

PSCI 6906T
Thesis Proposal Workshop
Mondays 11:35am-2:25pm
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Fiona Robinson
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Office Hours
Fall Term: Mon 9:30-11:30
Wed 9:30-11:30
Winter Term: Mon 9:30-11:30
Tues 9:30-11:30

Course Aims and Objectives

The main aims of this course are to provide Ph.D. students with information and guidance on research methods and strategies which will assist them in both the preparation of their thesis proposals and the later research and writing of their theses. Students will read and learn about a wide variety of issues related to scholarly research in different areas of Political Science. They will also be provided with opportunities to present their ideas and work, and to discuss the formation of thesis committees.

The workshop is student-led; the instructor will act as a facilitator. Many of the class sessions will include guest speakers who will discuss different aspects of the research enterprise. The main objectives of the course are to expose students to many different perspectives on how to conduct scholarly research, and thus to assist in the development of students' original research projects.

Course Requirements

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:

Fall Term

- 1) Regular attendance and participation in workshop sessions.
- 2) One 10 minute oral presentation on the readings for one week, from weeks 2-7. This presentation should very briefly outline the main points of the readings, then offer a critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, of the readings themselves, and of the methodological approaches or tools that they describe.
- 3) One 15 minute oral presentation, presented during Weeks 11 and 12. This presentation involves developing a 'methodology section' of a research proposal. Ideally, you will be relating the methodological approaches and research methods that we have studied this term to the topic of your thesis research. The presentation (and the written paper, below) should answer the following questions:

- a) What is the substantive topic of your research, briefly? (If you are sufficiently advanced in your thinking to be able to set out a research question, this should also be included). But I want to read less about the substance and more about the method here!
- b) Broadly speaking, how do you plan to approach the research of this topic? Will it involve quantitative or qualitative research, or both? If it is quantitative, what particular research methods will you employ? If it is qualitative, what general approach will you use: comparative, interpretive/historical, or critical methodologies?
- c) How does your methodological orientation tie in to an wider epistemological approach? How do you understand the nature of 'knowledge' in the context of your research? Can one 'know' by 'observing' in that context? Is there an 'objective' reality to which you can refer? Will your analysis be 'contextual' (ie historical) or 'textual'?
- c) What particular tools might be useful: surveys, interviews, archival research, discourse analysis or ethnography?
- d) What is the goal of your research? Is it to describe, compare, explain, predict, critique, emancipate, challenge or disrupt?
- Remember:** it is not required that you have all this figured out completely! The purpose of this is to consider the important problem of HOW you are going to do your research (as opposed to WHAT you are going to research). The aim is for you to devote time to reading and thinking about methodology in the context of your own research, and to have a chance to discuss it with your peers.
- 4) A 5 page (typed, 12 point font, double-spaced) written paper which sets out the methodology presentation (above) in writing. It is not a formal essay, but it does have to be well-organized, clearly written, and properly documented.

Winter Term

- 1) Regular attendance and participation in workshop sessions
- 2) Two oral presentations: a short (10 minute) presentation outlining your initial plans for a dissertation project in the fall term, and a longer (20 minute) presentation outlining a more detailed and developed draft of your thesis proposal.
- 3) Completion of a short (2-5 pages, double spaced) description of your initial research plans, identifying the particular areas which you need to develop further. This should be e-mailed to all workshop participants by 4pm on the Friday of the week before you deliver your first oral presentation.
- 4) Completion of a draft thesis proposal (approximately 20 pages, double spaced). Full details and requirements for the proposal will be discussed in Week 1 of the Winter Term. This should be e-mailed to all workshop participants on the Friday of the week before you deliver your second oral presentation.

Seminar Topics and Readings

Fall Term: Methodology and Research Design

Week 1 Introduction

Sept 14

Discussion of Course Outline and Assignments

Week 2 Objectivity and Critique in the study of Politics

Sept 21

Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Chapters 1, 3 and 10.

Susan Hekman, 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited', *Signs* 22(2): 341-365, 1997.

Week 3 Methodological Debates in Political Theory

Sept 28

Mark Philp, 'Political Theory and History' in David Leopold and Mark Stears, eds., *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

James Tully, 'Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity', *Political Theory*, 30(4), 2002: 533-555.

Week 4 Qualitative and Quantitative Research: Debates

Oct 5

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Chapter 1, 'The Science in Social Science' (e-book available via Library Catalogue).

Lisa L. Martin, 'The Contributions of Rational Choice: A Defense of Pluralism', *International Security* 24(2), 1999: 74-83.

Jack S. Levy, 'Qualitative Methods and Cross-Method Dialogue in Political Science', *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(2), 2007: 196-214.

Week 5 Comparative Methodology and Case Study
Oct 19

Peter Burnham, Karin Gilland, Wyn Grant and Zig Layton Henry (2004) *Research Methods in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 3, 'Comparative Methodology'.

L. Pal, 'Case Study Method and Policy Analysis' in I. Geva-May (ed.) *Thinking Like a Policy Analyst: A Clinical Approach to Policy Analysis* (Palgrave 2005).

Week 6 Archival Research and Interviewing
Oct 26

Burhnam et al, *Research Methods in Politics*. Chapters 7 and 9.

Beth L. Leech, 'Asking Questions: Techniques for Semistructured Interviews', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35(4), 2002: 665-68.

Laura Woliver, 'Ethical Dilemmas in Personal Interviewing', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35(4), 2002: 677-678.

Week 7 Discourse Analysis and Ethnography
Nov 2

Burhnam et al, *Research Methods in Politics*. Chapter 10.

Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(2): 225-254, 1999.

Lorraine Bayard de Volo, 'From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 37(2): 267-271, 2004.

Carol Cohn, 'Motives and methods: Using Multi-Sited Ethnography to Study US national security discourses' in Brooke Ackerly, Jacqui True and Maria Stern, eds., *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Week 8 and Week 9 – classes; prepare for presentations
Nov 9 & 16

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 16, 2009 for December examinations and March 12, 2010 for April examinations**.

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).

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 include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of “F” for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor 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. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

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.

Course Requirements: Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

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 in the after-hours academic life 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, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, 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.