work that will be assigned along with each other's work, as is typically done in a graduate school proposal development workshop. **They will be required to provide written feedback on their colleague's work weekly.** This will constitute the primary basis for the participation grade. Written feedback on each student's assignments must be emailed to the entire class on the morning in which that student will present her or his work (no later than 10am). Written feedback should be no less than two paragraphs

for each presenter. The feedback should summarize the work you are reviewing and then offer constructive feedback, both relaying what is well done and what could be improved, along with suggestions for how the work could be improved.

- 3) Oral Presentations: Throughout the course of the semester, students will give brief presentations (less than five minutes) of each of the components of their research design. Additionally, at the end of the semester students will give a 15-minute presentation of their final thesis.

Grading and Evaluation: The course will be graded on a 100-point scale with each of the components comprising a certain number of points. The breakdown is as follows:

Assignment 1: 10 points
Assignment 2: 10 points
Assignment 3: 10 points
Assignment 4: 10 Points
Final Thesis: 30 points
Final Presentation: 10 points
Participation/Critical Feedback: 20 points

Attendance: Student attendance is crucial to the success of the course and students' ability to learn in it. Attendance will be factored in into the overall participation grade.

Section I: Introduction

Week 1 – Thesis Introduction Group 1
Feb. 3

Week 2 – Thesis Introduction Group 2
Feb. 10

Week 3 – Thesis Introduction Group 3
Feb. 17

Section II: Literature Review

Week 4 – Literature Review Group 1
Feb. 24

Week 5 – Literature Review Group 2
Mar. 2

Week 6 – Literature Review Group 3
Mar. 9

Section III: Research Design

Week 7 – Research Design Group 1

Mar. 16

(***No class March 23 because of Friday Schedule)

Week 8 – Research Design Group 2

Mar. 30

Week 9 – Research Design Group 3

Apr. 6

Section IV: Empirical Chapter

Week 10 – Empirical Chapter Group 1/2

Apr. 13

Week 11 – Empirical Chapter Group 2/3

Apr. 20

Section IV: The Final Push

Week 12 – Final Presentations Group 1

May 4

Week 13 – Final Presentations Group 2

May 11

Week 14 – Final Presentations Group 3

May 18

Final Thesis due May 25