

PSCI 499A: Special Honours Essay

Fall, 2016

HH 138, Fridays 2:30-5:20

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Office Location: Hagey Hall 318

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-2pm (or by appointment)

Course Description: this course is intended to support students in the process of writing their Special Honours Essay. The objective is to tailor the functioning of the class to the research steps, writing requirements, and academic interests of its participants. Structured as a series of bi-monthly (semi-regular) workshops, students will lead the discussions and presentations of each meeting. By the end of PSCI 499A, students will be fully prepared to write their essay the following term (PSCI 499B).

Recommended books have been suggested to help with the research and writing process but there are no assigned readings as there would be in a traditional course. Instead, each workshop will consist of a brief overview of the topic/issue at hand by the instructor, followed by formal/informal presentations by participants on the written work they produced for that workshop. Students should circulate their written work via Learn several days prior to the workshop (see p. 4 more detail).

Participants are expected to read each other's work in advance and come prepared to comment constructively on this work. Brainstorming sessions may follow the individual presentations and discussion. In this sense, attendance and participation are a must for this course.

Students wishing to engage in alternative forms of research method and theory are able to do so upon agreement by the instructor (as early as possible in the term), however they will also be required to demonstrate an understanding of the conventional research approach and tradition in the discipline of Political Science.

Pre-Requisites: Level at least 4A Honours Political Science students only.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and be familiar with the central elements of a complete major research proposal
 - Be familiar with the required main components of a research proposal and be able to assess a research proposal against these standard criteria
- Design a major research project

- Conceptualize a major research undertaking, write a research proposal, understand the process of research design

University Regulations:

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [Student Discipline](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [Student Petitions](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>. In addition, consult [Student Grievances](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes) <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes> for the Faculty of Arts’ grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [Student Appeals](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72>.

Academic Integrity website (Arts): [Academic Integrity](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): [Academic Integrity Office](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/)

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Texts:

Berg, B. and Lune, H. *Qualitative Methods for the Social Sciences*. 8th edition. Pearson: USA. 2014. (Recommended)

Buckley, J. *Fit to Print: the Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing*. 8th edition. Nelson: Toronto. 2012. (Recommended)

Course Requirements:

Assignments:

Assignment #1:

Research topic

Title, subject, annotated bibliography

Assignment #2:

Essay outline

Research questions, hypotheses/anticipated arguments, working outline

Assignment #3:

Evidence and data collection

Data collection strategy, anticipated application of findings to research questions, revised working outline (and if not revised, indicate why not)

Assignment #4:

Theoretical framework

Theory and related literature review, theoretical application

Assignment #5:

Full written proposal

Combine assignments #1-4 into a single coherent, full and well-written special honours essay proposal

Note: assignments #1-4 should be approximately 2-3 pages each, assignment #5 should be approximately 8 pages (or no more than 4,000 words).

Grading

499A 499B
30% 70%

499A

Participation, commentary, interaction, attendance: 5%

Assignments #1-5: 5% each (25%)

Note: attendance is required to earn a mark for that week's workshop assignment.

Late Policy:

Submissions in 499A are organized in a series of steps and rely upon being completed in a particular order and must be submitted on time; written assignments must be accompanied by regular attendance/participation in each workshop. If an assignment is submitted late, the student will not receive a grade for that assignment but it may be used towards the final submission (499A assignment #5 and 499B essay).

Policy About Collaborative Work:

All written work must be sole authored.

Schedule:

Note: exact details about class meeting location, time, dates, to be discussed on September 9th. The schedule below may be subject to change.

Week 1 (September 9)

Introduction: overview of assignments and organization of the course.

Week 2 (September 16)

Note: Assignment #1 due 1 day prior (Thursday September 15, 2:30pm).

Week 3 (September 23)

Note: Assignment #2 due 3 days prior (Tuesday September 20, 2:30pm).

Week 4 (November 4)

Note: Assignment #3 due 4 days prior (Tuesday November 1, 2:30pm).

Week 5 (November 18)

Note: Assignment #4 due 4 days prior (Tuesday November 15, 2:30pm).

Week 6 (November 25)

Note: Assignment #5 due 4 days prior (Tuesday November 21, 2:30pm).

Schedule for 499B Winter 2016: TBD.