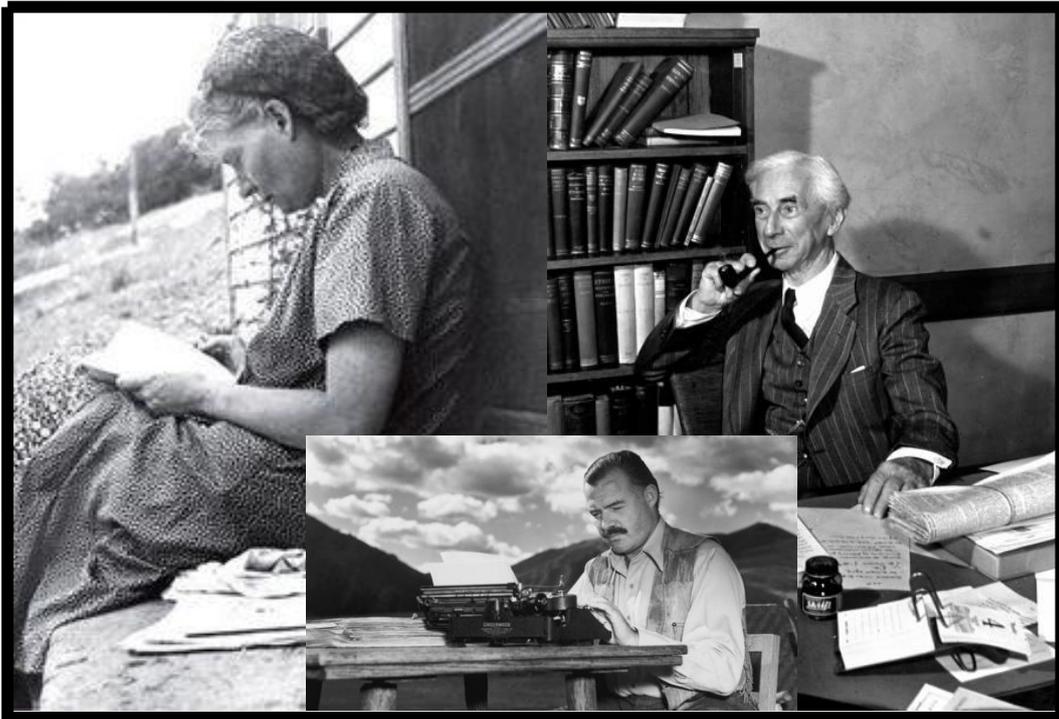


BISLA
Liberal Arts College

BACHELOR THESIS SEMINAR

Code:	P-351
Semester:	Fall 2018
ECTS Credits:	6
Hours/week:	90 + 90 min
Language:	English
Instructor:	Mgr. Dagmar Kusá , PhD
Meeting:	Mon/Wed 10:30 – 12:00 Tatarka Room



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Link: www.bisla.sk/kabinet/moodle

Prerequisites

- Writing on Politics
- Selected topic and advisor approved by the BISLA Academic Council

GOALS

At the end of the semester, you should:

- Have mastered the steps of long form academic writing;
- Be able to conduct independent academic research;
- Be able to place studied topic into a broader social, cultural, historical, political context;
- Know how to formulate a precise research hypothesis;
- Be experienced in acquiring, analyzing, interpreting data;
- Know how to plan, conduct, interpret outputs from field research;
- Be familiar with advanced formatting and citation style requirements;
- Be able to present research in front of an academic audience;
- Know how to approach an application process for graduate school or employment opportunity.

CONTENT

This course offers an opportunity to experience an academic research project and writing of a long-form academic paper from beginning to the end. Besides tackling the technical aspects of bachelor thesis writing, the course will focus on creative processes of research and writing, getting acquainted with methodologies and research techniques, basic software for data interpretation, etc. The course also walks students through the process of graduate studies research and admission.

The course is practically oriented. Through short assignments, the bachelor thesis will slowly come together first in the form of a full thesis proposal, which will be converted into first chapter drafts. At the end of the semester, all students will have at least two full chapters of the bachelor thesis completed. Students will also experience a mock defense of a bachelor thesis. The course has a workshop format, content will get created, analyzed, and edited during the classes, utilizing peer review, brainstorming, mind mapping, free writing, structured writing, and much more.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All written assignments will be incorporated into the Bachelor Thesis Proposal and eventually the text of the bachelor thesis itself. Therefore, it is no possible to skip or delay submission of individual assignments.

- Short written assignments (250- 300 words) (20%) each week.
- Thesis macro structure -- detailed outline of the thesis 10%
- Active participation in class (10%)
Preparation for seminars, reading background materials, taking part in class activities and peer review
- Bachelor Thesis Proposal (25%)
- Two draft thesis chapters 20%

Chapters will be evaluated on the basis of the chapter micro structure, used sources, their incorporation, cooperation with the thesis advisor. Content and style are secondary to the evaluation in this course.

- Mock defense of the thesis (15%).

Plagiarism will automatically result in an Fx.

A final letter grade based upon the percentage of points you earn in this course will be given based on the following scale:

Timeliness is of essence in this course.

Assignments have to be uploaded via MOODLE by the due date. It will not be possible to upload past the deadline and you will incur grade penalty.

Within 24 hours -10%,

1 to 3 days - 20%

4 to 7 days - 50%

More than a week late - 0%

Submission of the Bachelor Thesis Proposal is a condition for the admission towards the Bachelor Thesis defense in June

Grading scale

A – 100-93%,

B – 92-84%,

C – 83-74%,

D – 73-63%,

E – 62-51%,

Fx – 50-0%.

