

# **POLS-4980 Political Science Thesis 2: Writing and Presentation**

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**Dr. Jamey Essex / Winter 2020 / Thursday 10:00 am – 12:50 pm / Dillon 352**

Office: 1139 CHN / Office hours: Tuesday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, or by appointment

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## **Course description**

This course builds on the research proposal students have developed in the fall semester course POLS-4970 Political Science Thesis 1: Research Design. Students complete the undergraduate thesis under individual faculty supervision, and with the input of the course instructor, and present the results in written and oral formats. The in-class component of POLS-4980 focuses on practical considerations related to completing the thesis and preparing a final presentation, and other themes related to research dissemination, such as conference abstract writing and submission, preparing papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals, and communicating research results to a wider audience through writing for social media.

## **Course goals and learning outcomes**

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Critically analyze issues related to the study of politics and international relations and apply this knowledge in completing an independent research project on a chosen topic under the supervision of a faculty member.
- Examine and assess the historical roots of political ideas and practices, and identify and analyze existing academic literature relevant to a specific research problem and approach.
- Demonstrate competence in executing a research design, including formulating a clear question, selecting appropriate methods, collecting evidence and presenting findings, and communicating research results in the completion of independent research.
- Articulate the social, academic, and practical significance and impact of political science and international relations research.
- Demonstrate strong written and oral presentation skills through the writing of a research paper and the public presentation of research results.

A full listing of course learning outcomes for POLS-4980 can be found on the University of Windsor website [here](#). This course's primary goal is the completion of your undergraduate capstone thesis, as both a written product of your research and a public presentation.

## Required readings

There are no specific books or readings required for this course, though relevant articles and other materials will be posted on the course Blackboard site as needed in line with the scheduled seminar discussions. You will also find the books by Charles Lipson and Randy Olson, which were assigned for POLS-4970 in the fall semester, will continue to be useful as you work toward the completion of the thesis in the winter semester. These are listed below, and both will remain on reserve at Leddy Library.

- Charles Lipson. (2018) *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Randy Olson. (2015) *Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Assignments and grades

Your grade in this course will be based on two components: the written thesis and the presentation. As POLS-4980 is the second of two capstone set of courses for the thesis, the usual rule of no single graded assignment being worth more than 50 percent of the final grade is waived (see University Senate [Bylaw 54, section 2.5.1](#)). Likewise, because the course involves independent research and is not strictly in-class, there is no course evaluation requirement, and no requirement to provide 20 percent of the course grade by the course VW deadline in March. If you are worried that you will need to drop the course, you should speak to me and your faculty supervisor.

I will assign grades for your presentations, but the grade for the final thesis paper will be determined through consensus between me as course instructor and your faculty supervisor.

- **Final presentation (20%)** – a 15- to 20-minute presentation of your thesis research findings in a conference-style format, on a date TBA during the finals period, and scheduled so that it does not conflict with any other final exams.
- **Thesis paper (80%)** – the final written thesis product, an original research paper of at least 25 pages in length (double-spaced, normal margins), **due April 20**, in hard copy and electronic format to me and your supervisor. You should aim to give a full draft of your thesis paper to your supervisor no later than March 26, so that they may provide you feedback to incorporate into the final submitted draft and your presentation. Failure to do so will mean that there is less time to read and provide such feedback and improve the quality of the final submitted thesis.

## Late Policy

All work is to be turned in **on time**. If you must miss a due date for medical or personal reasons, you need to contact me and your supervisor beforehand or **as soon as possible** afterward (**i.e., usually within 24 hours**) to let us know and make arrangements for submission of late work. I only permit late work due to emergency or illness. There are only two pieces of work due for this course, and you should treat the presentation symposium day and the final written thesis submission deadline the same way you would final exam dates.

## Email and office hours

I am available in my office, 1139 Chrysler Hall North, on Tuesdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, or by appointment. If I have to change or cancel office hours, I will post alternative times and other information on the course Blackboard site. I will also be available during the course time slot on Thursdays during those weeks when we do not have in-class meetings. If you need to see me but are unable to make it to these office hours, please email me and we can arrange a suitable alternative meeting time. As a general rule, I try to reply to emails sent to me within two working days of receiving them. **I do not usually answer student emails after 5:00 pm, or on the weekends.** If you email me and do not receive a reply within two working days, assume that I did not receive your email, and try again. Please also note the university's email policy states that students must use their @uwindsor.ca email account to communicate with faculty. I also request that you use appropriate etiquette when using email – I may not reply to emails that do not include a subject line, a greeting, and your name.

You should also check with your faculty supervisor and ensure that you are aware of their office hours and make meeting appointment times with them as necessary.

