

**HAMSTON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 404
SENIOR SEMINAR II
SPRING 2001**

OFFICE HOURS: MW: 11-1 PM, F: 3-5 PM

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PURPOSE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE 404

The purpose of this course is to give the students an opportunity to design and produce a complete research project that utilizes methods of systematic inquiry. This research project is considered the magnum opus of the students four years of academic training in the Department of Political Science and Hampton University. Students must be able to display in this research their grasp of the essentials of the discipline. What this means is that students must display their ability and skill to use and to manipulate major concepts, theories, and approaches used in the Political Science. Additionally, students should be able to illuminate ideas, themes, and subjects in the discipline by applying techniques of precise, paraphrase, information gathering, analysis, reflection and interpretation. The essentials of essay construction and development of evidence-based argument are also a basic requirement of a thesis. Political Science 404 is an entity unto itself. It requires the completion of the entire research project from the cover page to the bibliography. The students now have an opportunity to rework, re-design, alter, modify, adjust, and/or correct what they produced in the concept portion of the research, which was completed for Political Science 403.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

1. To introduce students to the strategies of gathering primary and secondary data.
2. To enable students to master a body of literature relevant to her/his topic and to review it competently for purposes of her/his work.
3. To familiarize students with the dialectical process which exists between a researcher and the research manifested in the revision process.
4. To train students to handle in a competent manner the necessary techniques of documentation, citations and references.
5. To enable students to demonstrate their understanding of politics and its impact on social phenomena.
6. To allow students to demonstrate their awareness of causal relationships between social phenomena and what constitutes proof in political science.
7. To demonstrate to one's peers and the faculty, her/his grasp of the substance and methods of political science.

REQUIREMENTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE 404:

The student must seriously review the conceptual portion of the research which she/he submitted for Political Science 403.

As you continue your research always keep in mind the requirements for Chapters, 1, 2, and 3. That will help to determine what you need to do with the remainder of the research. Since we only completed chapters 1 and 2 last semester, you will continue with chapter 3 this semester and proceed to complete the entire research project.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. **BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM.** What is the problem you are addressing? What is generally known about it? What is not known about the problem?
2. **STATE YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION.** Put in the form of a question that which you believe is not known about the problem, which your thesis is about to explore. **YOUR QUESTION MUST BE WRITEN IN EMPIRICAL TERMS.** That is, in such a way that you can go and search for information or evidence to answer it. The question should logically flow from what is explained in the "Background" above.
3. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.** Re-state the problem clearly and precisely and say what your paper intends to do or what you plan to do with the problem. In other words, what is the purpose of your research? **THIS MUST BE FOLLOWED BY A THESIS STATEMENT OR HYPOTHESIS OR PROPOSITION. THIS THESIS STATEMENT IS A TENTATIVE ANSWER TO YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION. YOUR PAPER IS REALLY ABOUT VERIFYING WHETHER OR NOT YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION CAN BE ANSWERED. YOUR THESIS STATEMENT MUST ALSO BE WRITTEN IN EMPIRICAL TERMS: IT CAN BE MEASURED, TESTED, OBSERVED AND VERIFIED BY LOCATING THE APPROPRIATE DATA/EVIDENCE.**
4. **METHODOLOGY.** Explain the methods/strategies for locating the data to support your thesis. Be clear and specific. And, once you have found the data, explain how will YOU use it to support your thesis. How will you analyze and interpret the data.
5. **DEFINE KEY TERMS IN THESIS STATEMENT.** Key terms must be defined, operationally or functionally i.e., define in a way that they can be measured and observed.
6. **LIMITATIONS.** Some topics may have specific limitations. State explicitly the limitations of your study with reference to of such factors as scope, chronology, source materials, etc. This is optional. Do not put it in if it is not warranted. Do not use this to cover up for laziness.

