



POLI492 2022W Syllabus

Overview

Department/Program: Political Science

Year: 2022W2

Course Title: POLI492 - Honours Thesis

Course Schedule: Thursdays 11-2pm with 15 minute break (please only eat during break)

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Instructor: Fred Cutler (Canadian & Comparative Politics)

Office location: Buch C408

E-mail: fred.cutler@ubc.ca

TAs:

[Val Muzik](#) (IR and more)

Office hours: Appointments by email

Course Reserves: <https://courses.library.ubc.ca/c.tn9z9k>

Course Description

Students develop a thesis research project, report on their project during seminars, give feedback on their fellow students' projects, and write a thesis. All this is done in consultation with course instructor, TAs, and one faculty advisor.

This course enables the writing of your Honours thesis essay. It aims to:

- help you integrate knowledge from other political science courses
- identify where you can make an original contribution
- give you experience in designing, conducting, and writing original research
- gain a deeper understanding of political science methodologies
- take the research "beyond the case"
- develop your presentational skills
- learn how to critique work by others in a way that is helpful and respectful
- improve your writing by using a tough-minded, word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence approach to editing and rewriting
- get a feel for coaching in a knowledge sector of the economy



Coaching point: **POLI492 is a TWELVE credit course. You're giving up FOUR classes to do this, so make that sacrifice worthwhile!**

Your weekly work should be comparable to taking two courses. We're only in class 3 hours, so you should be carving out

12-15 hours of work outside class. Much of that will be reading, but make sure there's time for work integrating readings, working on your research method, and giving feedback to other students. Make your reading productive by having a great notes-to-action system.

Format of the course

Seminar sessions most but not all Thursdays of the year, including on December 8 and 15 during the exam period (since you will have few exams and we can't afford to lose those 2 weeks of collaboration time). Some breakout groups. Some asynchronous online participation. Everyone needs a laptop in class. Those doing quantitative theses need Stata on their laptop (available from UBC software distribution).

Term 1 will feel much more like a class, where we meet regularly, read the same things, do some presentations, and generate work. A lot of your time will be reading.

Term 2 will be less class-time-oriented and more about regular progress on your research with feedback from Fred, Addye, and Val, your research partner and research group, and your faculty advisor. You'll do A LOT less reading in Term 2 and instead you'll be executing your research. Keep in mind that this course is 40% of your time for a 5-course load and so you should be *doing* the research for a couple of full days, or four half-days per week.



Note about reading: In the weeks where we read, we have to all read all the pieces. First, they are chosen as examples of ways of doing things, so you'll benefit from being exposed to them and thinking about them almost exclusively in terms of method and how a research project gets done. Second, we will dissect them in class, so class will be really unsatisfying if people haven't read and taken relevant notes on them. Trust me, I don't talk too good, so you don't want to suffer the pain of having me try to talk to you. At. All.

Course Requirements and Grading

▼ Class Discussion, Participation, Presentations - 8%

Your participation will be graded. This includes your participation in discussion of sample theses from previous students and readings related to research methods. It also includes asking good questions and/or providing comments when other students present their work. The criterion for all aspects of participation is making a meaningful contribution given the context. There is no reward for a high volume of participation and indeed too much will make it unable for others to make their own meaningful contributions. The instructor will speak with you privately to warn you if you are occupying too much of the collective participation time.

▼ Reviewer, Discussant, Peer Coaching - 5%

You will be paired up to be peer coaches / advisors for another student. As a reviewer, you will write two reviewer reports: on the Thesis Proposal Draft in November and then on the Interim Research Report in February. These reports should be about one page (single-spaced) with some regular prose and some bullet points. The reviewer will lead the Q&A session when the research presents their Proposal Draft and Interim Research Report. Each report is due right before the reviewed paper is presented.

You will also be placed in 3 or 4 person research groups based on methodological approaches and techniques.

