POS 4972: Honors Thesis in Political Science

Instructor: Mirya R. Holman

Political Science 3323

3 credit hours

Spring 2015 SO 377

T/Th 12:30-1:50pm Email: mholman5@fau.edu

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-11:00am; 12:20-2pm

**Pre-requisites**: You must have been admitted to the Political Science Honors Program to enroll in this course. You must have already taken and passed POS 2041 Government of the USA, CPO 3003 Comparative Politics, and POS 3703 Research Methods to enroll in this course. You must also have passed POS 4304: Honors Research Seminar with a grade of an A- or better to take this course.

*Course Description*: The purpose of this seminar is to guide students in writing their honors theses in Political Science. Writing your thesis in conjunction with this seminar will help you keep your research on track and will provide opportunities for evaluation and feedback. You will also defend your thesis as a part of this course.

This seminar will evaluate your abilities to do independent research using the concepts and tools of political analysis. Your principal assignment is to undertake a research project and to produce and present a senior thesis. I expect that the papers will be well written and organized, supported by appropriate data and evidence, and reveal a command of political science tools and concepts that you have acquired in the course of your political science major and the honors in the major program.

The capstone requirements for honors-in-the-major programs are fulfilled by requiring students to complete the Honors Thesis. The Honors Thesis component of the honors program meets the *Honors Curriculum Manual* requirements. The following criteria will be used to determine whether a thesis meets the standard of honors-level enrichment of the undergraduate experience. First, the thesis must use an appropriate method of inquiry. Second, the thesis must be an appropriate length for the subject of the research paper or project. Third, the thesis will require in-depth research on a topic rather than a general survey or overview of an issue. Fourth, the thesis will be subject to multi-stage review and the supervising faculty member will provide advice and feedback at various stages of the research project. Fifth, the thesis will demonstrate significantly greater originality than is required for a research paper or project in other political science courses. Originality will be evaluated by the methods of research, whether the thesis gathered original data, whether it used original sources, the substantive contribution to the state of knowledge in the discipline, and the extent of the analysis. The thesis will be supervised by a faculty member; approved by the faculty member; and presented and defended at a departmental research presentation. Students are also encouraged to submit their thesis for presentation at a university level research presentation day, and if the thesis is presented the student is not required to present to the department.

During the spring semester of his/her senior year, each student must arrange regular consultations with his/her thesis supervisor to develop the senior thesis from the initial proposal to its final presentation. Guided by the thesis supervisor, each student must design a study or creative project that presents opportunities to experience rich and significant intellectual challenges. The project may propose hypotheses, review relevant literatures, conduct research, perform analyses, test and measure results, draw conclusions, and so on, as the thesis supervisor deems suitable. The senior thesis must synthesize knowledge and skills acquired over the course of the student’s undergraduate career. It must produce a substantive piece of work that reflects the student’s interests and expertise and meet established standards of excellence within the thesis supervisor’s discipline.

All elements of the thesis project, as designed by the student in consultation with the thesis supervisor, must be completed before the end of the spring semester of the student’s senior year. When the supervisor deems a senior thesis complete and of high quality, the student must submit the finished project to the department.

*Readings*: All of the readings you will do over the next semester will relate to the development of your thesis, as assigned by Dr. Holman, your advisor, or yourself.

**Course Assignments:** This course is designed to assist you with developing your senior thesis. As such, deadlines are used to motivate you towards completion of elements of your senior thesis. Therefore, you will:

1. Turn in two drafts of your thesis and revise your thesis according to comments from your advisor and Dr. Holman
2. Meet regularly with your faculty advisor and Dr. Holman
3. Attend the Undergraduate Research Symposium at FAU on March 28th. It is also highly recommended that you submit the thesis for presentation at the Symposium!
4. Present and defend your research to your peers and the Political Science faculty at the Political Science research day.
5. **Turn in your thesis.**

**You must complete all of these to Dr. Holman and your advisor’s specifications to pass this class.**

The grades will be assigned based on the following breakdown: 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+; 63-66% = D; 60-62% = D-; below 60% = F. **Please note that you must receive an A- or better in this course to graduate with Political Science Honors. Students who receive a passing grade below A- will receive credit for a Directed Independent Study.**

**Disabilities:** In compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),* students who require special accommodation due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities. In Boca Raton, the OSD office can be found at SU 133 or contacted via 561-297-3880. If you require a special accommodation, please make an appointment to discuss the accommodation with me.

**Honor Code Violations:** Students at FAU are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is a breach of these standards, as it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education where no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Harsh penalties – including failing this class or being removed from the university – are associated with academic dishonesty. Please consult University Regulation 4.001 at <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>

 for more information.

**Course Schedule:**

6-Jan-14 – Initial Meeting. Discuss research & writing plan for semester

14-Jan-14 – Check in with advisor and Dr. Holman. Progress report on research due.

20-Jan-14 – Check in with Dr. Holman. Meet as necessary.

27-Jan-14 – Check in with Dr. Holman. Meet as necessary.

3-Feb-14 – Check in with advisor and Dr. Holman. Progress report on research due.

10-Feb-14 – Check in with Dr. Holman. Meet as necessary.

17-Feb-14 – Check in with Dr. Holman. Meet as necessary.

23-Feb-14 – Check in with advisor and Dr. Holman. Progress report on research due.

3-Mar-14 – No Class – Spring Break

**8-Mar-2014 – FPSA in St. Augustine. All students can attend if interested.**

10-Mar-14 - Check in with advisor and Dr. Holman. Progress report on research due.

17-Mar-14 – Rough Drafts due to Dr. Holman and Faculty Advisor by 5pm.

24-Mar-14 – Check in with advisor and Dr. Holman. Progress report on research due.

**28-Mar-14- Undergraduate Research Day. All students required to attend.**

31-Mar-14 – No Class, Dr. Holman will be at the Midwest Political Science Association Meeting

7-Apr-14 – Second draft due to Dr. Holman and Faculty Advisor by 5pm.

14-Apr-14 – Check in with advisor and Dr. Holman. Progress report on research due.

Week of 21-Apr-14 – **Undergraduate Research Day Presentations from 2 to 5pm in front of all Political Science Faculty. Exact date and time TBD**

30-April-14: Final Thesis Due by 1:15pm to Dr. Holman and Faculty Advisor.