Guidelines

For the

Honors Program

Department of Political Science
Political Science Honors Program

In order to graduate with Honors in Political Science, an acceptable senior Honors Thesis must be completed. Majors who have maintained at least a 3.5 average in Political Science major courses (Political Science courses plus subfield related courses) are eligible for admission to the Honors Thesis program. Others can be admitted only through a special petition process requiring the student to submit a written document explaining why their GPA falls below the 3.5 threshold as well as providing a rationale for why the Honors Committee and Department should consider overlooking this factor. Admission to the Honors Thesis program does not automatically guarantee the awarding of honors. Students must first pass a number of requirements. These include:

- Application to the Honors Committee submitted in early April of the Junior year (see specific schedule on page 3),
- Full participation in the Honors Thesis Colloquium during Fall semester of Senior year, including presentation of a draft chapter to the Colloquium at a session dedicated to that purpose, as well as attendance at all other sessions,
- Presentation of a chapter and detailed outline of the entire thesis to the thesis advisor at the end of the Fall semester of the Senior year,
- Completion of the thesis, during the Spring semester of the Senior year, with the approval by the thesis advisor,
- Review by a committee of faculty members and an oral defense.

Students who are accepted into the Program but whose work does not ultimately meet the criteria for an Honors designation will still be eligible for credit either for a semester of Special Projects or for a Senior thesis without honors, depending on the level of progress. There are also certain junctures at which the student may elect to withdraw from the program and still receive some credit for work completed.

The Honors Committee supervises the Honors Thesis program. This committee is composed of three members of the Political Science faculty—at least one of who must be a senior member of the department. The principal purposes of this committee are to provide:

- A rigorous evaluation of applications for admission to the program,
- Coordination and standardization of procedures,
- A source of information for students and faculty participating in the Program.

The Department Chair appoints members of the Honors Committee. One member of the Honors Committee will serve as Director of the Honors Program during the year and will be responsible for organizing the Honors Thesis colloquium.

Procedures for Application

Students interested in the possibility of doing an Honors Thesis should make every effort to take the Research Methods course (PSCI 107) by the fall of their junior year.

Spring Semester of Junior Year:
Selection of Thesis Advisor and Submission of Proposal

Early during the spring of the junior year, the prospective candidate should approach a thesis advisor and discuss potential research topics. A draft of the thesis proposal is due to the thesis advisor by Friday, March 17, 2017. A second draft is due by Friday, March 24, 2017. By Friday, March 31, 2017, an official application for admission to the Program must be submitted to the Honors Committee.
NOTE: If you are planning to be abroad during spring of your junior year, please be aware that in order to meet these various honors proposal deadlines, you will need to plan in advance and work closely with your advisor by email, submitting the two drafts of your proposal to your advisor in a timely fashion. Juniors applying to the honors program from abroad will be expected to meet the same deadlines as those applying from campus.

This application must include:

- A transcript,
- A 5-7 page proposal,
- An email from a Political Science Department faculty member to the honors committee stating that he or she is willing to serve as your thesis advisor.

The research proposal should contain:

- A clear statement of the central research question to be explored, as well as a hypothesis posing a tentative answer to that research question. The latter is also known as a “thesis statement”,
- A discussion of the scholarly work on the topic with which the student is already familiar. This section should be footnoted, with references to the academic literature on the topic the student has chosen, and should indicate how the student’s thesis is going to contribute to the existing literature,
- A description of the principal methods that will be used in the study,
- A proposed outline of the thesis chapters. The outline should include chapter titles, and a short paragraph describing the contents of each chapter,
- A preliminary bibliography indicating studies and documents the student plans to review as well as the materials she/he has already consulted.

By April 10th, the Honors Committee will let students know whether their applications have been approved or denied. In some cases, the Committee may suggest that an applicant revise the proposal and re-submit it.

