

2001-02  
Political Science BC 3711-12, 04  
Thursdays 4:10-6, 306 Milbank

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## AMERICAN POLITICS SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR

This course is designed to assist students in the organization, research, and writing of a year-long senior essay in American politics. Writing a senior essay gives each political science major the opportunity to explore in depth a topic in which you are interested and to apply the research and writing skills you have been developing during your career at Barnard. If you are willing to **consistently put in the time and effort, throughout the academic year**, writing your senior essay should be a rewarding experience, and the crowning achievement of your Barnard education.

Selecting a topic that excites you and will sustain your interest throughout the year is crucial, as is defining a project that is both feasible and original. Your senior essay is **NOT** an expanded book report or an annotated bibliography that simply summarizes what has already been written. You are expected to make use of primary source materials, to engage in critical reading, and to produce a coherent piece of analytical writing. Your essay should provide a new perspective, and in some cases new information, on the topic you select.

### REQUIREMENTS:

The senior research seminar is a year-long process culminating in the submission of the final draft of the senior essay in April 2002. (See department handout for specific requirements and deadlines). During the year the seminar will consist of several group meetings, individual consultations, and required writing assignments. The schedule for the fall semester is listed below.

**Participation:** Students are expected to attend and actively participate in group sessions and peer review exercises. When we do not meet as a class, students are expected to consult with me individually about their research.

**Reading:** There is no specific required reading - your research will guide what materials you read, watch or listen to for this course. I strongly recommend that you purchase or have access to a dictionary and a thesaurus. You should buy and use K. Turabian, **A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations** for guidance on bibliographies, footnotes, etc. Other useful reference books include H. Becker, **Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish your Thesis**, and A. Harnack and E. Kleppinger, **Online! A Reference Guide to Using Internet Sources** (or any other manual about the internet).

**Written Assignments:** During the fall semester, you will be required to submit a research topic, research question(s), an annotated bibliography, a research design, a draft of your first

chapter(s), and written comments on your peer's work. Specific due dates are listed in the class schedule below.

**GRADING:**

The Senior Research Seminar is a year-long course and your reported grade for the fall semester will be a Y, unless you fail to successfully complete the requirements for the fall semester. Your performance during the fall semester - participation, research and writing efforts - will influence the final grade you receive in May 2002. At the end of the fall semester, I will meet with you individually to discuss the status of your thesis and provide you with an interim evaluation of your performance in the seminar.

***NOTE: All students are responsible for checking updates on e-mail relevant to group meeting dates, individual appointments, class assignments, changes and announcements. Please keep yourself posted!***

**PRELIMINARY CLASS SCHEDULE**

(Additional class meetings may be scheduled if necessary.)

- September 6 :           Group Meeting: Introduction/Identifying a Research Topic
- September 13 :        Individual Meetings to discuss research topics
- September 20: Group Meeting: Progress reports on research topics
- September 27: Yom Kippur - no group meeting; individual appointments can be arranged.
- October 4:             Group Meeting: Presentation of Research topics  
Assignment: One to two typed pages that state and explain your research topic due in class.
- October 11:           Group Meeting: Meet on 2nd floor of Barnard Library for presentation by Reference librarian on social science research and primary sources.
- October 18:           Group Meeting: Presentation of Research Questions  
Assignment: Research Question(s) and Annotated Bibliography due in class. **Bring enough copies to distribute to classmates.**
- October 25:           Individual Meetings
- November 1:           Group Meeting: Presentation of Research Designs  
Assignment: Research Design Due in Class; **3 copies (2 for me and one for peer reviewer).**

- November 8: Individual Meetings  
**Peer review comments due by e-mail, with copy to me.**
- November 15: Group Meeting:  
Assignment: First Chapter(s) due; **3 copies** ( 2 for me and one for peer reviewer); Completion of self-editing form for Senior Thesis Peer Review.
- November 22: Thanksgiving - Happy Turkey Day!
- November 29: Group Meeting:  
Assignment: Presentation of Peer Review Comments on Classmate's Chapter(s). (**Enough copies to distribute to classmates.**)
- December 6: Group meeting and/or individual meetings (to be determined on Nov 29).
- December 13: Individual meetings to Discuss Fall Progress Report

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