7. **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.** Why is your study important? How is it different from other studies on the topic? What new will it contribute to already existing literature? What are its policy implications?
8. **ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY.** This section tells what the following Chapters will consist of. Briefly tell what we can expect to find in each of the Chapters following Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. In this chapter you describe and evaluate the **relevant** research that has been done on your problem. You must first identify what is the most important published research already done on your problem, that is, the most significant scholarly articles and books. You should at least have included for each piece of work: the purpose of the work, the theoretical framework used, the major concepts utilized, the research method employed and the key findings and conclusions presented. Did you find general agreement among researchers about this problem or is there disagreement or controversy? Why? What are the main issues or unanswered questions remaining? Simply listing some books or journal articles does not constitute a review of literature. A chapter on "Review of Literature" that does not engage or discuss the most important works in the field of your study will NOT be acceptable. In addition, a review of literature chapter that is based on another review of literature by some other author will also not be acceptable.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Your theoretical framework should logically flow out of your review of the literature. What theoretical framework will guide your thesis research? Why have you selected it? (Is it the one that seems to be the least biased? Is it the one you agree with?) What are the specific parts of this theoretical framework that you will be applying? What are the basic assumptions and concepts you will be using? What specific questions are you asking or hypotheses are you testing? You need to explain what this framework is all about; that you are familiar with those who have written about it and what they have to say; and its significance for your paper. The one you choose must be appropriate for your study.

2. Some examples of theoretical frameworks used to elucidate political science topics are:

Discontent Theories of Rebellion	Legal-institutional Theory
Expected Utility Theory	Electoral Theory
Representative Bureaucracy Theory	Modernization Theory
Theory of Political Coalition	Feminist Theory
Game Theory	Marxist Theory
Neoliberal Institutionalism Theory	Systems Theory
Realism Theory	Internal Colony Theory
Schema Theory	Post-modernism Theory
Social Choice Theory	Conflict Theory
Dynamic Theory of Collective	Decision-Making Theory

Goods	
Development Theory	Democratic Theory
Dependency Theory	Dominant-Subordinate Group Theory
Group Theory of Politics	Climate of Hate Theory
Public Choice Theory	Race Relations Theory
Rational Choice Theory	Pluralist Theory
Elitist Theory	Bureaucratic Theory
Post-colonial Theory	Theories of Imperialism/colonialism

****Now, take another look at what you did in Chapters 1 and 2 ask the following questions:**

A. Did I locate and examine the most significant research done previously on the general problem that I am researching?

B. If so, then, what did these previous works tell me? And based upon what they told me, do I need to redirect my major and minor research questions, so that I can now answer questions that have not been answered previously? And if this is the case, then what does it mean for the significance of my study? Can I now make the case that my study is significant and relevant because it is attempting to fill a void in knowledge claim? Could this also have implications for my theoretical framework? What might this mean for my hypotheses/thesis statements? And finally, does this suggest that I use a different design methodology for my research?

If you have missed the point presented above, then, what it is saying is that the general research problem, the specific research questions, the significance of the research, the theoretical framework, and the methodology are all interrelated.

Again, you can only obtain the above if you did a thorough job with your Review of the Literature.

If you are satisfied that your research has met the above requirements, then proceed to the remaining chapters.

GUIDEUNES FOR CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

1. EACH STUDENT MUST HAVE ANOTHER FACULTY MEMBER AS HER/HIS SECOND READER. A FORM FOR SECOND READER'S COMMENTS AND SIGNATURE IS ATTACHED.
2. THE TASK OF THE SECOND READER IS TO READ YOU MANUSCRIPT AND MAKE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE YOUR RESEARCH. **DO NOT EXPECT THAT THE SECOND READER WILL DO OR WRITE YOUR PAPER FOR YOU.**
3. The topic of your thesis must be the same as the one approved by the instructor in Political Science 403.

4. Documentation for your research will follow one and only one format, the one found in Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers, latest edition.
5. The **TITLE/COVER PAGE, TABLE OF CONTENTS, ABSTRACT PAGE, ACKNOWLEDGMENT PAGE (optional), CHAPTER HEADINGS AND SUB-HEADINGS, INDENTATIONS, SPACING, CHARTS APPENDICES, ENDNOTES, FOOTNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY**, and any other aspect of the research having to do with the format, must conform to the Turabian manual. Any deviation from Turabian will result in the resubmission of the thesis with appropriate corrections.
6. **PLAGIARISM** is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. **YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE IF ANY PART OF YOUR PAPER IS PLAGIARIZED.** Plagiarism occurs when you lift verbatim someone else's work (four or more continuous words) without citing the source and giving credit to the author of the source, or taking somebody's ideas (even if she/he is not quoted verbatim) without giving proper credit. It is usually safer to over-document than to under-document. Plagiarism involves other penalties as well prescribed by the university.
7. Refrain from making your research look like a patchwork of quotations. This is usually the mark of laziness. Spend quality time reading and comprehending the information for your research. Then put it in your own words so that it can help build the argument you are attempting to make.
8. Never let a direct quote hang by itself. Always relate it to the body of the paper - the argument you are making. Do so either it is before you put the quote, or immediately following the quote.
9. **Each student must turn in two (2) professionally typed copies of the completed thesis on or before 5:00 p.m. _____. ALL THESES MUST BE IN THEIR COMPLETED FORM. NO THESIS WILL BE ACCEPTED WITH ANYTHING MISSING (NO MISSING COVER PAGE, ENDNOTE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, CHAPTER, OR ANYTHING ELSE).**
10. **THESES MUST BE TYPED IN DOUBLE SPACE, WITH 1½" MARGIN ON THE LEFT AND 1" MARGINS ON THE RIGHT SIDE.**
11. **IF YOU USE A PRINTER, MAKE SURE IT IS AT LEAST LEITER QUALITY. WIDELY SPACED DOT MATRIX WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**
12. **COPIES MUST BE TYPEWRITEN AND PRESENTED ON PAPER THAT IS AT LEAST 25% RAG CONTENT (COTTON).**
13. **THE FINAL TWO COPIES OF THE THESIS MUST BE SECURED WITH SOME FORM OF BINDING.**

