POLI 191A: Senior Honors Seminar

Fall 2021

Wednesdays 12-2:50 PM

SSB 104

Professor Molly Roberts  
Email: meroberts@ucsd.edu  
OH: Thursday, 8:00-9:00AM, SSB 399

Professor Philip G. Roeder  
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OH: Monday, 12-1 pm (Zoom)

TA: Bertrand Wilden  
Email: bwilden@ucsd.edu  
OH: Friday, 1-3PM, Zoom

Description

The two-quarter Senior Honors Seminar provides majors with an opportunity to design and carry out a research project on a topic of their choice, to work closely with individual members of the political science faculty, to write an honors thesis, and to graduate with honors in political science. Professors Roeder and Roberts will coordinate class meetings; all other members of the departmental faculty (except those on leave) can serve as individual advisors to students in the program.

The purpose of the weekly meetings is to help students carry out their research. Due to the interactive nature of this course, sessions will be held in person on campus. Class sessions are located at SSB 104. Class time will be devoted primarily to (1) discussion about how to create and execute a research paper, (2) discussion of research topics and research design, and (3) student presentations and critiques as specified in the assignments. You should be prepared to report on your progress during each class session. Written work must be submitted by each deadline as instructed below.

*It is extremely important that you get feedback from your individual thesis advisor on each completed assignment.*

Written assignments and deadlines

All assignments must be submitted to Canvas by NOON at the dates listed below. To receive credit for assignments, you MUST submit each assignment in TWO locations on Canvas – in the Assignments tab and in the Discussions tab. In addition, you must email a copy of your assignment to your thesis advisor (please CC Professors Roeder and Roberts). Note that these deadlines are 24 hours before the start of class. You are also
required to read what other students have submitted for their assignments before each class session – you can view these in the Discussions tab on Canvas -- so that you can provide feedback to your fellow students.

1. **October 5**: Assignment 1 due – In one sentence, provide the question that your thesis will answer. In one-paragraph, tell us why this question is important.

2. **October 12**: Assignment 2 due – Restate your question. Define your independent and dependent variables. Read 10 articles that address your dependent variable. For each article, identify the independent and dependent variable of interest.

3. **October 19**: Assignment 3 due – Restate your question. Define your independent dependent variables. Write a one paragraph summary of EACH of 10 articles that have addressed your specific question (i.e. that include the same independent and dependent variable).

4. **October 26**: Assignment 4 due – Three-page literature review -- identify the question, the argument, variables, and evidence of each article.

5. **November 9**: Assignment 5 due – Three-to-five page research design. Include a schematic of causes and outcomes.

6. **November 16**: In class presentations of research design.

7. **November 23**: Assignment 6 due – Revised three-to-five page research design. Include a schematic of causes and outcomes.

8. **November 30**: Assignment 7 due – Introductory chapter due (question, literature review, and research design). This draft chapter should be between 10 and 20 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.

9. **Late January/early February**: (Almost) Complete first draft of your thesis

10. **March 11** (Last day of instruction of Winter 2020): Penultimate draft of your thesis due

11. **March 28** (First day of instruction of Spring 2020): Submit an electronic copy to the Canvas course website. Printed copies are no longer required.

**Readings**

Reading is required for this class, and you are expected to complete the reading before the start of the seminar. The required readings for this class are:

Attendance and participation

Attendance and active participation are mandatory. The seminar functions well only if students come prepared, ready to discuss their research projects, and eager to engage in group discussions about the projects of other students.

Academic Integrity

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and, in so doing, protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. All suspicions of plagiarism and academic misconduct will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office according to university policy.

All assignments will be submitted through Canvas and we will run them through the Turnitin software which will detect any and all instances of plagiarism.

