

**University of Toronto**  
**Department of Political Science**

**POL 499Y: SENIOR THESIS AND THESIS SEMINAR**

**Seminar Instructor:** Professor Lawrence LeDuc  
office: 329 Alumni Hall (SMC), tel. 926-1300 (ext. 3232)  
email: leduc@chass.utoronto.ca

**Thesis Supervisor:** per application and approval by the Department

**Undergraduate Advisor:** Jamie Levin  
office: 3049 Sidney Smith Hall  
email: polsci.advisor@utoronto.ca

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 15,000 word (approx. 40 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 with the specifications of the APSA style manual (available on Blackboard). 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 those of the seminar.

The seminar begins with a consideration of the issues involved in choosing a thesis topic and an approach to researching it. The seminar will then proceed to examine a number of specific methodological considerations such as formulating research questions and hypotheses, conducting a literature review, and the role of theory in Political Science research. Throughout the course, consideration will be given to a wide variety of methods and approaches, including those involving theoretical debates, empirical inquiries, historical topics, or the analysis of documents and texts. Examples for class discussion will be drawn from a selection of short articles published in recent issues of journals such as the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, the *International Political Science Review*, *World Politics*, *Government and Opposition*, and *Perspectives on Politics*. In the second semester, students will concentrate primarily on the completion of their research and the actual writing of the thesis. A summary version of the thesis research will be presented at a "mini conference" which will take place in the final week of classes.

## REQUIRED SEMINAR MATERIALS

John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> edition)

APSA, *Style Manual for Political Science* (available on Blackboard)

*Other Readings.* A selection of articles will be posted on Blackboard. Short excerpts from Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* and Louise G. White, *Political Analysis: Technique and Practice* will be used in the discussion of some topics in the seminar and will be made available by the instructor. The Creswell book is available for purchase at the U-T Bookstore (214 College St.). Some copies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> editions of the Creswell book, which are acceptable for use in this course, may also be available.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Thesis .....	75%
Class participation and presentations .....	25%

A single grade will be submitted for the course. The thesis portion (75%) of the mark is assigned by the thesis supervisor and the remainder (25%) by the 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 20<sup>th</sup>. 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 8<sup>th</sup>. The abstract should be approximately 200 words in length, and will be circulated to the class at the January 15<sup>th</sup> session. Students will have the opportunity to revise and update the abstract up until the final class session before the mini-conference of April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Final versions of the abstracts will be available for public circulation as part of the preparation for the mini-conference.

## SYLLABUS

### **September 18<sup>th</sup>. Introduction and Orientation**

### **September 25<sup>th</sup>. Choosing a Topic**

Creswell, *Research Design*, pp. 25-27

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, "Improving Research Questions"

Howard Pawley, Marie-Pascale Pomey and Pierre-Gerlier Forest, "Examining Private and Public Provision in Canada's Provincial Health Care Systems: Comparing Ontario and Quebec." *International Political Science Review* 32 (2011), pp. 79-94

Philippe van Parijs, "What Makes a Good Compromise?" *Government and Opposition* 47 (2012), pp. 466-480

### **October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Choosing an Approach**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 1

Louise G. White, "Three Strategies for Answering Research Questions"

Debra Thompson and Jennifer Wallner, "A Focusing Tragedy; Public Policy and the Establishment of Afrocentric Education in Toronto." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44 (2011), pp. 807-828

Vanessa Williamson, Theda Skocpol and John Coggin, "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism." *Perspectives on Politics* 9 (2011), pp. 25-43

### **October 9<sup>th</sup>. Formulating Questions and Hypotheses**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 7

Kimberly Morgan, "The Politics of Mothers' Employment: France in Comparative Perspective." *World Politics* 55 (2003), pp. 259-89

Frank Harvey, "President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War: A Counterfactual Test of Conventional 'Wisdom.'" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 45 (2012), pp. 1-32