## Students with learning/physical differences

If you have a learning or physical difference, please obtain the appropriate paperwork from the University and let me know as soon as possible so that necessary arrangements can be made. More information is available via Student Accessibility Services, located in the basement of Dillon Hall and online at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/studentaccessibility/>.

If you need help in addressing stress, anxiety, or other mental health issues, please use the resources below to find that help. On campus, you may contact [Student Health Services](#) (ext 7002), the [Student Counselling Centre](#) (ext 4616), or the Peer Support Centre (ext 4551). The [My Student Support Program \(MySSP\)](#) is an immediate and fully confidential 24/7 mental health support that you can access for free online and by telephone (1-844-451-9700). This

service is available to all University of Windsor students and offered in over 30 languages. A complete list of resources on and off campus is available at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/wellness>.

### **Course expectations**

I expect that you will come to class, take the work seriously, attend to deadlines, and create and work in an environment that shows respect for your peers, for me, and for the institution. You can expect the same from me. For more information on the rules and regulations that govern student rights and responsibilities, please consult University Senate Bylaws 31, 32, 33, and 54 at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/secretariat/49/senate-bylaws>; the Academic Integrity Office at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/academic-integrity/>; and relevant Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science policies at <https://bit.ly/2sK7AG6>.

### **Classroom etiquette and academic integrity**

Consistent with University of Windsor policy, cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct are not tolerated. **Relevant official university and faculty policies on plagiarism and academic misconduct are at <http://www.uwindsor.ca/academic-integrity/>.** Those suspected of violating these policies will be referred to the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences for potential disciplinary action. If you feel you need help with the materials, don't cheat – please see me instead for assistance.

In class, you are expected to respect others' right to learn and discuss course themes and content in an environment conducive to learning and open engagement with your peers and course ideas and materials. You should rely on facts, reason, and evidence for your arguments. Racist, sexist, threatening or otherwise derogatory remarks and actions will not be tolerated.

## Course schedule

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- **Jan 9: Getting started again**

- Meet in class, to discuss moving from the proposal stage to the research, analysis and writing stages, and to do a story circle as described in the Olson book – we will form into 3 groups for this purpose
  - **Bring to class:** the intro section of your research proposal from POLS-4970, and your completed REB application (if you need to do one)
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- **Jan 16: Data collection**

- Discussion of primary data collection, management, and organization, and how things are going with REB procedures for those working with survey or interview methods
  - **Bring to class:** the methodology section of your research proposal from POLS-4970
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- **Jan 23: No in-class meeting**

- I will hold drop-in office hours instead
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- **Jan 30: Writing and submitting a conference abstract**

- Discussion of conferences and abstract preparation, and how to prepare for and what to expect in a conference presentation
  - **Bring to class:** at least one page of newly written material for your thesis, and read the material on the UWill Discover 2020 undergraduate research conference website
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- **Feb 6: No in-class meeting**

- I will hold drop-in office hours instead
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- **Feb 13: Writing for a wider audience**

- Discussion of turning your research thesis into formats for a larger audience (well, larger than me and your supervisor), and how to locate useful peer-reviewed and respectable online publication outlets
  - **Bring to class:** at least one page of newly written material for your thesis, author guidelines for a relevant academic journal and for a relevant online news/journalism-style publication
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- **Feb 20: Reading week**
    - No classes
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- **Feb 27: Actually submitting papers for academic publication**
    - Discussion of peer review process, how to select an appropriate journal, preparing your paper for submission, co-authoring, and using editorial and reviewer feedback; also a follow-up discussion and check-in about data collection and writing up results
    - **Bring to class:** at least one page of newly written material for your thesis, and for anyone doing the UWill Discover conference, whatever you currently have done for that
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- **Mar 5: No in-class meeting**
    - I will hold drop-in office hours instead
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- **Mar 12: No in-class meeting**
    - I will hold drop-in office hours instead
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- **Mar 19: Presentations that WOW the audience**
    - Discussion of how to put together and perfect the presentation of your thesis research and findings, and what to expect at the symposium presentation
    - **Bring to class:** a rough draft (or better) of your conclusion section, and an outline for your final presentation
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- **Mar 26: No in-class meeting**
    - I will hold drop-in office hours instead
    - **Note:** By this date, you should have a full draft of your thesis done and to your supervisor so that they have a chance to give you feedback on the total product before the presentations and final draft are due in April
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- **Apr 2: Wrapping up**
    - Discussion of procedures and grading for the final presentation and thesis paper, and your next steps for the work that you've completed
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**FINAL RESEARCH PRESENTATION TBA (~APRIL 13, BUT FINAL DATE TBA)  
FINAL RESEARCH THESIS DUE MONDAY, APRIL 20**