


POLITICAL SCIENCE
PSC 495: DISTINCTION THESIS SEMINAR

 Fall 2023	 W 12:50-3:30	 Eggers 100A	 Professor Erin Hern
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HOW TO REACH ME

<u>Hern's Drop-In Hours</u> M 1:00-3:00 PM 400B Eggers Hall	<u>Hern Online</u> Email: ehern@syr.edu Zoom: by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this year-long seminar is to help students produce a quality political distinction thesis. This seminar will provide assistance in the following ways:

1. Provide basic guidance on moving from topic to research question, producing a research design, proposal preparation, conducting research, and writing.
2. Monitor progress toward meeting the deadlines (below).
3. Develop a sense of a research community going through the thesis process together through presenting your own work and critiquing your classmates' work.

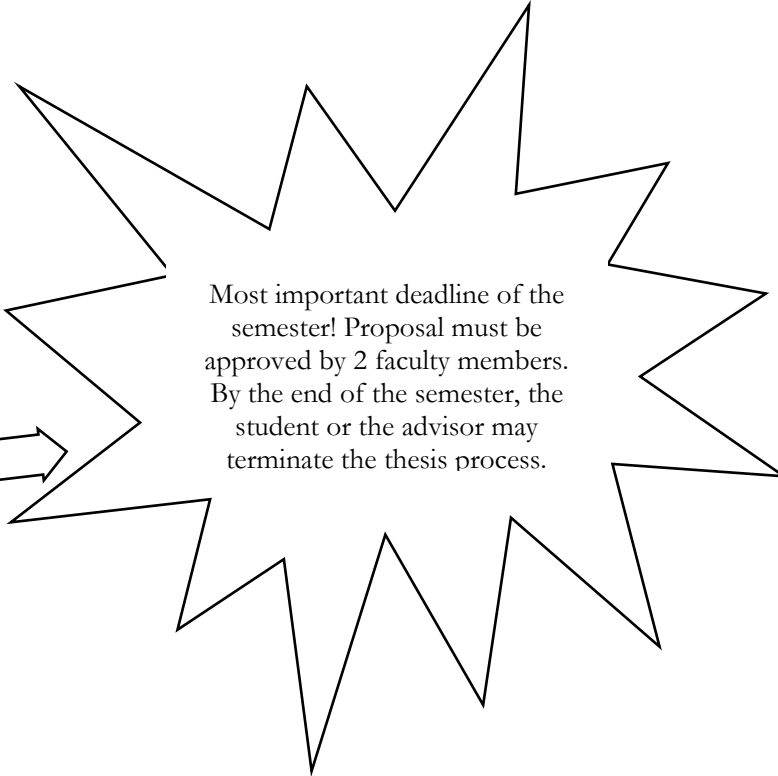
COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Move from general topic to specific, answerable research question
- Produce a clear, executable research proposal
- Develop a plan to execute research
- Enter Spring Semester with a clear plan for completion

IMPORTANT EXTERNAL DEADLINES

Put these dates in your calendar. These assignments are due to your faculty advisor.

10/15 – Draft Thesis Proposal
11/1 – Thesis Proposal
12/11 – Partial Thesis Draft



Most important deadline of the semester! Proposal must be approved by 2 faculty members. By the end of the semester, the student or the advisor may terminate the thesis process.

COURSE DETAILS

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for the course (separate from the external deadlines) will occasionally be due prior to the course. These assignments are preliminary drafts that will help you meet the external deadlines. They should be submitted to the appropriate folder on OneDrive with the following naming convention: “LastName_AssignmentName”. The OneDrive folder will be accessible to all the other students in the seminar so that you can read each other’s work and provide feedback in class. All assignments should be submitted in .docx or .pdf format.

Failure to submit these assignments will diminish your ability to participate in and receive feedback through the seminar.

GRADING

Your grade for the seminar is assigned by your thesis advisor. Note that attendance and participation in the seminar is a requirement for the distinction program, and I will consult with each adviser about seminar performance. Your grade for the fall term will be based on your assignments and work in the fall term, especially your final research proposal and draft.

SEMINAR FORMAT

We will meet about seven times over the course of the fall. Each meeting will include discussion of progress, general instruction and guidance, and peer feedback.

COURSE POLICY ON USE OF AI

Use of ChatGPT or other AI-enabled tools to compose assignments for this course is plagiarism, just as copying text from Wikipedia or journal articles is plagiarism. However, ChatGPT and other AI programs can be very useful tools for the various steps of producing your thesis. In class, I will discuss how to use AI tools to brainstorm, specify research questions, build a literature review, and get over writer’s block. While I welcome the use of these tools, **presenting text or ideas as your own that were produced by any source other than yourself is plagiarism and will be treated as such.**

For example: you may want to use ChatGPT to brainstorm potential research questions related to your topic. You may use the questions generated by ChatGPT as a starting point to produce a question that reflects your specific interests and capabilities. You may NOT simply copy the ChatGPT output.

