

Course Title: Bachelor Seminar

Code: P-351
Term: Winter 2017
ECTS credits: 6
Lessons per week: 90 + 90 min
Language: English
Instructor: Linda M. Steyne, PhD
Form of study: seminar

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Moodle: TBA

Prerequisites

- Successful completion of W-226 (Academic Writing 4 – Writing on Politics)
- Bachelor thesis topic approved by thesis advisor and the BISLA Scientific Council

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, a student is expected to be able to

- Write an acceptable academic paper of longer than 15 pages
- Do original, independent research
- Relate their research topic to the wider social, cultural, political, and historical context
- Formulate research questions and hypotheses
- Find, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary sources and data
- Plan, execute, and process findings from fieldwork and research
- Format academic papers and presentations appropriately
- Understand the process of choosing and applying for a master of arts program or job, and prepare the basic requirements for applying to such

Contents

The Bachelor Thesis Seminar provides the space and opportunity to do scientific research, and write a longer and more in-depth academic paper. Besides the technical aspects of writing the bachelor thesis, this course also works on developing critical thinking skills, comparative analysis, and

independent research. Also covered are the requirements for application to master of arts programs and various positions in the workplace.

The course takes form of practical workshops, with students gradually putting together their bachelor thesis proposal and two chapters of the bachelor thesis via short assignments done throughout. Students participate in various exercises and group work, as well as present their preliminary findings and work to the others. Students provide feedback to each other, evaluating written work and presentations.

Assessment Criteria

25% Short, weekly written assignments (250-400 words)

Almost all these written assignments become a part of the student's bachelor thesis proposal and even the final thesis. Since these assignment texts are used in class, **they are all compulsory**. Not doing even one of these assignments will not only negatively affect a student's grade but also the actual running of the class.

10% Active participation in class – being prepared for class by doing the required reading, and being involved in the activities and peer review sessions.

25% Bachelor Thesis Proposal

25% Two (2) Bachelor Thesis chapters (drafts) – These chapters are part of the final project which each student works on from the first day of the semester. They will be assessed on their use of sources, arguments, structures, and style.

15% Bachelor Thesis Presentation – This is assessed on both its written form and its presentation in front of peers.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to BISLA's Disciplinary Policy. Plagiarized work receives an Fx.

NOTE: Assignments must be submitted on time via MOODLE. Late work may be submitted via email but will be penalized as follows:

- 10% up to 24 hours late
- 20% from 25 to 72 hours late
- 50% from 73 hours to one week late
- Work over a week late will receive 0% but will receive feedback.

Assessment also takes into account how (and IF) students work with their thesis supervisors, who also have access to students' work via MOODLE.

Grading Scale (%)

A – excellent:	100-93%
B – very good:	92-84%
C – good:	83-74%

D – satisfactory: 73-63%
E – sufficient: 62-51%
Fx – fail: 50-0%

Passing the course assumes that student was not absent from more than 4 lessons.

Required Resources

Baglione, L. 2012. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science. A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: CQ Press.

Johnson, J.B. & Reynolds, H.T. 2012. *Political Science Research Methods*. 7th ed. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: CQ Press.

Silverman, D. 2009. *Ako robiť kvalitatívny výskum*. [Doing Qualitative Research.]. Bratislava: Pegas.

BISLA Guidelines for Bachelor Thesis Writing

APA Formatting and Style Guide: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Additional Readings and Resources

Cooper, S. and Patton, R. (2007). *Writing Logically, Thinking Critically*. New York: Pearson/Longman.

Umberto Eco: *How to Write a Thesis*

Katuščák, D. 2007. *Ako písať záverečné a kvalifikačné práce?* Bratislava: Enigma.

Kirby, S. L., Greaves, L. & Reid, C. 2010. *Experience Research Social Change. Methods Beyond the Mainstream*. Toronto: Toronto Press Inc.

Leonhard, B. H. 2002. *Discoveries in Academic Writing*. Boston, MA: Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Plichtová, J. 2002. *Metódy sociálnej psychológie zblízkaL Kvalitatívne a kvantitatívne skúmanie sociálnych reprezentácií*. Bratislava: Médiá.

Scott, G. M. and Garrison, S.M. 2006. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual, 5th ed*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Single, P.B. (2010) *Demystifying Dissertation Writing: Streamlined Process from Choice of Topic to Final Text*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus.

