

**Advanced Research Seminar
Political Science 691 (Spring 2025)
Tuesday 9:40am-12:40pm (Fine Arts 250)**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm
and by appointment

Overview & Learning Objectives

This seminar is designed primarily to provide guidance for the proposal-writing process. Turning an idea into a research project requires careful and creative thinking, conscious planning, and above all consistent engagement. Over the course of the semester, we will work on idea generation, theory development, effective use of literature, and research design, using deadlines, peer review, and discussions to keep us on track and making steady progress. By the end of the semester, students will have produced a complete draft of their dissertation proposal, as well as a short presentation of their project.

A second goal is to prepare you for teaching your own courses independently. To this end, you will sketch out two semester-length in-person courses: one survey/introductory course in your subfield and one special-topics course of your choice. We will discuss course design, how to choose course materials, assignment design and approaches to feedback, as well as old and new challenges particular to teaching Political Science.

Finally, successfully balancing teaching and research requires preparation and flexibility, as well as meticulous time management. We will focus narrowly on research at the beginning of the semester but shift our attention to teaching in later weeks, while continuing to work on research and writing consistently. The course is designed to help students develop productive routines (or refine existing ones) for a successful transition to tenure-track faculty.

Course Materials

There are no required books for the course. Readings will be available through the Binghamton University library or posted on Brightspace.

In addition to the readings listed on the syllabus, the following books are recommended:

- Deidre N. McCloskey. 2000. *Economical Writing*, 2nd Ed. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa.
- William J. Strunk Jr. [any edition]. *The Elements of Style*.

Course Expectations

Attendance and Class Participation. Full attendance is expected. Active participation is vitally important for the success of the seminar as well as for your final grade.

Assignments. Deadlines for assignment are listed on the syllabus. All assignments should be shared by the deadline with all course participants. We will have a shared Google Drive folder for this purpose.

Late and missed assignment. You are expected to hand in all assignments on time. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day late.

Grading

Your final course grade is calculated as follows:

Participation	20%
Draft dissertation proposal	50% (10% for each of 4 installments, 10% presentation)
Draft syllabus 1 (survey course)	15%
Draft syllabus 2 (special topics course)	15%

How to Get & Stay in Touch

General communication. Messages about the course, changes to the syllabus or deadlines etc. will be communicated through Brightspace ‘Announcements’ and your university email address. Make sure to check that email account and the Brightspace site daily.

Email. My email address is kkleinbe@binghamton.edu. I will respond to email during business hours (Monday through Friday 8am-6pm) and as soon as I can, but you should expect answers to take up to 24 hours even during business hours.

Office hours. Regular office hours will be held Tuesdays 1-3pm and over Zoom by appointment. If the regular office hours do not fit your schedule, if you prefer not to use Zoom, or if you would like to discuss something that might take a bit longer to work out, you can email me to set up a separate appointment.

Disability Accommodation

Students requesting disability-related accommodations should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD). They are the appropriate entity on campus to determine and authorize disability-related accommodations. The office is located in the University Union, Room 119. The office can be reached by phone under 607-777-2686. For students already registered with SSD, please provide your academic accommodation letter as soon as possible so that we can discuss the implementation of your accommodations.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All work submitted in this course must be original work. Sources must be properly cited. Any and all instances of academic dishonesty, including the use of Artificial Intelligence tools without proper attribution, will result in a failing grade (F) for the course.

Preliminary Schedule

Note: I reserve the right to add or change readings & assignments with adequate prior notice.

January 21 – Introduction & Initial Discussion

Bring your notes on the following questions (see my email from January 2, 2025):

Regarding the dissertation proposal:

- Who is your advisor for the dissertation? Who will be your other committee members (if you already know)?
- Reach out to your advisor (if you haven't yet) to find out: (a) What does your advisor expect to see in a dissertation proposal? (b) When are you expected to defend it?
- What are your biggest questions and/or concerns about the dissertation proposal?

Regarding teaching:

- What courses have you already taught (as primary instructor or teaching assistant)?
- What courses do you plan/hope to teach in the future (list as many as you want)
- What are your biggest questions and/or concerns about teaching undergraduate students?

January 28 – The Proposal: What is (the purpose of) a dissertation proposal?

Krathwohl, David R., and Nick L. Smith. 2005. *How to Prepare a Dissertation Proposal*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. Chapters 1-3.

