

POL 499Y1Y – SENIOR THESIS AND THESIS SEMINAR Course Syllabus (2011-12)

SEMINAR INSTRUCTOR:

Karlo Basta

Contact: karlo.basta@gmail.com (**Use this email address only!**)

Office hours: by appointment (flexible)

THESIS SUPERVISOR:

Per application and per approval by the department

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISOR:

To be announced

Email: polsci.advisor@utoronto.ca

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Office hours: TBA

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

This seminar is open only to students whose applications for the Senior Thesis Program have been approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. It is intended to serve as a forum in which students who are writing a senior thesis can present and discuss their work and consider various approaches to research in political science. The readings for the seminar are required of all students, and have been chosen to facilitate the thesis work and to provide insights into the process of researching a specialized topic in the field, writing the thesis, and presenting results of the inquiry. While the student's primary responsibility is to his/her thesis supervisor, all students in the Senior Thesis Program are expected to participate fully in the work of the seminar. The final grade for the course will reflect *both* the thesis itself and participation in the seminar.

The thesis is a 10,000-15,000 word (approx. 40-60 page) research paper on any topic chosen by the student in consultation with a thesis supervisor. The thesis should contain appropriate footnotes and bibliography, and in general conform to the specifications of the APSA (American Political Science Association) style manual. Once chosen, the thesis topic may be further developed and refined over the course of the seminar in consultation with the supervisor. Students are expected to hold regular meetings with their supervisor in addition to their seminar attendance.

The seminar will guide students through key issues in research design, from choosing a topic, through selecting approaches to researching it, to conducting research, drawing conclusions and summarizing the results in written form. While the students will be able to draw on a textbook to aid them in understanding the research process in political science, emphasis will be placed on how such research is actually conducted. To this end, the students will review and discuss empirical articles published in a variety of social science journals. In the second semester, students will focus mostly on completing their

research and writing of the thesis. Each student will be required to present the results of their research to their colleagues at the end of the course.

CONTACT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR:

Students should feel free to keep in touch with me and to ask for guidance throughout their research. There are no formal office hours, but I will be available on request, either immediately after the class, or by appointment via the email. There will be several weeks in the second semester during which we will have no classes. Students should spend this time working towards the completion of their research. I will be available for consultation during these times, unless otherwise specified.

READINGS

The readings are available on-line, through the University of Toronto library system, with the exception of those marked by a double asterisk. These readings will be made available on course reserve. *Students are required to read all the materials listed for each particular week. They are also expected to have the readings with them in the class.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Thesis: 75% (grade assigned by the supervisor)

Participation and presentations: 15% (grade assigned by seminar instructor)

Literature review: 10% (grade assigned by seminar instructor)

Purpose statement

Each student will be responsible for submitting a short “purpose statement” (see Creswell, Ch. 6) to the thesis supervisor *and* the seminar instructor no later than **November 22nd**. The purpose statement should be approximately 2-4 pages in length, and should contain a working title for the thesis, a discussion of the research question, the beginning stages of a literature review, and a short working bibliography. The purpose statement will not be graded or circulated, but will be used by the supervisor and the seminar instructor to provide feedback on the thesis research plans.

Abstract

Students will submit a working abstract of the thesis to the seminar instructor and supervisor no later than **January 10th**. The abstract should be approximately 200 words in length, and will be circulated to the class at the January 17th session. Students will have the opportunity to revise and update the abstract up until the final class session before the mini-conference of March 28th. Final versions of the abstracts will be available for public circulation as part of the preparation for the mini-conference. The abstract will not be graded

Literature review

Students will submit a literature review, containing no fewer than 15 sources, to the seminar instructor by **January 27th**. This assignment will carry 10% of the final grade. Instructions on how to approach it will be given during the class.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on Plagiarism at <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsept.html>.

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

COURSE OUTLINE

September 12th – Introduction

No readings

September 19th – Selecting a Topic and an Approach

Kellee Tsai. 2005. "Capitalists Without a Class: Political Diversity Among Private Entrepreneurs in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 38(9): 1130-58.

Stephen B. Dyson. 2009. "Cognitive Style and Foreign Policy: Margaret Thatcher's Black and White Political Thinking." *International Political Science Review* 30(1): 33-48

Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security* 33(1): 7-44.

