

CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
ARTHUR KROEGER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
PAPM 4908 HONOURS RESEARCH ESSAY

**GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS**

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**OVERVIEW**

The Honours Research Essay (HRE) provides you with the opportunity to explore a topic in depth. It does not simply describe a topic area, but analyzes it, and systematically defends a particular thesis. It does this with reference to existing scholarship or published literature (including policy reports) in the area, and a theoretical framework - a set of concepts and assumptions that inform your position. These concepts and assumptions may be used to interpret existing literature or explain evidence drawn from historical or current case studies, primary field research, or other sources approved by your HRE supervisor

While the length of the essay will depend upon how you have defined the terms of your topic, it should be in the range of 35 to 50 double-spaced pages. It should not exceed 60 pages.

**REGISTRATION**

The first time you register will be for **PAPM 4908 Section A**.

If you do not complete your essay and receive a grade by the deadline for that academic term, you will receive an IP on your transcript (i.e. In Progress) and you will be entitled to **two additional and consecutive registrations** in the course.

The first re-registration in PAPM 4908 Section B is optional. If you have not completed your Honours essay by the second session after your initial registration, registration in PAPM 4908 Section C is mandatory. The chart below outlines the various registration possibilities. If your Honours Research Essay is not successfully completed after three consecutive sessions (i.e. Sections A, B and C), you will receive a grade of F for the course. Note that one cannot register for PAPM 4908 starting in January, nor can you complete it in December.

PAPM 4908 Registration Options			
Option 1		Option 2	
Fall/Winter	PAPM 4908 A	Fall/Winter	PAPM 4908 A
		Summer	PAPM 4908 B
Option 3		Option 4	
Fall/Winter	PAPM 4908 A	Fall/Winter	PAPM 4908 A
Summer	No registration	Summer	PAPM 4908 B
Fall/Winter	PAPM 4908 C	Fall/Winter	PAPM 4908 C

Note also that **registration in your Honours Essay over the summer session is dependent on your supervisor being available**. It is therefore important to confirm this, taking into account your supervisor's other teaching or research commitments, and entitlements to holiday or sabbatical leave.

You may withdraw from PAPM 4908 up to the last date for withdrawal from full courses in the session in which you are registered.

The full-credit fee is charged for your first registration; the half-credit fee is charged for re-registration in sections B and C.

### SELECTION OF TOPIC

You should have given thought to your topic area well before the beginning of fourth year. In some instances, the ideas might come from a reading assigned or an essay written in another course. In other instances, they might come from an article that you read in a newspaper or journal, or a problem that you encountered on a co-operative work term.

### SELECTION OF SUPERVISOR

Faculty members will only accept a limited number of students to supervise, so students are encouraged to secure supervision early (up to 6 months prior to HRE registration).

It is your responsibility to research available faculty expertise and to approach potential supervisors. Any full-time faculty member of Carleton is eligible to supervise the Honours Research Essay.

Before you approach a potential supervisor, you should have prepared a brief (1 to 2 page) "Statement of Research Interest". This should include:

- a concise statement of the topic area you have in mind;
- the research question/ questions/issues within this topic area that you wish to address;
- an indication of the theoretical framework (assumptions and concepts) and research methods you anticipate using and
- a preliminary bibliography of research you have consulted or plan to consult.

The purpose of this statement is not to present a finalized definition of your topic or outline of your project, but rather to provide a potential supervisor with evidence of your preliminary thinking as the basis for further discussion and refinement of your research proposal.

The Supervisors' Guidelines for PAPM 4908, also available on the BPAPM website, will provide the supervisor with an understanding of the responsibilities associated with supervision. As a general rule, the better you are in providing a faculty member with a clear, concise and tangible idea for your project, the easier it will be for him or her to respond with helpful comments and advice and make a decision to supervise.

Once a faculty member agrees to be your supervisor, the [PAPM 4908 Supervision Consent Form](#) available on the BPAPM website should be submitted by the student before the [deadline](#). **Once the form is submitted, the supervisor will receive an email from BPAPM and they will have to confirm their consent.** If you encounter difficulties with electronic submission, or have difficulties securing a supervisor by this date, please contact the BPAPM Program Administrator (front desk) or College Administrator.

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

You are to submit a full **Formal Research Proposal** to your supervisor before the [deadline](#) on the BPAPM website.

The mark assigned by your supervisor to this proposal accounts for 10 per cent of your course grade (the final essay accounts for the remaining 90 per cent).

The proposal should be from 5 to 10 double-spaced typewritten pages, and include the following elements:

1. Introduction

Briefly describes the topic area of your essay, and explain why research in this area is needed (e.g. the gaps in existing research, the importance of the policy implications, the groups that could benefit).

2. Research question

States the central question that you will ask in your essay. Clarifies the key words used. Identifies key issues or any subsidiary questions or points you plan to consider.

