

General Requirements for Senior Research Seminars POLS BC 3761x-3762y

Department of Political Science Barnard College

ALL WORK SUBMITTED MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN!

General Requirements for the Senior Essay

A senior essay must be a coherent piece of *analytical* writing. It is intended to embody the answer to some question about the operation of certain aspects of political or governmental institutions or processes, broadly conceived. In choosing the question, the student should keep in mind these criteria:

- (1) That the question be sufficiently limited in scope to allow thorough treatment within the limits of the time available for researching and writing the essay;
- (2) That the question involve a subject matter with which the student has had some *familiarity*, normally by means of course work;
- (3) That the student has successfully completed one course, ideally a colloquium, in the sub-field of the question; and
- (4) That the question be of such intrinsic *interest to the student* that it will provide most of the motivation for sustaining the independent work required.

Normally a [grade of "Y,"](#) indicating a year-long course, will be assigned at the end of the first semester. However, at the discretion of the instructor, a letter grade reflecting the quality of the submitted work to date may be assigned instead. Your grade for the year's work in the course will be based on a *cumulative estimate of the quality of all stages of the essay*: research design, first and second chapters, first draft, and final submission. A second faculty member will read the essay where "distinction" or grades D or F are proposed.

Please note that a student with a *double major who writes a single essay* must keep her essay advisors (a.k.a. essay sponsors) in both departments of concentration well-informed throughout the essay's progress. Both advisors will read the completed essay and will agree on the final essay grade.

The following deadlines for submission of work to the instructor are provided to aid you in pacing your own work and to give your instructor the opportunity to evaluate your progress and to offer suggestions along the way.

Please note: Senior Essays will *not* be accepted after the final due date, except by departmental decision in the case of extraordinary circumstances.

SCHEDULE FOR THE FALL 2009 SEMESTER

- Your senior seminar instructor (a.k.a. essay advisor or sponsor) will determine the exact dates for weekly meetings, etc. for both semesters.
- Choice of topic after consultation with your instructor. (It is your responsibility to be in touch weekly with the instructor or, in the case of a double major, with your political science instructor and your essay sponsor in your other department.)
- Research design. Submission of statement of subject of essay; statement of questions to be answered; preliminary listing of types of courses or data to be used; preliminary outline by chapter.
- Submission by mid-December of one-half to two-thirds of the written work necessary for the complete first draft.

SCHEDULE FOR THE SPRING 2010 SEMESTER

- Required class meeting to discuss semester schedule and plans. The instructor will set up with each student individually other deadlines as well as dates and times for conference.
- Submission of rough draft of your complete senior essay.
- **THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 5:00 P.M.:** Final submission of completed senior essay, at the start of the Senior Party, Sulzberger North Tower.

Note: Please bring your essay to the copy shop a number of days early, because every Political Science senior will be aiming to get her essay copied and bound by April 15. There is no requirement regarding the binding; tape binding is the least expensive. Please have at least two copies bound for the department in case your essay is nominated for distinction.

Normally, acceptable essays vary in length from 50 to at most 75 typewritten pages, with the understanding that quantity does not equal quality. The basic requirement is that the essay competently covers the topic agreed upon.

For guidance on style and quoting or paraphrasing, please consult the Modern Language Association's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, on the web at:

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html>