September 26th – Formulating a Research Question and Hypothesis

Henry Hale. 2004. "Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse." *World Politics* 56 (2): 165-93.

John Markoff. 1999. "When and Where Was Democracy Invented?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41(4): 660-90.

October 3rd – Using and Building Concepts in Research Projects

David Collier and Stephen Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49(3): 430-51.

**Bradley A. Thayer. 2007. "The Case for the American Empire" in Christopher Layne and Bradley A. Thayer. *American Empire: A Debate*. New York: Routledge; pp. 1-41.

Daniel H. Nexon. 2008. "What's This, Then? "Romanes Eunt Domus"?" *International Studies Perspectives*, 9(3): 300-308.

David A. Lake. 2008. "The New American Empire?" *International Studies Perspectives*, 9(3): 281-89

October 10th – No Class (Thanksgiving)

October 17th – Literature Review

Mitchell A. Orenstein and Hans P. Schmitz. 2006. "The New Transnationalism and Comparative Politics." *Comparative Politics* 38(4): 475-500.

Tong Vu. 2010. "Studying the State Through State Formation." *World Politics* 62(1): 148-75.

October 24th – Writing a Proposal/Purpose Statement/Abstract

Readings to be announced

October 31st – First round of research design presentations

November 7th – Research design presentations

November 14th – Research design presentations (PURPOSE STATEMENTS DUE)

November 21st – Understanding Comparisons 1

**David Collier. 1993. "Comparative Method." In Ada Finifter, ed. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington D. C.: American Political Science Association.

Rebecca Bill Chavez. 2003. "The Construction of the Rule of Law in Argentina: A Tale of Two Provinces." *Comparative Politics* 35(4): 417-38.

Mia M. Bloom. 2004. "Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, Market Share, and Outbidding." *Political Science Quarterly* 119 (1): 61-88.

November 28th – Understanding Comparisons 2

Matthew R. Cleary. 2006. "A "Left Turn" in Latin America? Explaining the Left's Resurgence." *Journal of Democracy* 17(4): 35-49.

Henry Hale. 2005. "The Makeup and Breakup of Ethnofederal States: Why Russia Survives Where the USSR Fell." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1): 55-70

Frank Schimmelfennig. 2001. "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union." *International Organization* 55(1): 47-80.

January 9th – Case studies and theory testing (ABSTRACTS DUE)

**Harry Eckstein. 1973. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." In Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds. *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 7*. Reading: Addison-Wesley Press. (RECOMMENDED READING ONLY)

Robert Putnam. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-78

Sheri Berman. 1997. "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49(3): 401-29

January 16th – Case studies and causal mechanisms

**Alexander L. George & Andrew Bennett. "Ch. 10: Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation." In George & Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

John M. Owen. 1994. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19(2): 87-125

Ronen Mandelkern & Michael Shalev. 2010. "Power and the Ascendance of New Economic Policy Ideas: Lessons from the 1980s Crisis in Israel." *World Politics* 62(3): 459-95.

January 23rd – History as method

Ian Lustick. 1996. "History, Historiography and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 90 (3): 605-18.

Hendrik Spruyt. 1994. "Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order." *International Organization* 48 (4): 527-57.

Ates Altinordu. 2010. "The Politicization of Religion: Political Catholicism and Political Islam in Comparative Perspective." *Politics and Society* 38(4): 517-51.

January 30th - Interpretivist Political Science (LITERATURE REVIEW DUE)

**Lisa Wedeen. 2009. "Ethnography as Interpretive Enterprise." In Edward Schatz, ed. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Joel D. Schwartz. 1984. "Participation and Multisubjective Understanding: An Interpretivist Approach to the Study of Political Participation." *The Journal of Politics* 46(4): 1117-47.

**James C. Scott. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press. Pp. xv-xvii; 265-272.

February 6th – Towards Completing a Research Project

Readings TBA

February 13th – no class (instructor available for consultations)

February 20th – reading week (instructor available for consultations)

February 27th – no class (instructor available for consultations)

March 5th – Second round of research design presentations

March 12th – same as above

March 19th – same as above

March 26th – Mini-conference - Short presentations of thesis research

April 27th – * thesis submitted to supervisor*****