3. Literature Review

Describes a 5-8 examples of existing research (such as journal articles, public reports, books) in your topic area. Identify the limitations or gaps within this literature, and how your essay will attempt to overcome these.

4. Theoretical Framework

Specifies the set of assumptions and concepts that you will use in supporting your thesis, and outline your reasons for adopting them. These assumptions may be ones that have been previously established in the literature or in policy analysis more generally (e.g. class analysis, public choice, incrementalism, corporatism), or they may be ones you have devised or adapted for this particular study.

5. Methods and Sources of Evidence

Specifies the methods you will use in answering your question. Will your research be primarily drawn from secondary sources (e.g. literature on your topic), or primary sources? If the latter, what methods will you use? Will you use qualitative or quantitative methods? Will you do a case study, interviews, surveys? How will your sources of evidence, and the methods used, help you to answer your research question? Consider issues of access to data. If doing interviews or working with research participants, you must go through the Research Ethics Board.

6. Bibliography

Cites primary and secondary sources that you have consulted (including those mentioned under headings 4 and 5 above), as well as those you expect to consult.

7. Work Schedule (in consultation with your Supervisor)

Specifies the agreed-upon frequency of your future meetings, and the dates by which you will complete various stages of your work (e.g. complete literature survey, collect data, conduct interviews, write preliminary portions of the essay, submit these, have them returned with your supervisor's comments, revise and resubmit).

## THE HONOURS RESEARCH ESSAY: CONTENT AND FORMAT

As already mentioned, the Honours Research Essay is to be analytical, not descriptive. It states and then systematically derives and defends a thesis, and does so with reference to the relevant literature on the topic, and a theoretical framework. In writing it, you will have to exercise original thought in coordinating and synthesizing ideas and information, and in constructing your arguments.

Confirm with your supervisor the preferred format for footnotes and bibliographical structure. The final draft must be carefully proof-read; do not rely on spell-check. The style and clarity of writing will be taken into account in the determination of a grade. Errors in fact, spelling or grammar will also be taken into account, and may result in the essay not being accepted as written. For guidance, you may wish to consult writing manuals such as: *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White; *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian; or *The Broadview Guide to Writing* by Doug Babington and Don LePan.

The essay must be typewritten and double-spaced using 12-character-per-inch font. Leave margins of not less than 3 cm. at the top, bottom and sides of the page. All pages, with the exception of the first page, must be numbered. There must be a Table of Contents page. In addition, your essay must have a title page, which is set up in the following format:

TITLE
By
AUTHOR
A research essay submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for PAPM 4908 as credit towards the degree of Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management [Honours]
Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs Carleton University Ottawa, Ontario
April 2025

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

It is the student's responsibility to submit three copies of their Honours Research Essay. One electronic copy of your Honours Research Essay must be submitted to your supervisor, and another to the second reader. Once the essay has been graded and any final revisions made, a third copy must be submitted to [BPAPM@carleton.ca](mailto:BPAPM@carleton.ca).

The electronic copy may be in pdf or MS Word format, and the copy to be left to the College should be in an email attachment that indicates '4908 HRE final' in the subject line and your name and student number in the email text. **Do not** submit your HRE to the College Director on the 4908 Brightspace site. It is the student's responsibility to determine whether their supervisor and second reader would prefer an electronic copy or a hard (paper) copy of the Honours Research Essay in advance of the deadline.

## DEADLINES

Students who have applied to graduate immediately after the term in which they are registered must submit their essay by the last day for submitting term assignments, as described under The Academic Year in the Undergraduate Calendar. Supervisors must submit the final grade to the College before the [deadline](#).

If the deadlines are not met, a grade of IP (in progress) will be entered and students must reregister.

***Please refer to the following link for all dates and deadlines related to HRE:***

<https://carleton.ca/bpapm/about-b-papm/honours-research-essay-papm-4908/>

## EVALUATION

The final essay determines 90 per cent of the course grade for PAPM 4908. The research proposal determines 10 per cent. Whereas the proposal is marked by the supervisor alone, the final essay is marked by the supervisor in consultation with a second faculty reader chosen by the supervisor. If for some reason the supervisor and the second reader cannot agree upon a mark for the essay, the Director of the College will assign a third reader.

## CONSENT

Please complete the [Supervision Consent Form](#) available on the BPAPM website.

Arthur Kroeger College will keep electronic copies of all Honours Research Essay's on file. These documents may be shared with future students as a reference or teaching aid to guide them as they prepare for their Honours Research Essay. If you do not consent to having your Honours Research Essay shared with future students, please send an email to [BPAPM@carleton.ca](mailto:BPAPM@carleton.ca) with the following completed statement.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (full name and student number) do not consent to the use of my Honours Research Essay as a teaching aid or reference for future students in the Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management Program.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_