Fall Semester of Senior Year:
Evidence of Progress in Research and Writing

Students who are accepted into the Honors Thesis program register for Honors (PSCI 297) during the fall semester of the Senior year. This counts for one (1.00) credit. During the fall semester, most of the research should be completed, with periodic reviews of data sources and bibliographic materials by the thesis advisor. Each student is required to present a rough draft of his/her first chapter at a session of the Fall semester Honors Colloquium. By December 1, a draft chapter and a detailed outline of the entire thesis must be submitted to the advisor. On this basis, the thesis advisor, in consultation with the Director of the Honors Program and the Department Chair, determines whether or not the student has a reasonable prospect of completing the thesis during the Spring semester. If continuation is recommended, the student receives an “In Progress” (IP) grade for the fall, and registers for Honors again in the spring. If continuation is not recommended, the thesis advisor and Director of the Honors Program will designate an appropriate letter grade for the student’s work, to be applied to PSCI 299 (Directed Study in Political Science). Those students who successfully complete the Honors thesis receive a letter grade for both semesters upon completion of the Honors project. Under very special circumstances, a student who has been advised to withdraw can petition the Honors Committee for reconsideration.

Spring Semester of Senior Year:
Completion and Evaluation of Thesis

During the spring semester of the senior year, the prospective Honors student registers for Honors (PSCI 297). Chapters or sections of the thesis must be presented to the advisor according to a defined
By early March of the senior year, a first draft of the entire thesis must be completed and submitted to the thesis advisor. The student will be expected to act upon the recommendations of the advisor in terms of revisions to the thesis or additional research. A final draft of the thesis must be completed by April 1. Failure to meet the deadline or to make the required revisions means the student forfeits the opportunity to receive Honors. The student, at this point, may also elect to withdraw from further consideration for Honors. In either event, the student must still complete an extensive written project in order to receive course credit and a grade.

Once the thesis is reviewed and approved by the advisor, it is submitted to the Thesis Committee. Normally this committee will be composed of three members: the thesis advisor, one other member of the Political Science Department, and a third member either from the Political Science Department or from a department that is particularly relevant to the thesis topic. It is the student’s responsibility to put this committee together. It is advised that the student seek out the two additional committee members by March. The committee will meet to hear an Oral “Defense” of the thesis by April 15. The Thesis Committee will make the final determination of the awarding of Honors. The committee may grant honors, high honors, and highest honors or may decide not to award honors. Two votes on the committee are needed for granting honors. The thesis advisor is responsible for notifying the Honors Committee and, if appropriate, the Registrar, of the outcome of the Oral Defense.

The Political Science Department will make resources available to support your research and thesis preparation. You may apply for up to $500.00 of support. To apply, you must submit a brief cover letter requesting support. You must agree to either holding your thesis defense as an open, public event to which fellow students, friends, and other faculty will be invited; or, to make an oral or poster presentation on your thesis research at Academic Spree Day.

### Schedule for Honors Thesis Program

| √ | Spring semester Junior year - student takes an Optional Workshop on how to prepare a Thesis proposal |
| √ | A draft of the thesis proposal is due to the thesis advisor by the first Wednesday after Spring Break. A second draft is due by March 20th. |
| √ | April 1st of the Junior year – submission of application, including research proposal, to Honors Committee, Political Science Department Office, JEF 302. |
| √ | April 10th, Junior year – Honors Committee notifies student of acceptance or need for revisions and resubmission, or denial of application. |
| √ | Fall semester Senior year – student registers for Honors (PSCI 297) and attends the Honors Colloquium. |
| √ | December 1st, Senior year – a draft chapter, a detailed outline, and a full bibliography are presented to Thesis advisor, who in turn recommends continuation or withdrawal. |
| √ | Spring semester Senior year – student registers for Honors (PSCI 297) on a graded basis. |
| √ | March of Senior year – student presents a first draft of entire Thesis to advisor. |
| √ | April 1st, Senior year – student submits final draft of Thesis, including any revisions suggested by advisor, to designated Thesis Committee. |
| √ | April 16th, Senior year – Oral Defense and final decision by Thesis Committee. |
√ Participation in Academic Spree Day.

√ Graduation, Senior year – recognition granted to Honors recipient.
Please use this sample form as a guide for the title page of the Honors Thesis. It should be typed in this format and brought to the Defense so that the Honors Committee can sign it for approval.