Determination of grades

You will receive four grades for the work you complete in the honors seminar:

1. Course grade for the fall quarter: A letter grade will be assigned by your thesis advisor – with input from Professors Roberts and Roeder – on the basis of the work you complete in the fall quarter.
2. Course grade for the winter quarter: A letter grade will be assigned by your thesis advisor – with input from Professors Roberts and Roeder – on the basis of the work you complete in the winter quarter.
3. Thesis grade: The thesis grade will be the average of recommendations of two (possibly three) anonymous readers who are department faculty (not your thesis advisor). If the first two readers differ in their recommendations by more than two-tenths of a grade point [e.g., 3.5 and 3.8], a third reader will be asked to grade the thesis as well.
4. Departmental honors: The award of departmental honors is by a vote of the entire Political Science faculty. In assigning honors the faculty is guided by the average of your departmental GPA (through the winter quarter of 2020) and your thesis grade. There are three levels of honors—highest honors, high honors, and honors. A student may complete the thesis but not receive departmental honors.
Other Useful Resources


- Writing Center at UCSD: [https://writingcenter.ucsd.edu](https://writingcenter.ucsd.edu)Links to an external site. You can make an appointment here on-line and get a personal counseling and feedback on your written work. We encourage everyone to get a feedback on their writing on your introduction by the end of January.


CLASS SCHEDULE AND FALL QUARTER ASSIGNMENTS

September 29: Introduction and Framing Questions (Roeder)

- Read Lipson, *How to Write a BA Thesis*.
- Read Prologue to Section I and II, Chapters 1 and 2 in Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*
- Prior to class: Skim two of the award winning theses from last academic year:
  - Anika Dandekar. Politics of Antitrust Enforcement. (Lakoff Award) (On Canvas modules page)
  - Abbey Reuter. Tanks and Ticker Tape. (One of two DeWitt-Higgs Awards) (On Canvas modules page)
  - Skim others according to interest on [Dept Honors page](https://polisci.ucsd.edu/undergrad/departmental-honors-and-pi-sigma-alpha/departmental-honors.html)Links to an external site.

- *In class exercise: Be prepared to summarize a past thesis in two or three sentences; pay attention to the question, independent and dependent variables, the argument that links them, and the evidence presented to support it.*

October 6: Independent and Dependent Variables (Roberts)

- Read Chapters 3 and 4 in Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*
Assignment #1 Due on 10/5 (noon)

- *In class exercise: Be prepared to summarize other students’ summaries in two or three sentences*

October 13: Library Session: Primary and Secondary Sources (Annelise Sklar)

- Reference librarian Annelise Sklar will give a tutorial on electronic and library research resources. Class will meet at noon (usual time); further information will be posted on Canvas and emailed to you several days in advance.
- Read Chapters 5 and 6 in Booth, Colomb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*
- **Assignment #2 due on 10/12 (noon)**
- *In class exercise: Four sentence reconstructions of short articles*

October 20: Developing an Argument (Roeder)

- Read Chapters 7 and 8 in Booth, et al., *The Craft of Research*.
- **Assignment #3 Due on 10/19 (noon)**
- For next week, bring in (1) a dataset that you think can start providing some answers, and (if possible) (2) a graph/figure that motivates your puzzle

October 27: Research Design (Roberts)

- Read Chapters 9 and 10 in Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*.
- **Assignment #4 Due on 10/28 (noon): three-page literature review*

November 3: Using Evidence (Roeder)

November 10: Writing Workshop (TBD)

- Read Chapter 12-14 in Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*.
- **Assignment #5 Due on 11/9 (noon): Three-to-five page research design***

November 17: Presentation of Research Designs and Preliminary Evidence

- In-class reports on research design and preliminary research findings using slides.

November 24: Thanksgiving, NO CLASS

- **Assignment #6 Due on 11/23 (noon): Revised research design***
December 1: Looking toward Winter quarter: Time Management Workshop by the Academic Achievement Hub

- **Assignment #7 Due on 11/30 (noon):** Submission of Introductory chapter (question, literature review, and research design). This draft chapter should be between 10 and 20 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.

**PS 191B Winter Quarter**

We will hold two class sessions during the winter quarters, exact dates TBD.

- One session will be in early January. This will provide students a chance to present their progress to date.
- A second session will be in late January/early February. This will be a second writing workshop, focusing on editing and polishing. You will be expected to have a (nearly) complete first draft of your thesis by this date.