

POLITICAL SCIENCE 499 – Section 1

SENIOR THESIS

Fall, 2016

INFORMATION

COURSE: Meetings as needed throughout semester, and dates listed in syllabus
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Mikel Norris
OFFICE: Brittain Hall #341
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:30am – 1:30pm, and by appointment
E-MAIL & PHONE: mnorris1@coastal.edu / (843) 349-4033

INTRODUCTION

Catalog Description

POLI 499 Senior Thesis (3) A course designed both to assess and improve research skills, writing ability, and general mastery of the field of politics. Under the close supervision of a member of the department, students will review primary and secondary source materials and write one 25-page thesis of graduate school quality.

Senior Thesis Description

The thesis is a chance for students to demonstrate their ability to conduct original research and write an original paper. The overarching goal I have as an instructor for student attempting to write a thesis is to assist the student in learning – and following through on – the several steps in the research and writing process, beginning with the development of a research question through the final revision process of a completed draft of the thesis. Ideally, this will give the student a chance to clearly demonstrate the development of research and writing skills taught in other political science courses (POLI 200, for example). In the end, I want the student to produce an original, professional, and polished piece of research. While not required, I would love to see students present the research conducted for their thesis at the Coastal Carolina University Undergraduate Competition, a political science conference, or both.

Course Objectives

1. Introduce students to the several steps involved in process of conducting an original research project.
2. Critically analyze a body of literature and demonstrate how their original research fits within that body of literature.
3. Follow through on a well-developed research design that will result in the student being able to write an original research paper.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the several steps necessary to follow in order to complete an original research project.

2. Demonstrate a critical and analytical understanding of the theoretical literature on the student's topic of interest
3. Be able to complete a graduate-level quality paper on the topic of interest.

REQUIRED TEXTS and SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

There are no assigned materials for this course. The student will be required to find the materials necessary to write their research paper on their own, although the professor will assist in teaching the student to use certain library resources, as well as assist in finding materials that may be hard to locate. Any materials that need to be shared with the student may be shared on Moodle, via email, or via hard copy.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for this course are listed below:

- **PROGRESS ASSIGNMENTS:** These assignments will be worth **30%** of your final grade. These assignments are designed to insure students are working on their thesis over the semester.
- **THESIS:** The thesis will be worth **70%** of your final grade. Further instructions as to what will be required for your thesis will be distributed later.

A total of 200 points can be earned in this class. You will earn points as follows:

- Progress Assignments: 60 points (total)
- Thesis: 140 points

Your grade will be based on the following calculations:

- A (90% - 100%) = 180-200 points
- B+ (88% - 89.9%) = 176-179 points
- B (80% - 87.9%) = 160-175 points
- C+ (78% - 79.9%) = 156-159 points
- C (70% - 77.9%) = 140-155 points
- D+ (68% - 69.9%) = 136-139 points
- D (60% - 67.9%) = 120-135 points
- F (0% - 59.9%) = 119 points or less

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend all formal and informal meetings related to thesis preparation. This includes, but is not limited to, weekly meetings with the professor. Failure to make these meetings

will result in points taken off of the student's final grade. This determination will be based on the frequency and egregiousness of offense, and will be made at the discretion of the professor.

LATE & MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

No late assignments will be tolerated. Assignments not turned in on time will be given a **zero grade**. There will be no exceptions. If a student cannot hand in a hard copy of an assignment on the due date they can email me a copy of the assignment before the due date **as long as I am notified beforehand**.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating and/or plagiarism are wrong and I do not like it. It is unfair to other students. Furthermore, it reflects very poorly on your character. Cheating and/or plagiarism carry with it a severe penalty, and may even lead to expulsion from the university. **DON'T DO IT**. It is wrong and will not be tolerated. Instances of plagiarism will be sent to academic affairs. The penalty I will ask the Academic Integrity Committee will be determined by the nature of the offense. Typically, I would request an **Fx** if a student is caught plagiarizing. However, due to the nature and importance of this assignment for the student **and for the University**, I may ask for an even stiffer penalty (namely, suspension or dismissal from the university) based on the egregiousness of the offense. Since the nature of the course requires close contact between thesis writer and advisor, there is absolutely no need for a student to plagiarize, since as your advisor I consider it my responsibility to teach you the ins and outs of citing material properly.

Coastal Carolina University operates under a Code of Student Conduct, which governs both academic and social conduct. The Code of Student Conduct may be reviewed here:

<http://www.coastal.edu/conduct/documents/codeofconduct.pdf>

Per the Code of Student Conduct, all students at Coastal Carolina pledge to oppose all instances of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is listed as the first form of prohibited conduct in the Code of Conduct. This should make abundantly clear the importance of not engaging in this type of activity. Students may talk to me privately if they have any questions or concerns involving cheating and plagiarism.

ACCOMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I am committed to making all necessary accommodations for students with verified disabilities. Students with disabilities are urged to contact the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services (843-349-2503) to learn more about the rights and responsibilities of disabled students attending Coastal Carolina University.

COURSE SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1 (August 22 – August 26)

- **Research Question(s)** due Friday, August 26th
- **Annotated Bibliography** due Friday, August 26th
- **These assignments are given with the understanding that the student will have worked on and – ideally – have completed the assignments over the summer**

WEEK 2 (August 29th – September 2nd)

- I will be attending the American Political Science Association annual meeting September 1 – 4, and will not be on campus.
- **Theory and Hypotheses** due Friday, September 2nd

WEEK 3 (September 5th – September 9th)

- Required discussion with professor: Friday, September 9th
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WEEK 4 (September 12th – September 16th)

- Required discussion with professor: Friday, September 16th
- Analysis of weaknesses and problems encountered in writing thesis due Friday, September 16th

WEEK 5 (September 19th – September 23rd)

- **Research Design:** due Friday, September 23rd

WEEK 6 (September 26th – September 30th)

- Required discussion with professor: Friday, September 30th
- **Detailed Thesis Outline** due Friday, September 30th

WEEK 7 (October 3rd – October 7th)

- **NO MEETING OCTOBER 7th: Student Holiday**

WEEK 8 (October 10th – October 14th)

- **First Rough Draft** due Friday, October 14th

WEEK 9 (October 17th – October 21st)

- Required discussion with professor: Friday, October 21st

WEEK 10 (October 24th – October 28th)

- Required discussion with professor: Friday, October 28th

WEEK 11 (October 31st – November 4th)

- **Second Rough Draft** due Friday, November 4th

WEEK 12 (November 7th – November 11th)

- Required discussion with professor: Friday, November 11th

WEEK 13 (November 14th – November 18th)

- Required meeting with professor: Friday, November 18th

NOVEMBER 21st thru NOVEMBER 25th: THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASSES)

WEEK 14 (November 28th – November 30th)

- Required meeting with professor, Wednesday, November 30th

THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE THESIS WILL BE DUE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2nd.

*******THE PROFESSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER. ANY CHANGES WILL BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS BEFOREHAND*******