

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY, POMONA

Political Science 462 — Winter 2018

Senior Thesis in Political Science II

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Classroom: 5-138

Meeting time: MWF 9:15 - 10:20AM

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Office: Building 94, Room 316

Office Hours: T 11:30AM - 1:00PM

Th 11:30AM - 1:30PM

By appointment

1 Course Description

The primary activity in this course is a independent study and preparation of a senior thesis under faculty supervision. This course is the second in a two quarter sequence. Students will utilize the skills they have acquired in the previous quarter and the major to complete their own original research project. Major components of the course implementing a unique research design, presenting research findings in a professional setting, and writing a final, comprehensive 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.

2 The Thesis Project

Each student is to develop a 30-40 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 200-level courses and at least three upper division courses in a single subfield. Students should have already selected a topic, research question, and hypotheses. Research design and implementation is the central focus of this course and significant time should be devoted to it.

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. Please see Section

4 for how these requirements will be used to calculate your final grade.

As previously stated, the thesis project is designed to give you a chance to demonstrate your competence in the following skills and abilities. In this quarter, the course is primarily dedicated to the latter half of this list:

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, or theoretical.
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.

3 Required Text

The readings for this course are to be found in the Fall quarter online reader. No new readings are assigned for this quarter.

4 Course Requirements

At the end of winter, the final thesis is graded anonymously by another member of the political science faculty and myself. We grade thesis projects according to criteria that you will be provided in advance. The average of those two grades will determine your grade on the project itself.

For the Winter quarter, your grade will be calculated using the following guidelines:

Percentage	Assignment
10%	<i>Attendance:</i> There are only three required meetings throughout the quarter. These meetings are during Week 1 (W 1/3), 7 (M 2/12), and 10 (M 3/5).
10%	<i>Class Conduct:</i> 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.
15%	<p><i>Conference Presentation:</i> The conference presentation will be graded on a number of different criteria by the faculty attendees. The Senior Conference is scheduled for Friday, February 23. Although you do not have to attend the entire day, the schedule will not be published until the middle of the quarter. Please clear your schedules for this day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to present at the Senior Conference results in an automatic fail. Students who fail cannot graduate in June and must repeat this course next year.
65%	<p><i>Thesis:</i> The thesis is graded based on a rubric that will be provided to you. You will be assigned an anonymous faculty member to grade your thesis. Their grade will be averaged with my own to determine this portion of your grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student must turn in two hard copies of the thesis. The thesis must follow the appropriate format and be velo binded at Copy & Mail in the Bronco Student Center. You must also turn in a digital copy on Blackboard.

5 Extra Credit

I am offering two opportunities for extra credit. The first is at the Cal Poly Pomona Student Research Conference. This conference is to be held on **Friday, March 2** in our campus library. The application deadline is on Friday, January 26 (Week 4). At this conference, ten winners are selected from the campus by a panel of faculty judges. You can earn 8 % extra credit toward your final grade for presenting at the conference. The second is presentation practice. Several class meetings during Weeks 7 (W 2/14 & F 2/16), 8 (M 2/19 & W 2/21) are dedicated to optional presentation practice. There are only 20 spots available, but you can sign up at <https://doodle.com/poll/vd4cyyr5px9gviai>. You can earn 2% extra credit toward your final grade for practicing your presentation.

6 Communication

One of the most rewarding parts of Senior Thesis is developing your projects in one-on-one meetings. It is near impossible to write a thesis without feedback. It is impossible to provide individualized guidance and instruction during our class meetings. By the end of the quarter, I think it is reasonable if students attend office hours at least three times. Office hours are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. I will be happy to schedule alternate times that may work better with your schedule as I'll be on campus on most other days.

6.1 Class Participation

As an independent study course, there are minimal opportunities to participate in class discussion. Nonetheless, there is an expectation that students will demonstrate a good faith effort in completing the thesis. Procrastinating and waiting until the last possible minute to complete assignments is not a good faith effort. I expect students to demonstrate growth and make a considerable effort in executing their projects. This effort constitutes participation in this course.

6.2 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 office hours, but you can also schedule an appointment so we can meet when it is convenient for you. Feel free to contact me online on any social media platform. I am online frequently and will be happy to answer your questions.

6.3 Course Website

The course is accompanied by an online webpage that serves as a hub for information exchange between myself and the class. You can find the course webpage at <http://www.marioguerrero.info/courses/pls462/>. Please remember to check the course webpage frequently. In addition, you should be checking your school e-mail account frequently.

7 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 an exam. Violators will receive an 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.

8 Special Assistance

A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to meet the course requirements. Cal Poly Pomona offers counseling for personal and academic concerns at the Counseling and Psychological Services at no additional charge to students (Building 66-110, 909-869-3220). Additionally, Student Health Mental Services (Building 46, 909-869-3070) provides a range of services to help students identify and overcome obstacles stemming from financial, emotional, social, or family situations. The Disability Resource Center (Building 9-103, 909-869-3333) also provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. You must register with DRC prior to receiving these accommodations.

Separately from these services, the University Writing Center (Library-2921) provides assistance to students writing papers. The Writing Center offers students 30-minute one-on-one appointments. Writing Center tutors specialize in reading for content, but will also read papers for grammar and style. Please utilize this resource if you know you need help with your writing.

9 Course Schedule

Please note that the following schedule is subject to change throughout the quarter.

WEEK 1: DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 6. WELCOME BACK

CLASS MEETING: Wednesday 1/3 (Required)

WEEK 2: JANUARY 7-JANUARY 13. DEAD WEEK.

WEEK 3: JANUARY 14-JANUARY 20. DEAD WEEK.

WEEK 4: JANUARY 21-JANUARY 27. DEAD WEEK.

Friday, January 26: Cal Poly Pomona Research Conference Application Due

WEEK 5: JANUARY 28-FEBRUARY 3. DEAD WEEK.

Monday, January 29: Title and Abstract Due (via email)

WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 4-FEBRUARY 10. DEAD WEEK.

WEEK 7: FEBRUARY 11-FEBRUARY 17. PRESENTATION PREPARATION

CLASS MEETING: Monday 2/12 (Required)

PRESENTATION PRACTICE: Wednesday 2/14 & Friday 2/16 (Optional)

WEEK 8: FEBRUARY 18-FEBRUARY 24. SENIOR CONFERENCE

PRESENTATION PRACTICE: Monday 2/19 & Wednesday 2/21 (Optional)

Friday, February 23: Senior Conference

WEEK 9: FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 3. DEAD WEEK

Friday, March 2: Cal Poly Pomona Student Research Conference

WEEK 10: MARCH 4-MARCH 10. THESIS DUE

CLASS MEETING: Monday 3/5 (Required)

Friday, March 9: Senior Thesis due