Course Schedule (Subject to change – students will be informed)

Week	Day	Class Date	Content & Assignments
Week 1	Tuesday	12-Sep	Intro, expectations, Q&A
	Thursday	14-Sep	Motivational talk and encouraging intellectual skills
Assignment - READ:			C.W. Mills: On Intellectual Craftsmanship
Due Tues, Sept 19			Form: Submitting BA Thesis
Week 2	Tuesday	19-Sep	How to start your research
			Organization and documentation
			Reorganization, layering, refocusing (C.W.M.)
			KFP System (keep, file, protect)
			Finding a research question: from your field of interest thru the possible research areas to the research question
Due Tuesday, Sept 26			Library Tour Task
	Thursday	21-Sep	No Class (conference)
Week 3	Tuesday	26-Sep	Library Tour Task debrief
			Peer-review ground rules
			Active reading
			The art of keeping citations
			Working with literature/sources
			Accessible data and texts online
			Preparing for your annotated bibliography
Assignment - WRITE:			from Sourcework
Assignment - READ:			Baglione - Ch 1 & 2
			The Literature Review, methodology, procedure
	Thursday	28-Sep	How much time to spend on describing the methodology?
			Why a research journal is a good idea
			How many sources are enough?
			When is the research 'finished'?
			What's the point of a literature review in a BA thesis?
			What should be in it?
			Outlining the literature review

Week	Day	Class Date	Content & Assignments
Assignment - READ:		Baglione - Ch 3: Learning the Proper Citation Forms, Finding the Scholarly Debate, and Summarizing and Classifying Arguments	
Due Tues, Oct 3			Annotated bibliography
Week 4	Tuesday	3-Oct	Annotated bibliography - feedback
			Discussion of the reading
Assignment - ReWrite:		Annotated bibliography as needed	
	Thursday	5-Oct	Building a Theory: Themes, key concepts, and how they relate
			Tony Buzan and the Concept Map
			How to get from the literature review to a clear research question
			How to keep the logic consistent
			What are the characteristics of qualitative theory?
			What is mind mapping and how can it be used to build a theory?
			How to build a conceptual map of your bachelor thesis
Due Tues, Oct 10			Literature Review
Assignment - READ:		Baglione - Ch 4: Making Sense of the Scholarly Answer to Your Research Question: Writing the Literature Review	
Recommended Reading:		Kirby, et. al. : Literature Review	
Week 5	Tuesday	10-Oct	Literature Review - Feedback
	Thursday	12-Oct	Hypothesis and Outline: detailed map of your thesis
			How to get from a theoretical model to a concrete research project?
			What are the characteristics of a verifiable hypothesis?
			How should your outline and your thesis be laid out (structure)?

Week	Day	Class Date	Content & Assignments
Assignment - READ:			Silverman - Ch 5 & 6
Recommended Reading:			Buzan: Use Your Head!
Week 6	Tuesday	17-Oct	The Concept Map
	Thursday	19-Oct	Thesis Introduction
			The Abstract & Intro & Preface - what's the point?
			How do they differ? Length? What's in them?
Assignment - READ:			Baglione - Ch 5 & 6
Due Tues, Oct 24			Hypothesis and Outline
Week 7	Tuesday	24-Oct	Hypothesis and Outline
	Thursday	26-Oct	Individual Consultation - please sign up online
Due Tuesday, Oct 31			Abstract and Introduction
Assignment			Work on your Thesis Proposal, putting all the bits together that you've written thus far in their revised versions:
			Abstract, intro, outline, bibliography, annotated bibliography
Due Sunday, Nov 5			Complete Thesis Proposal
Rdg Wk	Tuesday	31-Oct	READING WEEK
	Thursday	2-Nov	
Week 8	Tuesday	7-Nov	Meet your Supervisor
			Writing Chapter 1
			Processing data
			Research design
			Variables
			Narrative
			Micro- and macro-structure of your thesis
			Outlining Chapter 1

Week	Day	Class Date	Content & Assignments
Assignment - READ:			Baglione - Ch 7
	Thursday	9-Nov	Chapter 1 long outline with references - draft
Week 9	Tuesday	14-Nov	Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis
			Data collection and its analysis
			Fieldwork
			Ethics
			Conclusions from section on research
Assignment - READ:			Baglione - Ch 8
Due Thursday Nov 16			Chapter Outlines
	Thursday	16-Nov	Chapter Outlines - feedback
Week 10	Tuesday	21-Nov	Applying to grad school
			Where and when to submit an application
			What makes a good application
			What's in a CV
			Recommendations
			Statement of Purpose/Personal Statement
			Student Portfolio
Due Thursday, Nov 23			Your CV or Personal Statement
	Thursday	23-Nov	CV or Personal Statement - feedback
Week 11	Tuesday	28-Nov	Formatting and Citations
			Differences between BE and AmE styles
			BISLA House Style
			Technical aspects of writing and submitting your thesis

Week	Day	Class Date	Content & Assignments
Due Thursday, Nov 30			1st draft of oen of your chapters
	Thursday	30-Nov	Bring your NOTEBOOKS!
			Peer review, feedback, debriefing
Week 12	Tuesday	5-Dec	Presenting and Defending your Thesis
			Parts and length, Struture
			The role of the supervisor and the opponent/reviewer
			Tips and tricks
			Practice
Due Thursday, Dec 7			Your 2nd chapter (micro-structure)
	Thursday	7-Dec	2nd Chapter - feedback and peer review
Due Monday, Dec 12			Your presentation (either PPTX or outline)
Week 13	Tuesday	12-Dec	Student Presentations
	Thursday	14-Dec	Student Presentations
Week 14	Tuesday	19-Dec	Student Presentations
	Thursday	21-Dec	Debrief
Due Monday, Dec 31, 2017			Chapter 2 of your thesis