

Political Science 4620
Spring 2019
Senior Thesis II

Dr. Mario Guerrero (@marioguerrero)

Email: mag@cpp.edu

Course Website: <http://marioguerrero.info/courses/pls4620>

Voice: 909-869-3885

Office Hours: TuTh 11:15am – 12:00pm; W 8:00am – 10:50am; by appointment

Office Location: Building 9, Room 316

Classroom: Building 5, Room 136

Class Time: Tu 8:30 – 9:45am

Course Description

The primary activity in this course is the independent study and preparation of a senior thesis under faculty supervision. This course is the second in a year-long sequence. Students will utilize the skills they have acquired in the previous semester and the major to complete their own original research project. Major components of the course include implementing a unique research design, presenting research findings in a department-wide conference, and writing a final, comprehensive thesis paper. In course meetings, students will meet to discuss their progress but a large portion of this work is independent. As part of the course, students are expected to meet with the professor and other faculty members in advisement of their projects.

The Thesis Project

Each student is to develop a 30-to-40 page research paper that focuses on a specific aspect of political science. The project should adopt the perspective of at least one of the subfields of political science: American politics, international relations, comparative politics, political theory, public law, public administration, or political methodology. The student should ideally have completed all the core courses and at least three upper-division courses in a single subfield. Students should have already selected a topic, research question, and have developed an argument. Research design and implementation is the central focus of this semester and significant time should be devoted to it.

Course Objectives

As stated last semester, the thesis project is designed to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your competence in the following skills and abilities. In this semester, the course is primarily dedicated to the objectives in the latter half of the list found on the next page:

1. Develop a research topic within one of the subfields of political science.
2. Design a research project in accordance with the principles of sound research methodology: quantitative, qualitative, legal, theoretical, or otherwise.
3. Apply knowledge and modes of analysis from one of the subfields of political science to the understanding of a current political issue.
4. Conduct library research.
5. Identify appropriate data sources and know how to use the data effectively in support of an argument.
6. Write clearly and persuasively in a technically competent manner.
7. Critique the writing of others.
8. Make an effective oral presentation on a political science topic.

Required Text

The readings for this course are found in the Fall semester syllabus. No new readings will be assigned for this semester.

Course Requirements

The grade in this class is largely based on your final thesis. Other requirements are spread out over additional assignments designed to keep you on task. At the end of the year, the final thesis will be graded anonymously by two faculty members. We grade thesis projects according to criteria that you will be provided in advance. The average of the two faculty graders will determine your final grade on the project.

For the Spring semester, your grade will be calculated using the following guidelines:

%	Assignment	Description
10%	Attendance	There are only three required class meetings throughout the semester. These meetings are during Week 1 (Tu 1/21), Week 9 (Tu 3/19), and Week 15 (Tu 5/7). Each meeting is worth 3.5 percentage points of your final course grade. There are no excused absences.
10%	Class Conduct	Students are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner while interacting with each other and the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to penalize this portion of the grade for any inappropriate behavior.

%	Assignment	Description
15%	Conference Presentation	The conference presentation will be graded on a number of different criteria by the faculty in attendance. The Senior Thesis Conference is scheduled during Week 10, on Friday March 29. Although you do not have to attend the entire day, the schedule will not be published until March. Please clear your schedules for this day. Failure to present at the Senior Conference results in an automatic fail. Students who do not present cannot graduate in May and must repeat this course next year.
65%	Thesis	The thesis is graded based on a rubric that will be provided to you. You will be assigned an anonymous faculty member who will grade your thesis alongside myself. Our grades will be averaged to determine your final grade. The final thesis is due during Week 13, on Friday, April 26. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student must turn in two hard copies of the thesis. The thesis must follow the format assigned and be velo binded. You must also turn in a digital copy on Blackboard.

Extra Credit

I am offering two opportunities for extra credit. The first is to present your work at the Cal Poly Pomona Student Research Conference. This conference is to be held on **Friday, March 1** (Week 6) at the library. The application deadline is on Wednesday, January 30 (Week 2). At the conference, ten winners are selected from the campus. To earn the 8% extra credit toward your final grade, you must elect to present at one of the competitive sessions at the conference. The second opportunity to earn extra credit is to practice your presentation in class. During Weeks 7-10, I will make class time available to practice your presentation. There are only 20 spots available, sign up is available at <https://doodle.com/> . You can earn 2% extra credit toward your final grade for practicing your presentation.

Communication

One of the most rewarding portions of this course is developing your projects during one-on-one meetings. It is near impossible to write a thesis without feedback from your advisor. It is also impossible to provide individualized guidance and instruction during our class meetings. By the end of the semester, students should plan to meet with the faculty member at least three times. Office hours are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. I will be happy to schedule alternate times that may work better with your schedule.

Methods of Communication

Whenever I am in my office (94-316), I am happy to meet with you. I am guaranteed to be in my office during dedicated hours, but you are also able to schedule an appointment to meet when it is convenient for you. Feel free to contact me on Facebook messenger, I am frequently online and will be happy to answer your questions whenever I can.

Academic Honesty

Cal Poly Pomona takes academic honesty very seriously. Cheating is not tolerated and students will be held accountable for cheating on an assignment or exam. Violators will receive a F in the course and then be referred to the Dean of Students and Judicial affairs for further disciplinary action that may result in suspension. There should be no reason for you to feel compelled to cheat in this class. If you feel overwhelmed with the course, please do not hesitate to contact me for help.

Special Assistance

A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to keep up with coursework. The following services are open to all students, use them when necessary:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services** (Building 66, Room 110; 909-869-3220; <https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/counseling/>): At no additional cost to students, Counseling and Psychological Services provides counseling for both personal and academic concerns.
- **Student Health & Wellness Services** (Building 46; 909-869-3070; <https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/>): This office provides a range of services to help students identify and overcome obstacles stemming from financial, emotional, social, or family situations.
- **Disability Resource Center** (Building 9, Room 103; 909-869-3333; <https://www.cpp.edu/~drc/>): This office provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. You must register with the DRC prior to receiving these accommodations.
- **Learning Resource Center** (Library 2919; 909-869-3502; <https://www.cpp.edu/~lrc/>): This office promotes student success through tutoring, workshops, test preparation, and study skills development. They also house the University Writing Center (Library 2921), which provides assistance to students writing papers. The Writing Center offers students 30-minute, one-on-one appointments. Please utilize this resource if you need help with writing.

Course Schedule

Please note that the following schedule is subject to change throughout the semester:

Week	Dates	Description	Deliverables
1	January 21-January 25	Welcome Back	Required Class Meeting (Tue 1/22)
2	January 28-February 1	Dead Week	Application Due (Wed 1/30)
3	February 4-February 8	Dead Week	
4	February 11-February 15	Dead Week	
5	February 18-February 22	Dead Week	
6	February 25-March 1	Dead Week	Student Research Conference (Fr 3/1)
7	March 4-March 8	Practice	Optional Practice (Tue 3/5)
8	March 11-March 15	Practice	Optional Practice (Tue 3/12)
9	March 18-March 22	Class Meeting	Required Class Meeting (Tue 3/19)
10	March 25-March 29	Presentation	Optional Practice (Tue 3/26) Senior Conference (Fri 3/29)
Spring Break (April 1-April 5)			
11	April 8-April 12	Paper Writing	
12	April 15-April 19	Paper Writing	
13	April 22-April 26	Paper due	Final Thesis due (Fri 4/26)
14	April 29-May 3	Dead Week	
15	May 6-May 10	Conclusion	Required Class Meeting (Tues 5/1)