▼ Completion of mini-exercises and activities - 17%

These are the weekly activities that are specified in the  [Assignments and Mandatory Activities](#) as Activities

[February \(Mar\) Presentation](#) - 5%

- ▼ Empirical Analysis memo and presentation - 5% [February \(Mar\) Presentation](#)
 - ▼ Thesis Prospectus (Proposal) - 20% (Due Nov 24 as [Prospectus Draft Preliminary](#) and Dec 15 as [Prospectus Final](#))
- The Prospectus is a project plan for the execution of a research project. It will have the following headings:
- Research Question
 - Relevant Literature
 - Hypotheses or Argument
 - Research Design (or Argument Logic for non-empirical theses)
 - Project Timeline (composed of sequenced tasks)
 - Obstacles, Challenges
 - Support, Training, or Resources Needed
- Thesis - 45% 📌 [Thesis Guidelines and Sequence of Events](#) are on a separate page linked from here.

Schedule

POLI492 Schedule (Weeks)





Aa Week (Monday Date)	📅 Class Date	☰ Topic / Focus	➤ Readings	➤ Assignments	➤ 492 Best Practices Suggestions	☰ Tags
Week 1 (Sept 5) - Intro	@September 8, 2022	Intro - Course Design	Digital Tools for Lit Review , Panthea Pourmalek Prospectus			
Week 2 (Sept 12) - Questions	@September 15, 2022	Research Questions and the Overall Research Process	Chapter 1: From Research Topic to Research Question , Designing Social Inquiry Ch. 1 (pp. 3-19), Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse , Writing Synthetic Notes , How Solidarity Works , Chapter 1, Ana Tse Honours Thesis			Research Que
Week 3 (Sept 19) - Questions ↔ Lit	@September 22, 2022	Analysis of Past Theses. Lit Search and Review.	Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework ,	Lit Review Deep Analysis , 📌 Potential		Lit Review

Aa Week (Monday Date)	📅 Class Date	☰ Topic / Focus	↗ Readings	↗ Assignments	↗ 492 Best Practices Suggestions	☰ Tags
		Workshopping questions.	Chapter 2, POLI Thesis: Vaishnavi Panchanadam. From Rhetoric to Practice: The Role of Domestic Civil Society in Post-Conflict UNSCR 1325 Governance, POLI Thesis: Michelle Wei. 'Civil' disobedience and the civic: When are blockades constructed by Indigenous nations successful?, POLI Thesis: Jack Magnus. Deconstructing Meaningfulness in Indigenous-Crown Consultation: A Case Study of Environmental Assessment in British Columbia, Canada (2002-2019), POLI Thesis: Omri Rosen. The Populist Puzzle: Mainstream Strategies, Structural Conditions, and European Right-wing Populist Electoral Fortunes., POLI Thesis: Danilo Angulo-Molina. The Deterrence Effect: An Analysis of	Question & Lit Presentation (5 minutes).		

Aa Week (Monday Date)	📅 Class Date	☰ Topic / Focus	↗ Readings	↗ Assignments	↗ 492 Best Practices Suggestions	☰ Tags
			Preliminary Examinations by the International Criminal Court on the Severity of Civilian Atrocities, How to undertake a Literature Review, Distribution and Redistribution in PostIndustrial Democracies, Ana Tse Honours Thesis			
<u>Week 4 (Sept 26) - Theory</u>	@September 29, 2022	Theory. Explanation. Presentations of questions & lit.	Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry, The Process of Social Research Ch. 2. Science and Social Research: From Theory to Data and Back; Ch. 4. Research Designs: It Depends on the Question, How Solidarity Works for Welfare, Chapter 2, Explaining Variation In The Success of Extreme Right Parties in Europe, The office of the children's ombudsperson: children's rights and social-policy innovation, 380 Textbook - Fundamentals of Pol Sci Research - Ch 1-4	Potential Question & Lit Memo, 📌 Potential Question & Lit Presentation (5 minutes), Theory, diagrams sketches		

