Course Description

This is the second part of a required year-long course for all third-year doctoral students in political science. All enrolled students are expected to have already taken the first part of this course, POS 695. This year-long course is designed to help advanced graduate students formulate and execute a major research project that could potentially be developed into a future dissertation or a journal article. Students are encouraged to use this opportunity to produce a working draft of a dissertation proposal by the end of the year. During the spring semester, the course will pick up where we left at the end of the last semester, and students are expected to build on the initial drafts they produced while working closely with their future dissertation advisors. They will start with preliminary data-gathering, followed by theoretical construction, methodological design, and a tentative research plan. The resulting prospectus drafts will then go through rounds of revisions before being presented to a departmental audience. As in POS 695, students will again participate in, and benefit from, peer review processes as they develop the skills of providing informed feedback to, and accepting constructive criticisms from, their colleagues. By the end of the spring semester, each student is expected to have assembled a tentative dissertation committee, and to have produced a solid dissertation prospectus draft. The students will then present their works to the department.

Course Requirements

The seminar relies heavily on students’ participation. Students must complete the assigned readings prior to the seminar meetings. Each student is required to work closely with his/her future dissertation advisor(s) and other potential members of his/her dissertation committee. Each student is expected to complete a series of writing assignments, make presentations based on these assignments, and provide feedbacks to their colleagues, including in writing as indicated by the syllabus. At the end of the semester, each student should complete a 30-40 page draft prospectus and present his/her work to the department on May 15. Grades will be assessed as follows:

- Class participation: 20%
- Preliminary writing assignments and presentations: 20%
- Peer-review feedbacks: 20%
- Final draft prospectus and presentation: 40%
Readings

There are no required books for this course. All the required readings are available on Blackboard. Those marked with “available on-line” can be retrieved by clicking on “E-Journals” from the Libraries web page and typing in the title of the journal in the search box.

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January 29: Moving forward

• Course syllabus
• Report on progress made during the winter, if any
• 1st Assignment: A meeting with your mentor/advisor to discuss your research progress

February 5: Collecting preliminary data

• Report on mentor meetings
• 2nd assignment: A written report on the preliminary empirical data you have collected on your project based on available information and secondary literature. How would the data shape your tentative argument?

February 19: Exploring methodology

• 2nd assignment due; presentations on the 2nd assignment
• 3rd assignment: Peer review of the 2nd assignment: are the empirical data collected relevant to the author’s research? Do they appear reliable? What kind of research should the author engage in in the future to obtain more and better-quality data?

February 26: Planning research

• 3rd assignment due
• Presentations on data availability and future empirical research plan (what you can plausibly do to get the data you need)
• **4th assignment**: Exploring potential funding opportunities: putting together a list of fellowships/grants that you might apply to

**March 5: Funding for dissertation (Guest: Professor Victor Asal)**

• Ted Gurr and Victor Asal, “NSF dissertation improvement grant solicitation: Doctoral dissertation research in political science: All men are created equal,” July 27, 2000

• **4th assignment due**

• **5th assignment**: Drafting the section on “research and methodology”

**March 20 (instead of 19): Fieldwork and data management (Guest: Professor Meredith Weiss)**

• “Political Science Field Research & Ethics,” *APSA-CD Newsletter* 15:3 (September 30, 2017): 3-36
• “Data Access & Research Transparency,” [https://www.dartstatement.org/qualitative-transparency-deliberation](https://www.dartstatement.org/qualitative-transparency-deliberation) (Browse the entire website)
• “Qualitative Transparency Deliberations,” [https://www.qualtd.net/](https://www.qualtd.net/) (Browse the entire website, esp. those reports relevant to your research)

• **5th assignment due**

• **6th assignment**: Peer review of 4th assignment: is the research plan clear and doable? Is the proposed research likely to yield the necessary data? How can the plan be improved?

**March 26: Putting together a first full draft**


• **6th assignment due**

• **7th assignment**: Putting together a first full draft of your dissertation prospectus

**April 9: Group 1 presentations**

• Presentation of draft prospectus #1
• Presentation of draft prospectus #2
• Presentation of draft prospectus #3

• **7th assignment due**
- **8th assignment**: Peer review of 7th assignment: does the draft prospectus include all the necessary elements of a prospectus? Which components need to be strengthened, and how?

**April 16: Group 2 presentations**

- **Presentation of draft prospectus #4**
- **Presentation of draft prospectus #5**
- **8th assignment due**
- **9th assignment**: Revisions of draft prospectuses

**April 30: Presenting and Publishing as a graduate student**

- Mariano E. Bertucci, “Why, and How, to Bridge the “Gap” Before Tenure: Peer-reviewed research may not be the only strategic move as a graduate student or young scholar,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48 (2015): 591-594 [available on-line]
- **9th assignment due**
- **10th assignment**: Preparing for the final presentations

**May 7: Final consultations**

- Individual consultation sessions with the instructor

**May 15, 10:00-12:00: Final paper due; departmental presentations, followed by lunch**