14. EACH STUDENT WILL DEFEND HER/HIS THESIS ORALLY IN THE PRESENCE OF BOTH FACULTY AND STUDENTS. THE DATE FOR INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE WILL BE DECIDED BY LOTTERY NO LATER THAN THE SECOND WEEK OF CLASS.

15. ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND EACH ORAL DEFENSE.

16. This class will not meet formally each class period. The instructor will give notice of those time he wishes to meet with the class as a whole. All students must attend class whenever it meets as a whole. Most of the meeting will be on an individual basis with the instructor. This allows you time to do your research. Leave your telephone number so that you can be contacted if need be. Those students who do not have telephones, it is your responsibility to keep in touch with the instructor and other members of the class about meeting times. Finishing your research is an individual task. Call it independent study if you may. However, your theses supervisor and faculty in the Political Science department are here to help you. **MAKE USE OF THIS HELP.**

HERE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR A BETTER THESIS:

1. Avoid the use of encyclopedias as a source.
2. Limit the use of magazines and newspapers as authoritative sources.
3. Limit the use of textbooks as authoritative sources.
4. Utilize academic journals, government documents, and primary sources.
5. Avoid contractions, spelling errors, run-on sentences, and incomplete sentences.
6. Avoid abbreviations.
7. Divide the body of the research into chapters, and sub-chapters (where warranted).
8. Have each paragraph relate to the one that precedes it and the one that follows it.
9. Begin each chapter on a separate page.
10. Do not assume that the reader knows what you are thinking, or "trying to say."

THESIS FORMAT

THE TYPEWRITTEN THESIS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. COVER PAGE
2. TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE
3. ABSTRACT PAGE
4. ACKNOWLEDGMENT (OPTIONAL)
5. CHAPTER 1. THIS IS YOUR INTRODUCTIONS CHAPTER AND MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:
 - BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM
 - RESEARCH QUESTION(S)
 - STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM. THIS IS THE SAME AS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. INCLUDE YOUR THESIS STATEMENT OR HYPOTHESIS (ES).
 - METHODOLOGY
 - SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
 - DEFINITION OF TERMS (IF WARRANTED)

- ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE PAPER.
- 6. CHAPTER 2. THIS IS THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE CHAPTER.
- 7. CHAPTER 3. THIS IS YOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK CHAPTER.
- 8. DIVIDE THE REST OF THE BODY OF YOUR thesis INTO APPROPRIATE CHAPTERS AND SUB-CHAPTERS THAT BEST STRUCTURE YOUR ARGUMENT. END THE BODY OF YOUR PAPER WITH CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY CHAPTERS. (REMEMBER THAT A SUMMARY IS DIFFERENT FROM A CONCLUSION).
- 9. EACH CHAPTER MUST HAVE FOOTNOTE OR ENDNOTES.
- 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY (TO INCLUDE ALL THE SOURCES YOU HAVE USED)

NAME OF FACULTY_____

NAME OF STUDENT_____

TO THE FACULTY: THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO SERVE AS A SECOND READER FOR MS./MR. _____THESIS. PLEASE RECORD YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS SHEET EACH TIME YOU HAVE SUBSTANTIVE CONSULTATION WITH THE STUDENT ABOUT THE THESIS.

COMMENTS:_____

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