Please note: If you are using editing tools like Grammarly to polish your writing, you must disclose this use in advance.

If you are unsure whether your use of a tool is fair game in this class, please ask. The AI field is evolving quickly and the judgment calls around fair use may shift as the technology advances.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE (FALL SEMESTER)

The schedule below includes class meetings, internal deadlines, and external deadlines (**BOLD CAPS**). Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by the end of the day (midnight).

- 8/28 (M) **Potential topics and questions due (via OneDrive):** This short document should include a brief (4-5 sentence) description of your topic of interest and at least three possible research questions related to that topic. If you are considering more than one topic, repeat the above (paragraph plus 3 questions) for each topic.
- 8/30 (W) **Class 1: Introduction & Choosing a Good Question**
We will introduce ourselves and our research projects and discuss the goal and structure of the class. We'll talk about how to build a constructive relationship with your advisor and common pitfalls in thesis process, and I'll also answer any questions you have (big or small) about the thesis process. We'll also begin to go over your research topics and questions.
- 9/4 (M) **Research Question due (via OneDrive):** submit the wording of your research question.
- 9/6 (W) **Class 2: Literature Reviews and Research Statements**
Prior to class, please read the abstracts of past student theses posted on OneDrive. As you read the abstracts, note the research question that each is answering. You should also read your classmates' research questions and come prepared to offer constructive criticism. In class we will discuss the components of a research statement and strategies to begin building a literature review, with the goal of moving toward an empirically answerable question grounded in the existing literature.
- 9/18 (M) **Draft Research Statement and Annotated Bibliography due (via OneDrive):** A two-page statement that describes your topic, states your research question, and outlines your research strategy (how you plan to answer the question), PLUS an annotated bibliography of at least ten peer-reviewed sources. An annotated bibliography includes the bibliographical citation and a short (4-5 sentence) description of each piece.
- 9/20 (W) **Class 3: Writing a Thesis Proposal**
In this session we will focus on how to answer the research question you have posed. We will discuss different strategies (surveys, case studies, etc) and the pros and cons of each. We will also go over how a proposal is structured. In preparation for class, please skim the past theses posted on Blackboard, focusing on those that are relevant to your work. Please also read the proposal structure posted to Blackboard. This will help you with your proposal drafting. You should also read your classmates' research statements and come prepared to offer constructive criticism.
- 10/2 (M) **Early Draft Research Proposal due (via OneDrive):** An early draft of your proposal is due. This proposal should include your abstract, topic justification (why it matters), brief literature review, research question, hypotheses, and research design. This proposal draft should be 5-7 pages.

- 10/4 (W) **Class 4: Creating a Research Timeline**
 Before class, read your classmates' draft proposals and come prepared to offer constructive feedback on their hypotheses and research strategy. In this session we will focus on turning your thesis proposal into doable research project. This will include creating a "research timeline" that has specific goals for you to meet. This research timeline will be a part of your final thesis proposal.
- 10/15 (Su) **DRAFT THESIS PROPOPSAL (5-10 PGS) DUE TO YOUR ADVISOR AND SECOND READER**
- 10/25 (W) **Class 5: Troubleshooting Advisor Feedback**
 This class will be a workshop-style session dedicated to troubleshooting any challenging feedback from your advisor on your draft thesis proposal.
- 11/1 (W) **THESIS PROPOSAL (5-10 PGS) DUE TO YOUR ADVISOR AND SECOND READER**
- 11/8 (W) **Class 6: From Proposal to Thesis**
 This session is devoted to discussing how to make the leap from proposal to thesis. We'll talk about the different parts of the thesis, discuss literature reviews in more depth, and talk through any potential trouble spots of your projects.
- 11/27 (M) **Submit Partial Draft (via OneDrive):** submit the current draft of your thesis. It does not need to be a complete draft—submit what you have.
- 11/29 **Class 7: Semester Wrap-Up**
 Students will provide brief progress reports on their thesis so far. Review your classmates' work and come prepared to offer suggestions. We'll also chat about what work to get done over the break (as well as the importance of taking some time off) and plans for the spring semester.
- 12/11 (M) **PARTIAL THESIS DRAFT (15-20 PGS) DUE TO ME, ADVISOR, AND SECOND READERS** draft (15–20 pages) is due to me, your advisor, and your other readers. The draft should include your research question, hypotheses, and research design. This draft does not have to be a complete rough draft of your thesis. Rather, you should do the part of the research that is most valuable to you at this stage. Some possible forms that this might take include a literature review, preliminary analysis of partial data, completion of a planned case study, or development of a theoretical framework.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity:

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university policy. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first offense by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of Academic Integrity Policy. The standard sanction for a first offense by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

Disability Related Accommodations:

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498, TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Religious Observances:

SU religious observances notification and policy, found at <http://hendricks.syr.edu/spiritual-life/index.html>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they **notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes** and by the submission deadline for flexibly formatted classes. An online notification process is available for students in **My Slice / StudentServices / Enrollment / MyReligiousObservances / Add a Notification**.