Course Description
This course provides a semi-structured process in which students undertake an analytical research and writing project of greater depth than in ordinary semester-long classes. The senior thesis culminates the undergraduate experience at Willamette, and offers the chance to demonstrate your capacity to formulate, investigate, analyze and compose a piece of original political science research work. You are asked to take the research, analytic, and writing-process skills that you have developed during your time at Willamette, use them effectively, and stretch them further than ever before in order to produce the best work of your career. Substantively, you are tasked with using your research, thinking, and writing to produce your own analysis of an important question. The thesis section is a two-credit course, signaling the amount of time, attention, and effort you are expected to invest in the project. It gives you more freedom, but also more responsibility, than any course you have had before at Willamette. At a minimum, you should anticipate spending twenty hours each week working on research (searching, reading, note-taking), writing, and revising.

Student Learning Outcomes
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of a range of explanatory theories in political science, particularly in their chosen sub-field.
- Students will make effective use of various types of evidence to support a clear analysis and conclusion.
- Students will enhance their abilities to read and think critically, to research effectively, and speak clearly.
- Students will enhance their abilities to write persuasively, including:
  - Writing well in terms of prose, grammar, and syntax;
  - Organizing ideas in a logical progression of thoughts;
  - Answering an interesting “puzzle” or question with a clear and cogent thesis;
  - Choosing an appropriate scope that is neither too broad nor too narrow;
  - Reviewing and summarizing relevant arguments about the theoretical core of the puzzle found in the existing scholarly literature;
  - Supporting the thesis with logic and evidence;
  - Comparing the thesis argument with a fair evaluation of (including evidence for) a counter-argument or competing explanation;
  - Maintain an analytic posture towards the inquiry (rather than an advocacy or partisan posture).

Texts and Resources
- I have ordered The Craft of Research by Booth, Colomb and Williams and it is in the Bookstore. This is an excellent guide to all facets of doing a senior thesis research project.
- You will use Chicago citation and style guidelines. See http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org
- Hatfield Library archives all senior theses. You can access and review Politics graduates’ theses here: http://libmedia.willamette.edu/xmlui/handle/10177/2127
- Here are some other references that you might find useful:
The Writing Center
You are required to complete at least four, and preferably more, appointments with the Writing Center during the senior thesis project. Please schedule your appointments early in the semester – don’t wait! Ask about any consultant who knows Politics or else the specific subject that you are researching. If you find a consultant whose feedback seems useful, stick with her / him and make a series of appointments before the course deadlines (and whenever else you might want to have a sounding-board / feedback source). Keep in mind - you cannot expect to bring a 40 page paper in to the Writing Center the night before a due-date and expect to derive much benefit. With each formal assignment you will hand in a cumulative Writing Center Log that lists the precise date and duration of each meeting, the name of the writing consultant, a description of the meeting (what part or parts of your paper the consultant read, the sorts of things you discussed), and a comment on the usefulness of the meeting. The log is not separately graded, but if it is not completed up to three points will be deducted from each assignment for which the log is not submitted on time.

Course Organization
In the first half, or part, of the semester we will meet biweekly or weekly as a class. These sessions will allow us to discuss and brainstorm on the thesis project’s elements, processes, standards and general expectations. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and individual conferences with the instructor. Unexcused absences will result in deductions from the final course grade. In the later part of the course, class meetings will be less frequent, but will still occur occasionally to discuss assignments, share experiences, and give formal oral presentations prior to submitting the final written version of the thesis.

Peer editing is an important part of the course design, and other self-initiated forms of collaboration (formal and informal) are encouraged. You will thus be expected to read peers’ work and offer support, suggestions, and constructive criticisms.

More often, usually weekly or every other week, students will meet with the instructor on an individual basis, and are expected to come prepared to discuss their progress on the thesis. Students will receive feedback from their peers and the instructor, but the thesis project primarily involves independent research and writing. Students are thus expected to take responsibility for planning and carrying out their thesis as a project, rather than as a traditional course in which they respond to the initiative and organization of the instructor. Count on meeting weekly (we will set up appointment times during the scheduled class hours); if either the student or the instructor believes that a meeting will not be helpful that week, a specific agreement (e.g. by e-mail) must be made. Otherwise, the individual meeting, or writing conference, is a weekly matter.

Accommodation If you have particular learning needs, medical conditions, or disabilities that require accommodation, please inform me at the beginning of the semester, and make an appointment with the Bishop Wellness Center’s Disability and Learning Services staff. Accommodation will gladly be made according to their instructions, but only if notice is given in advance, not on the due date of one of the assignments.
Grading and Evaluation
The grade is composed of five elements. All of them must be passed in order to pass the course.

1) Research prospectus (15%): 1800-2400 words (6-8 pages plus/ not including annotated bibliography) laying out a careful research design:
   - Specification of the question, puzzle, problem
   - An overview of two or three approaches to/explanations of the problem found in the existing literature
   - Your own working hypothesis/explanation
   - Your method of inquiry/testing (what types of information, and if possible specific material, will allow you to assess your outcome and competing arguments/explanations)
   - Annotated bibliography (with at least 10 articles and 5 book sources – can shift two to the other category)
   - (Separately) You must have had your first Writing Center appointment, and include a separate one-paragraph/half-page entry into your WC log.

2) First draft (15%): a 3750-5000 word (15-20 page) partial draft version of the thesis
   - A title and subtitle
   - Outline
   - Introduction
   - Body of the paper in sections according to the outline
   - Conclusion (including a section on implications: what further questions/issues future research should address, given your findings?)
   - Bibliography (15-20 articles, 10-15 books)
   - (Separately) Writing log with entries for first and second WC consultations.

