

**PSCI 6908W**

Thesis Proposal Workshop

Monday 8:35 – 11:25

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Brian Schmidt

Office Hours: Monday 1-3, Tuesday 10 -12

Office: Loeb B657

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**Course Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this course is to provide Ph.D. students with information and guidance on research methods and strategies that will assist them in both the preparation of their thesis proposal and the later research and writing of their thesis. The ultimate objective is for students to develop a defensible dissertation thesis proposal.

Over the course of the semester, students will produce a shorter preliminary and a longer more developed version of their dissertation proposal. Each version of the proposal (and the underlying research project) will be presented to the class so that students can receive feedback from their peers and from the instructor. The workshop is student-led; the instructor will act as a facilitator.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

The course is evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Students will not be assigned a letter grade for course work. However, students are required to complete ALL of the following requirements in order to achieve a satisfactory grade:

- 1) Regular attendance and participation in workshop sessions.
- 2) A short (10 -15 minute) presentation outlining your initial plans for a dissertation project.
- 3) Acting as a discussant for the preliminary draft proposal of one of your peers by providing a 5-10 minute oral response to the presentation of the proposal.
- 4) A longer (20 minute) presentation outlining a more detailed and developed draft of your thesis proposal.
- 5) Completion of a preliminary draft dissertation proposal (10-12 pages + bibliography, double-spaced, 12pt font) and circulation of this draft (by email) to the entire class and the instructor 48 hours in advance of the first oral presentation in class.

The preliminary and final draft proposal should include a working title for your dissertation and the name of your (prospective) supervisor as well as the following elements (not necessarily in this order):

- (a) the topic of the dissertation and why this topic is important
- (b) a preliminary statement of your research question(s)
- (c) your tentative argument (or research hypothesis) about this (these) question(s)
- (d) a preliminary contextualization of your research question and your argument in the relevant literature(s) (How does your question/argument “fit” within the literature? In what ways does your argument agree or disagree with other relevant approaches/studies? What gap does it fill? How is it original and/or innovative?)
- (e) a preliminary discussion of your theoretical framework/approach
- (f) a preliminary discussion of your methodology (How will you go about substantiating your argument? What lines of inquiry will be pursued? What aspects of the topic and/or cases and/or data will be investigated? What methods will be used?)
- (g) an identification of particular areas of your proposal that need further development and a reflection on challenges related to your research project (if any)
- (h) an indicative bibliography

6) Completion of a draft thesis proposal (approximately 20 pages, double spaced). This should also be e-mailed to all workshop participants at least 48 hours prior to when you deliver your second oral presentation.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Week One                      Course Introduction** **January 8**

Optional reading: Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), chs. 3-5.

### **Week Two                      Seminar on Research Ethics** **January 15**

Guest: Research Ethics Coordinator, Carleton University Research Office

Reading: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. "Context of an Ethics Framework' and 'Ethics Review, Section H: Review of Research in Other Jurisdictions or Countries". Available at: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/English/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>

### **Week Three                      No class; prepare for first presentation** **January 22**

<b>Week Four</b> <b>January 29</b>	<b>Proposal Presentation 1</b>
<b>Week Five</b> <b>February 5</b>	<b>Proposal Presentation 1</b>
<b>Week Six</b> <b>February 12</b>	<b>Proposal Presentation 1</b>
<b>Week Seven</b> <b>February 19</b>	<b>No class – Reading week</b>
<b>Week Eight</b> <b>February 26</b>	<b>No class; prepare for second presentation</b>
<b>Week Nine</b> <b>March 5</b>	<b>No class; prepare for second presentation</b>
<b>Week Ten</b> <b>March 12</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation</b>
<b>Week Eleven</b> <b>March 19</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation</b>
<b>Week Twelve</b> <b>March 26</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation</b>
<b>Week Thirteen</b> <b>April 2</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation</b>
<b>Week Fourteen</b> <b>April 9</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation</b>

### **Academic Accommodations**

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The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your *Letter of Accommodation* at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

**For Religious Observance:** Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance ([www.carleton.ca/equity](http://www.carleton.ca/equity)).

**For Pregnancy:** Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

**Plagiarism:** The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

**Submission and Return of Term Work:** Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a

**stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Grading:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

**Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Carleton E-mail Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/>

or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.