

**PSCI 6908W**  
Thesis Proposal Workshop  
Thursday 2:35 – 5:25

**Instructor:** Brian Schmidt  
**Office Hours:** Available by appointment  
**Office:** Loeb B657  
**Telephone:**  
**E-mail:** [brian.schmidt@carleton.ca](mailto:brian.schmidt@carleton.ca)

**Course Aims and Objectives**

The underlying objective of this course is to provide Ph.D. students with information and guidance on research methods and strategies that will assist them in developing a solid dissertation proposal. The immediate aim is for students to develop a dissertation proposal that they can defend shortly after completing the course. The ultimate aim is to prepare students for the experience of researching and writing a doctoral dissertation.

During the course of the semester, students will produce a short preliminary, and a longer developed, dissertation proposal. Each version of the proposal will be presented to the class so that students can receive valuable feedback from their peers and from the instructor. The workshop is student-led; the instructor will act as a facilitator. In this regard, constructive student participation is a vital element of the course.

**Course Format**

This course will be conducted synchronously, meaning that it will take place in a real-time, on-line setting. For this reason, you are expected to connect on-line through a zoom invite that I will be sending to each of you. The class will meet on Thursday from 2:35 - 5:25.

**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 of your preliminary dissertation proposal.
- 3) Serving as a discussant for the preliminary draft proposal of one of your peers – provide a 5-10 minute oral response to the presentation of the proposal.
- 4) A longer (15-20 minute) presentation of your more detailed and developed 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.
- 6) Completion of a draft thesis proposal (approximately 15-20 pages). This should also be e-mailed to all workshop participants at least 48 hours prior to when you deliver your second oral presentation.

The preliminary and final draft proposal should include a working title of your dissertation and the following elements (not necessarily in this order and some of these may require additional work and time):

- (a) the topic of the dissertation and why this topic is important
- (b) a statement of your research question(s)
- (c) your argument (or research hypothesis)
- (d) the context of your research question and argument in the relevant literature -- 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 in the literature does your topic/argument fill? How is it original and/or innovative?
- (e) a discussion and defense of your theoretical framework/approach
- (f) an overview and justification of your methodology (How will you substantiate your argument/research hypothesis? What type of evidence will you use and how will you produce it? What methods—interviews, case studies, large N, archival—will you be using and why?)
- (g) a working bibliography

## **Class Schedule**

**Week One**                      **Course Introduction**  
**January 14**

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 21**

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>

<b>Week Three January 28</b>	<b>No Class</b>
<b>Week Four February 4</b>	<b>Proposal Presentation I</b>
<b>Week Five February 11</b>	<b>Proposal Presentation I</b>
<b>Week Six February 18</b>	<b>No class – Reading week</b>
<b>Week Seven February 25</b>	<b>Proposal Presentation I</b>
<b>Week Eight March 4</b>	<b>No Class</b>
<b>Week Nine March 11</b>	<b>No Class</b>
<b>Week Ten March 18</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation II</b>
<b>Week Eleven March 25</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation II</b>
<b>Week Twelve April 1</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation II</b>
<b>Week Thirteen April 8</b>	<b>Thesis Proposal Presentation II (if necessary)</b>

---

Accommodations during COVID

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor's note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to

complete the self-declaration form available here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/self-declaration.pdf>

### Academic Accommodations

#### Pregnancy

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

#### Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

### Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit:

[carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience.

Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)

### 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.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

### Intellectual property

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).

---