3) Second draft (20%): a 7500-10000 word (30-40 page) full draft version of the thesis
   - Visit to the writing center to discuss this draft before it is turned in is required. Please note on a separate sheet when the visit occurred, who the WC consultant was, and what recommendations the consultant made for revision, and how you responded to those recommendations.
   - Title and subtitle
   - Outline
   - Introduction
   - Body of paper in sections according to the outline
   - Conclusion (including a section on implications: what further questions/issues future research should address, given your findings?)
   - Bibliography (25+ articles, 15-20 books)
   - (Separately) Writing log with entries for first, second, and third WC consultations.

4) Final draft (35%): 11000+ word (40+ pages) final version, complete piece of original research (two spiral/hot bound copies).
   - Title and subtitle
   - Abstract: 100-150 word synopsis of the thesis following the title page and before the table of contents page
   - Table of Contents
   - Introduction
   - Body of paper in sections
   - Bibliography (25+ articles, 20+ books)
   - (Separately) Writing log with entries for first, second, third and fourth WC consultations.

5) Participation, peer editing, and final presentation (15%)
   - On-going class involvement
   - Preparation for and attendance at individual conferences
• Conscientious peer review
• Interim verbal presentation
• Summary verbal presentation, involving a statement of the project’s analytic problem, methods, data, and conclusions, and responses to questions about the same. Use of information technology in the presentation is recommended.

Late submissions will be deducted one-third grade penalty per day (e.g. a B+ paper handed in a day late receives a B, two days late a B-, etc.). Most submissions will be electronically via WISE – more instructions later.

Thesis Assessment
The Politics Department uses the following rubric to assess all senior theses:
1. The thesis identifies a well-defined and compelling puzzle or question.
2. The thesis presents and develops a clear and coherent argument.
3. The thesis makes effective use of evidence.
4. The thesis demonstrates understanding of competing explanations or interpretations.
5. The thesis is clearly and concisely written without distracting grammatical or stylistic errors.
6. The thesis is well organized and has a logical progression of thought.

Academic Honor Code and Plagiarism:
http://www.willamette.edu/cla/dean/ethic/index.html
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“"We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of moral, academic excellence. We will proudly submit only our original work. We will never attempt to give ourselves or others an unfair advantage. We will commit to upholding our honor and the value of our work. Through this commitment we will serve as an example of our peers.” Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense against academic integrity, and will not be tolerated, but referred to the College for sanction. Two pieces of simple advice, if followed, can eliminate any confusion: a) when in doubt, quote or cite; b) simply remember that when the instructor (or anyone else) reads your written work, it must be you who is “speaking” to him/her through the words on the page. Make sure your writing is always a statement in/of your own thoughts expressed in your own voice, even when you are speaking about, or reflecting on, others’ ideas. If you’re unsure of what plagiarism means or entails, please familiarize yourself with Willamette’s plagiarism policy, which you can find at http://www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/archive/2003/resources/polices/plagiarism_cheating/index.php.

Course schedule (NOTE: subject to revision as we go along)

January 13 / 15: Course Introduction
Discussion of goals of the senior thesis project, and overview of expectations. Peer commentary on thesis topic assignment. The research prospectus assignment guidelines will be discussed. Recommended: schedule your Writing Center appointment.

January 22: Questions, Theory, and Research
Discussion of the types of questions asked in analytical research, theoretical frameworks, and the connection between theory and research. Students will submit an informal summary of progress made in research and reflection, and should come prepared to discuss the topic and question in more detail, along with preliminary ideas about the perspectives/arguments/schools of thought about the topic, the types of empirical sources that might be used in the research, etc.

January 27 / 29: Constructing the Senior Thesis
Discussion of research techniques, and the format and structure of the senior thesis. Students should continue to conduct research on the empirical aspects of their project. Students should meet with the Social Science reference librarian at Hatfield Library to discuss the types of research materials available through the library relevant to each student’s research topic. Students should have scheduled and held their first Writing Center consultation by January 29.
January 31: THESIS PROSPECTUS DUE, together with a Writing Center log entry, uploaded to WISE by noon, and an e-mail copy of the prospectus sent to your peer-reviewer.

February 3 / 5:
Class meets for review discussion of thesis prospectus; discussion of 1st draft guidelines.

February 7 first-draft peer feedback exercise due, uploaded to WISE and e-mailed to author.

February 10 /12 –
Individual conferences – come with a written progress report of 700-1000 words.

February 17 / 19 –
Individual conferences – come with a written progress report of 700-1000 words.

February 24 / 26 –
Class meets for informal presentations on progress.

March 3 / 5
Second meeting with Writing Center consultant should be held by March 5.

MARCH 7: FIRST DRAFT OF THESIS DUE (uploaded to WISE along with an updated Writing Center consultation log; electronic copy sent to peer reviewer).

March 10 /12:
Class meets to review the second draft; discussion of second draft guidelines.

March 14 second-draft peer feedback exercise due, uploaded to WISE and e-mailed to author.

March 17 / 19
Interim presentations.

March 24 / 26
Spring Break

March 31 / April 2
Must have third writing center consultation by April 1.

APRIL 3: SECOND DRAFT OF SENIOR THESIS DUE (uploaded to WISE along with an updated Writing Center consultation log; electronic copy sent to peer reviewer).

April 7 / 9
Individual conferences - come with a written progress report of 700-1000 words.

April 14 / 16
Oral Presentations

April 16 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNITION DAY

April 21 / 23
Individual conferences – come with a written progress report of 700-1000 words.

April 28 FINAL DRAFT OF SENIOR THESIS DUE (uploaded to WISE along with a completed Writing Center consultation log).