Four or more absences result automatically in Fx

Sources of literature

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: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/printable/560/>

Recommended reading

- Cooper, S. and Patton, R. (2007). *Writing Logically, Thinking Critically*. New York: Pearson/Longman.
- Umberto Eco: *Jak napsat diplomovou práci?*
- 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.

TOPICS and SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Sept 17 and 19

Introduction, overview of the course, division of tasks, expectations

- Intro, expectations, reporting on status quo
- Time frame
- What a good thesis looks like
- "Motivational schpiel"

Recommended reading: **C.W. Mills: *On Intellectual Craftsmanship***

WEEK 2: Sept. 24 and 26

- Research file,
- Organization and documentation,
- Reorganization, layering, re-focusing,
- System KFP -- keep, file, protect
- Active reading
- Citeable notes
- Prep for Annotated Bibliography

WED: work in class

Bring with you Annotated Bibliography from last semester and a FULL BIBLIOGRAPHY of all of the sources you have so far

Peer review

Literature collection, continue working, write in class

WEEK 3: Oct. 1 and 3

Literature review and Methodology

- How detailed must be the methodology section?
- Using the research journal for methodology section
- How many sources are sufficient?
- Integrating sources into text
- When to move on from research to writing?
- What is the purpose of a **literature review**? Which components should it include

- **Outline of lit review**
- How does methodology follow from lit review?
- ...do we really need them in a bachelor thesis?

WED: bring completed Annotated Bibliography (15+ sources)

Start working on the Lit Review - segmenting, outline, free-writing
Use chunks of annotated bibliography, weave into the narrative.
This is the beginning of your theoretical chapter of the thesis

WEEK4: Oct. 8 and 10

**Theory building. Themes, key concepts, relations.
Tony Buzan and mind mapping**

- Circling back from lit review to research question
- Ensuring logical consistency of your work
- What does a sound theoretical chapter look like?
- Using mind mapping to develop theory
- Conceptual mapping

**WED: Continue working on the Literature Review
Consult Literature Review with me, peer review.
Send to your thesis advisor!**

**READ: Lisa Baglione: ch. 4: Making Sense of the Scholarly Answer to Your Research
Question: Writing the Literature Review
Kirby et. al., Literature Review**

WEEK 5: Oct. 15 and 17

**Hypothesis and outline.
Detailed macro structure of the bachelor thesis.**

- How to match a case study with theory and vice versa?
- A testable hypothesis and intro paragraph
- Introduction to the thesis
- Abstract - examples

Conceptual mapping (in class)

BRING NOTEBOOKS

**READ: Silverman: chapters 5 and 6
Recommended : Tony Buzan: Use Your Head!**

WEEK 6: Oct. 22 and 24

First pages of the Thesis: Abstract, Acknowledgments, Preface, Introduction

- What purpose do **Abstract and Intro** serve?
- What goes into which part?
- What length?
- What info should they contain?

WED: bring your final hypothesis and a full thesis outline.

Work on the Thesis Proposal: turning the outline into narrative: overview of the thesis for the Proposal.

READ: **Baglione**: ch. 5 Effectively Distilling your Argument: The Thesis, Model, and Hypothesis

Single: ch. 6: Transforming a Focus Statement Into a One Page Outline

WEEK 7: Oct. 29, Nov. 1

READING WEEK

Complete the Thesis Proposal

Include Abstract, Intro, and Conclusion (anticipated impact) into the final proposal.

Put all parts together in proper template

Revise, edit

Include updated Bibliography

READ: L. Baglione: Ch. 7 Research Design

SUBMIT the PROPOSAL BY SUNDAY

WEEK 8: Nov. 5 and 7

MEETINGS WITH ADVISORS TO REVIEW BTP

First chapter/next chapter

- Data interpretation
- Research Design
- Operationalizing variables
- Narratives
- Microstructure of the chapter

READ: Silverman ch. 8: Výber prípadu

Single: ch. 7: Long Outline with References

WEEK 9: Nov. 12 and 14

Quantitative and qualitative analysis

- Data collection, interpretation, incorporation
- Field research and methods
- Ethical standards
- Level of conclusions

READ: L. Baglioni, ch. 8: Evaluating the Argument...

By Sunday: microstructure on one chapter

WEEK 10: Nov. 19 and 21

Applying to grad school... CV, statement of purpose, building a portfolio

- Researching grad schools
- Putting together a great application
- What should and should not be in a CV?
- Recommendations
- Motivation statement/ Statement of Purpose
- Student Portfolio

WED: bring Curriculum Vitae and/or personal statement

CONSULTATIONS with THESIS ADVISORS!

WEEK 11: Nov. 26 and 28

**MONDAY: Qualitative analysis cont'd
Discourse analysis software and examples
Other per request and need**

WED: CITATION STYLE and FORMATTING

- Formatting the thesis
- British vs. American punctuation and style
- BISLA House Style
- Technical requisites of the thesis: DOING THE LAYOUT IN CLASS

***WED: BRING CHAPTER DRAFT
BRING NOTEBOOKS***

- Peer review
- Feedback, debrief

WEEK 12: Dec. 3 and 5

MON

Work on the microstructure/outline of second chapter

WED

DEFENSE

Components to cover
Structure and length
Thesis advisor and thesis opponent
Tips and tricks
Skills needed

WED: bring microstructure of second chapter

WEEK 13: Dec. 10 and 12

Free-write

MOCK DEFENSE

Submit draft of a second chapter

WEEK 14 Dec 17 and 19

MOCK DEFENSE CONT'D

WEEK 15: January 7

CONSULTATIONS: MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME DURING THIS WEEK