SENIOR THERESIS

This course is designed to facilitate your work on a senior thesis in the area of American politics. Although we will meet as a class on a number of occasions, your work in this course will largely develop out of your individual research efforts and through individual meetings with me. I will help you to refine your topic, guide you toward appropriate research resources, and give you written and oral feedback at the various stages of your project. The two-credit nature of this course reflects the Politics Department's expectations about the amount of time, energy and effort (not to say thought) that you will need to put into researching and writing your thesis. You should plan on spending about twenty hours a week researching and writing your thesis. Hopefully, the paper you write for this class will be the best piece of work you will have completed at Willamette and thus a fitting culmination of your Politics major.

Schedule of class meetings and paper due dates
1. January 17: Class meeting. ungraded 750 word prospectus due at beginning of class.

2. January 24 or 26: Individual meeting required. 1000 word report (#1) on progress during past week, due at 5 pm on the day before the required meeting. All progress reports should be submitted via e-mail, saved as a Word document.

Revised prospectus of approximately 2,000-2,500 words is due at my office Monday, January 30 at 10:00 am. Prospects should also be e-mailed at the same time to me and to your two peer readers. (10% of grade; half of grade is for the quality of your written responses to peers' prospectuses). First meeting with writing center must occur before January 30.

3. February 2: Class meeting to discuss peer responses on revised research prospectus

4. February 6 or 7: Individual meeting required. 1000 word report (#2) on progress during past week, due at 8 pm on the day before the required meeting. (I will be at a conference on Feb. 9)

5. February 14 or 16: Individual meeting required. 1000 word report (#3) on progress during past week, due at 8 pm on the day before the required meeting.

6. February 21 or 23: Available for individual meetings

First draft (minimum 5,000 words) is due at my office on Friday, Feb. 24 at 4pm (15% of grade; 10% is for draft, 5% is for quality of comments on the drafts of 2 peers' papers). Draft (including a preliminary abstract) must also be e-mailed to me as a Word document. Before turning in first draft you must have had at least one meeting (after Jan 30) with the writing center to discuss that draft.

7. February 28: Class meeting to discuss peer responses on first draft

Final SSRD abstract is due Monday, March 6.

8. March 7 or 9: Individual meeting required. 1000 word report (#4) on progress during past week, due at 8 pm on the day before the required meeting.

9. March 14 or 16: Individual meeting required

10. March 21 or 23: Available for individual meetings
Second draft (minimum 8000 words), including revised abstract, is due at my office on Friday, March 24 at 4:00 pm. (20% of grade). Also hand in to me at the same time the first draft with my comments on it. Second draft must also be e-mailed to me as a Word document. Before handing in 2nd draft you must have had at least one meeting with writing center to discuss that draft (by now you should have met with writing center at least three times).

March 28 or 30: No class, spring break

11. April 4 or 6: Individual meeting required

12. April 11 or 13: Class meetings for presentation of work in progress

13. April 18: Class meeting for presentation of work in progress

April 19: Student Scholarship Recognition Day. You are required to present your work in progress on your senior thesis at SSRD.

14. April 25 or 27: Available for individual meetings. Between April 3 and May 1 you are required to make at least two writing center visits.

Final thesis, including final abstract, due at 5:00 pm on Monday, May 1 (final paper should be a minimum of 11,000 words). (25% of grade). At the same time, please turn in your progress reports and your writing center log.

Grading
Your grade will be based on:
(1) Revised Prospectus: 10% (5% for prospectus, 5% for comments on peers' prospectuses)
(2) Progress Reports: 10%
(3) Writing Center Log: 10%
(4) Presentation of Work in Progress: 5%
(5) First Draft: 15% (10% for the paper, 5% for quality of comments on peers' drafts)
(6) Second Draft: 20%
(7) Final Paper: 30% (including 5% for abstract)

Late work or missed appointments and classes can result in a deduction from your final grade. Writing a passing final paper is not enough to pass the course. Each graded component of the course must be satisfactorily completed in order for you to pass the course.

Writing Center Log
You must make at least five writing center visits during the course of the semester. Those who do not visit the writing center the required number of times, at each stage of the writing process, will receive a full grade deduction on the final course grade. You must also keep a writing center log indicating the precise date and duration of the meeting, the name of the writing consultant, a description of what happened at the meeting (what part or parts of your paper the consultant read, the sorts of things the consultant said) as well as an evaluation of the usefulness of each meeting.

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