

Professor Sheri Berman
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Senior Research Seminar in Comparative Politics

POL BC 3761x

Tuesdays, 11-12:50 pm

This course is designed to help you get through the process of writing a senior thesis. Writing your senior thesis should be the high point of your undergraduate career. It is an opportunity for you to develop and research a topic of your own choosing—to investigate and become expert in a pressing question in political science. However, completing a year-long research project is no easy task. It will probably require more organization and focus than you are used to. This class, accordingly, will guide you through this process. We will begin by developing topics and discussing research techniques and strategies. Once the writing process begins regular meetings with the professor as well as your peers will help keep you on track and ensure that the thesis progresses in a structured and timely fashion.

Requirements:

The most important requirement, of course, is a completed thesis of 50-100 pages due the **week of April -- 2006**. The precise format of the thesis will be discussed in class. In addition to the thesis, students will have to complete a number of intermediate assignments throughout the fall.

These will include:

- a preliminary research proposal (**due on September 26**)
- a revised proposal and annotated bibliography (**due October 9**)
- chapter outlines (**due October 23**)
- a draft of chapter 1 (**due October 30**)
- revised draft of chapter 1 and revised chapter outlines (**November 13**)

In addition, students are expected to attend *all* class sessions and participate in class discussions and critiques.

Readings:

The Kogan and Van Evera readings are available for purchase at Labyrinth Books and will also be on reserve at the Barnard library. The articles are available online.

Class Meetings

Class 1 (September 5): Introduction.

Class 2 (September 12): Class meeting to begin discussion of topics and argument evaluation.

Readings:

-Teresa Pelton Johnson, "Writing for International Security: A Contributor's Guide," International Security, 16, 2, Fall 1991.

http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/publication.cfm?ctype=article&item_id=380&pv=yes

-Nataly Kogan, "Conquering Your Undergraduate Thesis."

Class 3 (September 19): Individual Meetings.

Class 4 (September 26): Individual Meetings.

**One page preliminary research proposals and bibliographies should be emailed to me by 10 a.m. on September 25.*

Class 5 (October 3): Optional Individual Meetings.

Class 6 (October 10): Class meeting to discuss research progress and critique research proposals and design.

**Revised research proposals and annotated bibliographies should be emailed to me and your colleagues by 10 a.m. on October 9.*

Readings:

-Stephen Van Evera, Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science.

Class 7 (October 17): Optional Individual Meetings.

Class 8 (October 24): Individual Meetings.

**Chapter outlines should be mailed to me by 10 a.m. on October 23.*

Class 9 (October 31): Individual meetings to discuss progress on Chapter 1.

**Drafts of chapter one should be emailed to me by 10 a.m. on October 30.*

Class 10 (November 14): Class meeting to discuss and critique first chapters and chapter outlines.

**Revised drafts of chapter one and your chapter outlines should be emailed to me and your colleagues by 10 a.m. on November 13.*

Class 11 (November 21): Individual meetings to discuss chapter two.

Class 12 (November 28): Optional individual meetings.

Class 13 (December 5): Class meeting to discuss semester's progress and plans for the spring term.