**October 16<sup>th</sup>. Conducting a Literature Review**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 2

Jean Grugel, “Democratization Studies, Citizenship, Globalization and Governance.” *Government and Opposition* 38 (2003), pp. 238-64

Sheri Berman, “Islamism, Revolution and Civil Society.” *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (2003), pp. 257-272

**October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Writing a Proposal / Abstract / Purpose Statement**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 5, 6

Natalia Vlas and Sergiu Gherghina, “Where Does Religion Meet Democracy?: a Comparative Analysis of Attitudes in Europe.” *International Political Science Review* 33 (2012), pp. 336-351

Irene Wu, “Who Regulates Phones, Television and the Internet? What Makes a Communications Regulator and Why It Matters.” *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (2008), pp. 769-783.

**October 30<sup>th</sup>. First round of research design presentations**  
[ *Extra class or class hour will be added if necessary* ]

**November 6<sup>th</sup>.** “ ” “ ” “ ”

**November 13<sup>th</sup>.** “ ” “ ” “ ”

**November 20<sup>th</sup>. Quantitative Methods [ Purpose statements due ]**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 8

Louise G. White, “Explanatory and Causal Relationships”

Simon Bromley, “The U.S. and the Control of World Oil.” *Government and Opposition* 40 (2005), pp. 225-255.

Joseph Fletcher and Jennifer Hove, “Emotional Determinants of Support for the Canadian Mission in Afghanistan: A View From the Bridge.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 45 (2012), pp. 33-62

**November 27<sup>th</sup>. Qualitative Methods**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 9

Louise G. White, “Meaning and Context”

Sofia Vasilopoulou, “European Integration and the Radical Right: Three Patterns of Opposition.” *Government and Opposition* 46 (2011), pp. 223-244

Elizabeth Perry, “Chinese Conceptions of ‘Rights’: From Mencius to Mao – and Now.” *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (2008), pp. 37-50.

**January 8<sup>th</sup>. No class [ Abstracts due – submit by email ]**

**January 15<sup>th</sup>. Analysis and Interpretation [ Circulation and discussion of abstracts ]**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 10

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, “Interpretation and Inference”

Matthew Winters, “Choosing to Target: What Types of Countries Get Different Types of World Bank Projects?” *World Politics* 62 (2010), pp. 422-458.

G. John Ikenberry, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order.” *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (2009), pp. 71-87.

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Using Theory**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 3

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, “Constructing Causal Theories”

Sebastian Rosato and John Schuessler, “A Realist Foreign Policy for the United States.” *Perspectives on Politics* 9 (2011), pp. 803-819

Kayhan Delibas, “Conceptualizing Islamic Movements: the Case of Turkey.” *International Political Science Review* 30 (2009), pp. 89-103.

**January 29<sup>th</sup>. Drawing Conclusions**

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, “Maximizing Leverage”

David Keen, “Liberalization and Conflict.” *International Political Science Review* 26 (2005), pp. 73-89.

Erin Tolley, “Do Women ‘Do Better’ in Municipal Politics? Electoral Representation Across Three Levels of Government.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 44 (2011), pp. 573-594.

**February 5<sup>th</sup>. Writing Strategies**

Creswell, *Research Design*, ch. 4

Louise G. White, “Designing and Writing a Research Paper”

*APSA Style Manual*

Glen Sussman, “The USA and Global Environmental Policy: Domestic Constraints on Effective Leadership.” *International Political Science Review* 25 (2004), pp. 349-369.

Baogang He and Mark Warren, “Authoritarian Deliberation: The Deliberative Turn in Chinese Political Development.” *Perspectives on Politics* 9 (2011), pp. 269-289

**February 12<sup>th</sup>. No class**

**February 19<sup>th</sup>. Reading week — no class**

**February 26<sup>th</sup>. No class**

**March 5<sup>th</sup>. Second round of research design presentations**  
**[ *Extra classes will be added as necessary* ]**

**March 12<sup>th</sup>. “ ” “ ” “ ”**

**March 19<sup>th</sup>. “ ” “ ” “ ”**