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Assignments:

(1) Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.

(2) Identify & make a short list of literatures to which your dissertation will (or aims to) contribute.

February 4 – The Proposal: Generating Questions & Hypotheses I

Krathwohl, David R., and Nick L. Smith. 2005. *How to Prepare a Dissertation Proposal*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. Chapter 4.

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 & 3.

McGuire, William J. 1997. "Creative Hypothesis Generating in Psychology: Some Useful Heuristics." *Annual Review of Psychology* 48: 1-30.

February 11 – The Proposal: Generating Questions & Hypotheses II

No new reading

Assignments:

(1) Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.

(2) Revisit & refine list of literatures to which your dissertation will (or aims to) contribute.

February 18 – Teaching: Initial Thoughts on Teaching Political Science in 2025

Burmila, Edward M. 2010. “Graduate Students as Independent Instructors: Seven Things to Know about Teaching Your Own Course while in Graduate School.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43(3): 805-807.

Rosen, Amanda M. 2024. *Teaching Political Science: A Practical Guide for Instructors*. Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 2 (skim chapter 1). [available online through the Binghamton University library]

Isaacs, Emily J. 2024. “It’s Time to Start Teaching Your Students How to Be a Student.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 19, 2024).

Pick **one** of the following two:

Stripling, Jack. 2024. “Is Reading Over for Gen Z?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 10, 2024).

Sheinerman, Marie-Rose. 2024. “College Students Not Reading Is an Issue, So Teachers Are Adjusting How Classes Look.” *Teen Vogue* (September 18, 2024).

Deadline: Compose & share a draft (6-8 pages) of your research question/theory section by February 21

February 25 – The Proposal: Feedback Session & Using Literature Appropriately and Effectively

Jackson, Christopher, and Andrew Q. Philips. 2024. “Synthesize This: Meta-Analysis as a Dissertation Tool.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57(1): 70-75.

Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. “Doing a Literature Review.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127-132.

Nolan, Deborah, and Sara Stoudt. 2020. “Reading to Write.” *Significance* 17(6): 34-37.

Assignments:

(1) Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.

(2) For each distinct literature you have identified as relevant for your dissertation, compile a list (just a list, not a review) of 1-2 foundational texts & 2-3 prominent recent contributions (where possible).

March 4 – No Class Meeting (writing session)

Deadline: Compose & share a draft (6-8 pages) of your literature review by March 16

March 18 – The Proposal: Feedback Session

No new reading

March 25 – The Proposal: Research Designs

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4 & 5.

Assignment:

- (1) Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.
- (2) Make a short list of distinct, plausible research design options for your topic.

April 1 – Teaching: Course Designs

Rosen, Amanda M. 2024. *Teaching Political Science: A Practical Guide for Instructors*. Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 3. [available online through the Binghamton University library]

Revisit readings from February 11 (on generating questions & hypotheses)

Assignments:

- (1) Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.
- (2) Identify 2-3 existing syllabi related to the topic of the special topics course you plan to teach. If possible, aim for a mix of R1-schools and smaller liberal arts colleges.
- (3) Identify 2-3 textbooks that would be appropriate (or are widely used) in the survey/introduction course you plan to teach.

April 8 – Teaching: Designing Assignments & Giving Feedback

Rosen, Amanda M. 2024. *Teaching Political Science: A Practical Guide for Instructors*. Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 4, 5, 6, 7 (skim as needed). [available online through the Binghamton University library]

Assignments: (1) Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.

- (2) Compile 2 assignments (with short, one-paragraph descriptions) each for the survey/introduction course and the special topics course you plan to teach. Feel free to draw on the existing syllabi you collected for last week.

Deadline: Compose & share a draft (6-8 pages) of your research design section by April 13

April 15 – The Proposal: Feedback Session & Data/Data Management

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6.

April 29 – Teaching: Policies & Challenges

Rosen, Amanda M. 2024. *Teaching Political Science: A Practical Guide for Instructors*. Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 8 & 9. [available online through the Binghamton University library]

Assignments:

- (1) *Write 2-3 pages on your potential dissertation topic.*
- (2) *Look up policies and requirements relevant for undergraduate courses at Binghamton University.*

May 6 – Feedback Session & ‘Selling It’

You will deliver a 15-minute presentation (with slides) of your dissertation proposal.

Deadline: Final drafts of your proposal & syllabi (2x) are due NO LATER THAN May 11