

PSCI 6908W
Thesis Proposal Workshop
Thursday 8:35 – 11:25

Instructor: Brian Schmidt
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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 10**

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 17**

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 24**

Week Four January 31	Proposal Presentation 1
Week Five February 7	Proposal Presentation 1
Week Six February 14	Proposal Presentation 1
Week Seven February 21	No class – Reading week
Week Eight February 28	No class; prepare for second presentation
Week Nine March 7	Thesis Proposal Presentation
Week Ten March 14	Thesis Proposal Presentation
Week Eleven March 21	Thesis Proposal Presentation
Week Twelve March 28	No Class
Week Thirteen April 4	Thesis Proposal Presentation

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy 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

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

Academic Accommodations for 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 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.

carleton.ca/pmc

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

Accommodation for 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