

Political Science 497: Senior Seminar Fall 2018

Time: TTH 1:10–2:25
Location: Baxter 114

Instructor: Matt Wells
Email: wellsm@wabash.edu
Office: Baxter 28
Office Hours: MW 10:00-12:00

Instructor: Ted Masthay
Email: masthayt@wabash.edu
Office: Baxter 127
Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:30

Course Description

This course is the capstone for the Political Science major. Much of it will be dedicated to the development of your senior paper, an original research paper that answers a compelling political science research question. We'll also devote some time to preparation for the comprehensive exam you will take in January 2019 and reflecting on how you might deploy your political science knowledge and skills beyond the classroom.

To be more formal, the goals of the course are for you:

- 1) To become skilled observers of political behavior such that you can discern an important normative or empirical question about power and government;
- 2) To choose an appropriate method and resources to answer that question;
- 3) To present your findings regarding that question as a skillful writer and speaker; and
- 4) To become effective consumers of political information, learning to read and think critically about political science and politics.

Class Requirements and Grades

Most of your course grade (75%!) will be based on the quality of your senior paper work. This includes the final product (due 12/14), obviously, but also the proposal (due 8/23, revision due 9/2), two prior drafts (due 10/19 and 11/26), and a variety of other assignments and activities (see the schedule below for details).

The remaining 25% of your grade will be based on our assessment of your engagement and participation in non-senior-paper course activities. For the most part, these will take the form of in-class assignments and discussions designed to prepare you for the analysis section of the comprehensive exam (in the short term) and applying political science knowledge and skills to “real-world” political events and developments (in the long term).

Required Texts

There are no common readings for you to purchase for PSC 497. Texts for in-class readings will be provided to you free of charge. It is your sole responsibility to acquire texts and other materials for your senior paper, however. This may necessitate some purchases and (more likely) use of Interlibrary Loan, which you can access through the [Lilly Library website](#).

For Your Further Consideration

As always, you are expected to comply with the Gentleman's Rule. Violations, including academic dishonesty and inappropriate decorum, will be handled accordingly.

It is expected that you will check your Wabash email account regularly for course-related messages and that you will respond to them promptly and professionally.

In light of the infrequency of our class meetings, it is expected that you will not miss any of them except in cases of emergency, illness, job/grad school/internship/fellowship interview, or Dean-excused absence. Please make sure to inform us (preferably by email) of any absence in advance (unless a true emergency makes that impossible, in which case you should inform me as soon as it is feasible to do so). Failure to do so will result in a substantial grade penalty.

You are encouraged to use the Writing Center as a resource for your senior paper work. For more information or to schedule an appointment, click [here](#).

Students with disabilities (apparent or invisible) are invited to confidentially discuss their situation with the disability coordinator, Heather Thrush, Associate Dean for Student Engagement and Success. If a student wishes to receive an academic accommodation, his documentation of the disability must be on file with Dean Thrush, who can, in confidence, provide information and guidance. Early notification helps us all work together in the most effective ways. Dean Thrush can be reached in her office (Center Hall 112A), by phone (765-361-6347), or by email (thrushh@wabash.edu).

Weekly Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. You will be informed if it does, and any new instructions will supersede the ones here; otherwise, it is your responsibility to fulfill responsibilities (i.e. show up and/or submit assignments) as stipulated below. Asterisks mark the days we will meet as a full class during the 1:10-2:25 timeslot. These meetings will take place in 114 Baxter unless otherwise indicated.

**Thursday, August 23*

- Senior paper proposals are due on Canvas at 8:00 AM, and we will meet in 114 Baxter Hall to discuss organizational (and possibly other) matters.

Tuesday, August 28 & Thursday, August 30

- No class; instead, we will hold one-on-one meetings during the first half of the week to discuss your senior paper proposals. Please follow the link on Canvas to sign up for a meeting time by 5:00 PM on Friday, August 25.

Sunday, September 2

- Deadline to submit revised proposal on Canvas and sign up for a meeting time.

Tuesday, September 4 & Thursday, September 6

- No class; instead, we'll have one-on-one meetings to finalize your research plans.

**Tuesday, September 11 & *Thursday, September 13*

- Analysis practice. *Thursday, September 13th* is also the deadline to sign up for a meeting time for the next week.

Tuesday, September 18 & Thursday, September 20

- No class; instead, we'll have one-on-one meetings to discuss your research progress.

Tuesday, September 25 & Thursday, September 27

- No class; use the time instead to work on your senior paper research and prepare your progress report, which you should submit on Canvas no later than noon on **Friday, September 28**. That is also the deadline to sign up for a meeting time for the next week.

Tuesday, October 2 & Thursday, October 4

- No class; instead we'll have one-on-one meetings to discuss your progress reports.

Tuesday, October 9

- No class; instead we'll have drop-in office hours for senior paper work.

Thursday, October 11

- No Class

Tuesday, October 16 & Thursday, October 18

- No class; use the time to complete your senior paper draft, which is due on Canvas at noon on **Friday, October 19**.

Tuesday, October 23 & Thursday, October 25

- No class; instead, we'll have small-group meetings to provide feedback on your seminar paper drafts. You will be assigned to a group of about three classmates and a half-hour timeslot. You will be expected to read your groupmates' drafts and provide constructive feedback on them during your assigned meeting time.

**Tuesday, October 30 & *Thursday, November 1*

- Analysis practice. Your revision memo, a brief document describing your plans for revising your senior paper to address peer and instructor feedback, is due at noon on **Friday, November 3**. That is also the deadline to sign up for a meeting time the next week.

Tuesday, November 6 & Thursday, November 8

- No class; instead, we will hold one-on-one meetings to discuss your senior paper revision plans.

**Tuesday, November 13*

- Analysis practice.

Thursday, November 15

- No class; instead we'll have drop-in office hours.

Tuesday, November 20

- No Class

Thursday, November 22

- No Class

Monday, November 26

- A substantially revised draft of your senior paper is due on Canvas at noon.

Tuesday, November 27 & Thursday, November 29 & Tuesday, December 4 & Thursday, December 6

- These final four class meetings will be devoted to presentations of your senior paper research. Presentation times will be assigned, either randomly or thematically. You are expected to attend all four presentation days, and to demonstrate your engagement with your colleagues' work by providing feedback and asking questions after their presentations.

Friday, December 14

- Senior papers are due on Canvas by 12:00 PM.