DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
SENIOR SEMINAR (POLI 497)
2007-08 SCHEDULE

What follows is the timetable that will provide structure for your individual projects as well as the group meetings for the Politics Department Senior Seminar. During the fall semester, in addition to today, we will meet seven times—the exact dates are shown below. The meetings are scheduled for either Monday or Wednesday afternoon from 2:10 to 4:00 p.m., depending upon your scheduled day for the class meeting. In addition to Jay Barth, either Ian King or Daniel Whelan will participate in the seminar (each will take one of the two days). Most importantly, these meetings will serve as a forum in which we, as a group, will be able to discuss the progress—and the problems—of individuals in completing their independent research projects. The individual projects will also allow us as a group to discuss the process that is “political analysis”—both its strengths and weaknesses—more generally. Students' active participation in the seminar is crucial to the success of this endeavor. That participation will make up a significant component of the grade that the student receives for the course (a grade which may well be different from the comprehensive examination grade).

In addition to the group meetings, students must stay in regular contact with the professors in the department (especially the professor or professors with whom they are working most closely) throughout this process. Ongoing communication is crucial to the successful completion of this thesis and it is students' responsibility to do their part in providing information about the way in which their projects are progressing. Therefore, in the weeks when the seminar does not meet as a group, individual appointments will be set with Jay Barth so that the necessary degree of communication can be maintained and deadlines can be established and met by individual students.

Just after the start of the spring semester, students will meet with the two faculty members with whom they have been working most closely so that detailed attention can be given to each project as the student works on any rewriting of the initial draft. Deadlines for completing different parts of the project are laid out in the attached schedule. The failure of a student to meet any deadline will result in a mandatory reduction in his/her final grade for the seminar!

The basic timetable for the research project has been established with the annual meeting of the National Conference for Undergraduate Research in mind. This academic year, the NCUR meeting will be held April 10-12th, 2008, at Salisbury University in Salisbury, Maryland. In order for you to present your research paper at NCUR, you will need to submit a brief, very concrete proposal
describing your project by late November—a few weeks before the end of the fall semester. This is also the approximate deadline for proposals to be sent in for the annual meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association which generally occurs in February. The organizers of these meetings will examine the proposals sent in by potential participants and determine which papers fit into the conference schedule. While participation at NCUR or the ArkPSA is not a requirement for the course credit, you are required to submit a proposal to participate in one of those non-Hendrix conferences and participate if the proposal is accepted. In addition, if you wish to receive Odyssey UR credit for the course you must do a public presentation of some sort of your project. We will provide an on-campus venue for such presentations if the student does not participate in NCUR or ArkPSA.

Students who successfully complete the Senior Seminar also become eligible for Writing Level II credit. However, remember that a grade of C or above much be achieved to receive that credit in a course.

As you will see, a full draft of the seminar paper is due at the end of this semester. There will be an opportunity for revisions to this draft in the first weeks of the spring semester. The absolute deadline for final draft of the papers is Thursday, March 6, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. Assuming that your participation in the seminar and the paper you have written are of satisfactory quality, you will be finished with your comprehensive examination requirements and you will have a comparatively relaxed remainder of the spring semester! If your paper is not turned in by the deadline or you receive a failing grade on the paper, however, you will be required to take an additional written comprehensive exam (before graduating) in addition to turning in the research paper to gain credit for POLI 497. There is absolutely no budging on this ultimate deadline!!!!
FALL SEMESTER

Wednesday, August 22: OVERVIEW OF THE SEMINAR EXPERIENCE AHEAD and INFORMATION SESSION FOR GRADUATION AS A POLITICS MAJOR

Week of September 10 Meetings:
Each student should come to this meeting with copies of a one-page overview of his/her project for all seminar participants, focusing on its relevance, its link to previous literature in the field, the hypothes(es) being testing, and the general methodology through that will occur in the work. [If you need copies made, feel free to get Robin Hartwick to make these copies in advance of the seminar meeting.]

At this meeting we will establish the shape of each student’s research design proposal that has previously been completed. For this meeting, each student will have written a 2-3 page critique of another student’s proposal (with copies made for the student and for the professors) which will serve as a focus for the discussions. The critique should deal with questions such as: What are the strengths of the design? In what areas might the design be improved? What obstacles to completing the research by the deadline do you see?

Week of September 17 Meeting:
This will be a brainstorming session about the literature that should be part of an adequate literature review for particular projects.

Week of October 1 Meeting:
A final literature review for your project should be completed and it will be discussed. It is hoped that you have taken advantage of the summer months and the early part of the fall term to read literature that you have identified as important for your topic.

NOTE: Please give a copy of your lit review to Robin Hartwick in the Social Science Area office by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 27th (for Monday students) and by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 1st (for Wednesday students). She will make copies for all of the seminar participants that you will be able to pick up from her on Friday or Tuesday, respectively. Again, come to the meeting having read all of the other students’ literature reviews and prepared to offer useful critiques to your colleagues!

Week of October 15 Meeting:
This meeting will focus on data collection issues. What problems are you having locating data? What alterations in your original research plan are these difficulties necessitating? You should also be working towards writing a conference proposal, samples of which will be on reserve in the library. Please be consulting faculty members in addition to Dr. Barth along the way!

**Week of October 22 Meeting:**

Your conference proposal abstract is due at this meeting. Group members will respond to the proposals, offering suggestions for final improvements before the proposals are submitted. Please submit the abstract in accordance with the schedule laid out for the October 2 Meeting above.

**Week of October 29 Meeting:**

Students will bring a calendar with deadlines for the specific tasks that must be completed on their project in advance of the completion of the draft of the thesis at the end of the semester.

**END OF FALL SEMESTER:** A complete draft of the project will be turned in at this time. This draft is due no later than noon on Wednesday, December 12th.

**Thursday, March 6:**

Final paper is due. Please turn in at lease one hard copy to either Dr. King or Dr. Whelan by 5:00 on that day. (Did I mention that there are NO exceptions to this deadline?)

**April:**

A social event to celebrate the completion of your work and the imminent graduation!