

SEMINAR IN POLITICS AND LAW

LGLS/POLS 490 Fall 2017
AIG 237

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Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-3:30
or by appointment

'Education is not the transmission of information or ideas.
Education is the training needed to make use of information and ideas.'
Pamela Hieronymi (UCLA)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to be the culmination of your undergraduate work in Politics and Law. During the semester, you will, in consultation with the professor, select, design and complete an original research project to be presented to the class at the end of the semester.

Class meetings will emphasize the process of research, analysis, and writing rather than particular substantive areas in politics and law. Through reading and practice, you will become familiar with the 5 steps to good quality research: conceptualizing, structuring, researching, drafting, and finalizing. The final product will be a paper you proudly will be able to show to a prospective employer or to a graduate or law school admissions committee. This project should display your very best work.

We will spend most of our weekly sessions discussing and practicing various aspect of research in politics and law as well as reviewing works in progress from each student in the seminar. Everything we do together this semester will build toward the completion of your seminar papers. As your project develops, you will share your work with the class. You must be prepared to discuss and defend each step of your project, from your literature review through to a highly polished presentation of your final product.

There are no written exams in this course. Rather, you face the more challenging task of designing, executing and presenting your own original research. To ensure that you write a paper that reflects your best work, the task of writing a final paper is broken down into 4 required components (research proposal, outline, abstract and literature review, draft and PowerPoint slides) and the final product. Interim deadlines for each component are set to prevent you from procrastinating along the way. Each component is graded individually. The final paper will also be graded independently from the individual components. This allows you to do further work on each component to improve it.

THE BASIC FACTS

develop an original research project

follow the 5 steps to good quality research

complete the 4 required components

submit the project



YOUR PROJECT MUST BE...

grounded theoretically and/or on a policy debate
informed by scholarly discussions on the topic
aimed at advancing knowledge
analytical
written well and presented



Outlines, handouts, slides
and other materials are
posted on the OneNote.

STEPS, REQUIREMENTS, AND TIMELINE

steps	output	deadline
 <p>conceptualizing identify the research question at the core of your project</p>	research proposal	9/19
 <p>structuring develop a project plan outlining its content and the major activities required to implement it</p>	outline	10/10
 <p>researching collect, evaluate and summarize the information needed to carry out the project</p>	literature review	10/31
 <p>drafting write up a complete draft of the project and present it to an audience for feedback</p>	abstract manuscript draft slides	11/21
 <p>finalizing incorporate feedback, finalize the project and submit it</p>	final project	12/18

Your final paper should be between 6000 and 8000 words long, excluding appendices. It should be readable and well written. Pay close attention to the mechanics of writing on all assignments. Consult manuals of style. Visit ACE and/or the library if you need help. Both substantive and stylistic/mechanical aspects of your written work contribute to your grades. You must conform to standard citation and bibliographic form. Avoid plagiarism.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

learning goals

1. gain an understanding of essential concepts and theories in the chosen area of inquiry
2. develop and implement a research project
3. locate and utilize information effectively
4. critically analyze readings
5. formulate arguments and defend them with adequate evidence
6. communicate ideas clearly and effectively

components

research proposal: 15%
outline: 15%
literature review: 15%
abstract + ppt: 15%
final project: 40%

letter grades

93-100%: A
90-92%: A-
87-89%: B+
83-86%: B
80-82%: B-
77-79%: C+
73-76%: C
70-72%: C-
67-69%: D+
60-66%: D
59% or below: F