Aa Week (Monday Date)	📅 Class Date	☰ Topic / Focus	↗ Readings	↗ Assignments	↗ 492 Best Practices Suggestions	☰ Tags
<u>Week 5 (Oct 3) - Qualitative Research</u>	@October 6, 2022	Qualitative Research Design	<u>Qualitative Methods, Understanding Process Tracing, Process Tracing and Casual Inference, How Solidarity Works for Welfare, Chapter 4, The rules of the game: The logic of health policy-making in France, Switzerland, and Sweden, The Politics of When: Redistribution, Investment and Policy Making for the Long Term, The nuclear taboo: The United States and the normative basis of nuclear non-use</u>	<u>Articles methods dissection exercise</u>		<div>Qualitative Res</div> <div>Research Desi</div>
<u>Week 6 (Oct 10) - Quantitative Research</u>	@October 13, 2022	Quantitative Research Design	<u>Large N Regression Analysis, Stata Regression Refresher, Explaining Variation In The Success of Extreme Right Parties in Europe, Setting the rules of the game: The choice of electoral systems in advanced democracies, Rookie Mistakes: Preemptive Comments on Graduate</u>	<u>Case sketch</u>		

Aa Week (Monday Date)	📅 Class Date	☰ Topic / Focus	↗ Readings	↗ Assignments	↗ 492 Best Practices Suggestions	☰ Tags
			<u>Student Empirical Research Manuscripts, Data Organization in Spreadsheets, How Solidarity Works for Welfare, selections</u>			
<u>Week 7 (Oct 17) - Interpretive Methods ... and stuff</u>	@October 20, 2022	Interpretation as method. Directions to Research Design	<u>Realism in the Social Sciences, Decolonizing Methodologies (Intro and Chapter 1), The Two Cultures of Democratic Theory: Responsiveness, Democratic Quality, and the Empirical-Normative Divide, Interpretation and the Sciences of Man, Land Grabbing and the Perplexities of Territorial Sovereignty</u>	<u>Expanded bibliography check in (20 items EXACTLY).</u>		
<u>Week 8 (Oct 24) - Methods and Data Search Workshop</u>	@October 27, 2022	Thematic Methods Workshop sessions - TBA. Readings TBA per group.				
<u>Week 9 (Oct 31) - Methods Selection, Research Design, Project Management</u>	@November 3, 2022	Thesis structure review and its relation to the prospectus.	<u>If You're Against Them You're With Us: The Effect of Expropriation on Autocratic Survival, How Solidarity Works for Welfare, Chapter 5, How Solidarity</u>	<u>ROUGH draft thesis outline</u>		

Aa Week (Monday Date)	📅 Class Date	≡ Topic / Focus	↗ Readings	↗ Assignments	↗ 492 Best Practices Suggestions	≡ Tags
			Works, Chapter 1, Harvard Thesis Guide (Selections), Panthea Pourmalek Prospectus, Hemingway PhD prospectus			
Week 10 (Nov 6) - Break	@November 10, 2022	Prospectus prep. No class for Midterm break.		Research Design Memo		no class
Week. 11 (Nov 13) - Clarifying hypotheses/propositions/claims (HPCs)	@November 17, 2022		Panthea Pourmalek Prospectus, Hemingway PhD prospectus			
Week. 12 (Nov 20)	@November 24, 2022	Prospectus presentations		Prospectus Draft Preliminary		
Week. 13 (Nov 27)	@December 1, 2022	Peer review of Prospectuses	Your peer partners' prospectuses (groups of 3)			
 Week. 26 (March 27)	@March 30, 2023	Final DRAFT for review		Thesis Final Draft for Review		Editing Final
Week. 19 (Feb 9&16)	@February 9, 2023	Presentations		February (Mar) Presentation		
Week. 14 (Dec 8)	@December 8, 2022	Prospectus feedback meetings with FC, VM, AS				Final Draft Prospectus Fir
 Week. 15 (Jan 12)	@January 12, 2023	Restart.				
 Week. 16 (Jan 19)	@January 19, 2023	Group methodology work				
Week. 17 (Jan 26 No Class)	@January 26, 2023	One on one appts				
 Week. 19 (Feb 9 Presentations)						