

PLSC 29800-02  
B.A. Thesis Colloquium in Political Science  
Spring 2015  
Fridays 3:00- 4:50 PM  
Pick 506

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Office Hours: By Appointment

For most students, writing a thesis is their first experience producing an original argument based on their own primary research. The purpose of this colloquium is to learn the process of developing and executing such a project, finding guidance in a text, responding to the direction of a facilitator (me) and your faculty advisor, engaging with the critical comments of your peers, and learning by doing your own original research. The focus this quarter will be the creation and refinement of your research proposal. Many of the sections will be run as a peer workshop, and we will pay special attention to the topic, scope, relevance, and general components of the proposal, and looking ahead, the eventual research thesis.

### **Requirements**

The great benefit of the BA Colloquium is the feedback you will all give to and receive from your peers. To that end, your attendance and participation are incredibly important. Your grade will be based three writing assignments, your in-class participation, and a research proposal for your project, which you will complete as your final assignment this Quarter.

Your grades will be based on the following:

Participation

Assignment 1: Research Question

Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography

Assignment 3: Claim, Evidence, Contribution

Final Assignment: Research Proposal

### **Weekly plan**

4/3/15 Introduction: The purpose of research and approaches to identifying topics and questions

4/10/15 Library session with Sarah Hogan, political science bibliographer

Regenstein Library, room A-11

*Booth, Colomb, and Williams, chaps. 1–2 (Writing for Readers)*

4/17/15 Refining the topic: Topics to questions to problems

*Booth, Colomb, and Williams, chaps. 3–4*

*Introductions from Past Theses*

**Discuss your topic, question, problem and comment on your classmates'**

4/24/15 Discussion of Paper 1: Posing your question

**Assignment 1 (Research Question) due 5:00 PM Thursday, April 16th**  
**Discuss classmates' assignments, writing for your audience, writing and organizing as you go, selecting research methodologies**

5/1/15 Sources: Related literature, secondary sources, and primary sources

*Booth, Colomb, and Williams, chaps. 5–6*

**Assignment 2 (Annotated bibliography) due in class**

**Discuss research design, primary sources, methodological approach, ethics**

5/8/15 **No Class!**

*Literature Review and Analysis sections from sample theses (we will incorporate these into the next week's class discussion)*

5/15/15 Guiding the research: Offering claims/arguments

*Booth, Colomb, and Williams, chaps. 7–8.*

*Proposal Writing Guide (on Chalk Site)*

*Example Research Proposal (on Chalk Site)*

**Discuss arguments, structuring proposals, effective writing**

5/22/15 Supporting the argument: Using reasons and evidence to warrant claims

*Booth, Colomb, and Williams, chaps. 9–11.*

**Assignment 3 (Claim, Evidence, Contribution) due 5/20 11:59PM**

**Discuss arguments, reasoning, and evidence**

5/29/15 Workshop Presentations of Draft Proposals

**Draft Research Proposal due 5/27 11:59 PM**

6/5/15 Reading period/Make-up class earlier this week (?)

6/11/15: **Research Proposal due, 5PM**