(Sample Title Page)

A Senior Honors Thesis

The Causes and Consequences of Color Prejudice within Communities of African Ancestry: A Comparative Analysis of Power and Privilege in the United States and Brazil

Submitted by:
Ayana Zuwena Pilgrim
Political Science Department
Clark University

April 21, 2000

______________________________, Advisor

Committee Member Approval:

Reader 1: __________________________

Reader 2: __________________________

Reader 3: __________________________
Former Honors Thesis Titles

Garrett Lynch  Spring 2016  The Blind Man of Eurasia: Russia’s Strategic Mishandling of the Ukraine Crisis and Its Negative Repercussions on Russian Foreign Policy.

Kallie McLoughlin  December 2016  Is Everybody Doing It? Sex Education in the United States: A Comparison of Five States

Katherine Bogen  Spring 2015  Reproductive Rights in Latin America: Authoritarianism, Identity Framing, Religious ‘Morality’, and Sexual Health in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile since 1970

Patrick Burchat  Spring 2015  Anti-American Propaganda in Cuba: Stability through Fear

Kimi Ko  Spring 2015  Theravada Buddhism’s Political Significance under the Military Junta (1992 - 2011) and President Thein Sein’s Democratizing Government (2011 - ) in Myanmar

Chelsea Salmonsen  Fall 2013  The Inside Account: The Future of the Massachusetts Republican Politics According to Massachusetts Republican State Legislators

Matthew Furman  Spring 2013  Overriding the Tax Revolt: An Exploration of Why a Majority of the Voters in Some Massachusetts Cities and Towns Have Voted for Higher Property Taxes

Daniel Hall  Spring 2013  The American Response to the Arab Spring: A Study of Regional Security Strategy and Crisis Intervention

Samer Saïd  Spring 2013  Analyzing Partition as a Tool of Conflict Resolution in Protracted Ethno-National Conflicts

Diamond, Matthew N.  Spring 2012  The Mobilization and Retreat of Prisoner-Initiated Civil Rights Litigation as Institutional Dialogue

Eisemann, Audrey  Spring 2012  Social Media as Tools in Campaigns: An Exploratory Study of Their Use in the 2011 Worcester City Council At-Large Election

Gzirishvili, Tamar  Spring 2012  From Negative to Positive Peace: Georgia and its Breakaway Regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Brescia, Thomas A.  Spring 2011  Warlords of Afghanistan

Chimina, Oana  Spring 2011  Russia and the European Union: Strategic Partnership?

Rouleau, Emily  Spring 2011  The Supreme Court versus the President: A comparative Case Study Analysis of Periods the U.S. Supreme Court is at Odds with the President of the United States

Antoniou, Katerina  Spring 2010  Intractable Conflicts and the Impact of Of Territorial Diseases in Cyprus and Beyond

Bainbridge, Samantha  Spring 2010  Pride and Prejudice: Nationalism and Xenophobia in Russian Immigration Policy
Bokhan, Kristen  
Spring 2010  
Examining and Environmental Movement in China: Evidence of an Emergence and its Consequences

Nair, Arjun  
Spring 2010  
Neo-Liberalism and Environmental Degradation: The Unsustainable Nature of the Chilean Model

Aguirre, Gabriel G.  
Spring 2009  
Latin America and its Quest for the Right Left

Fradkin, Julia  
Spring 2009  
Judicial Activism on the U.S. Supreme Court: An Examination of the Court’s ‘Policymaking Powers’ through Case Study Analysis

Lamrani, Omar  
Spring 2009  
Russian Military Resurgence and the Threat to United States National Interest

Hipps, Robert  
Spring 2009  
Water and Conflict: A Study of Water as an Independent Variable in International Relations from the Liberal and Realist Perspectives

Hasib, Charlene  
Fall 2008  
The Juvenile Justice Reform Act: A Study and Critique of the Massachusetts System

Closs, Sean  
Spring 2008  

Joyal, Mary  
Spring 2008  
The No Child Left Behind Act: How Teacher’s Unions and Educators are Responding to the Law and Plans for the Law’s Reauthorization

Burns, Brian  
Spring 2007  
Presidential Character Revisited: Adaptiveness versus Rigidity

Katcher, Benjamin  
Spring 2007  
Is the War on Terrorism Compatible with Humanitarian Intervention? Lessons from Darfur

Fialkov, David  
Spring 2006  
Reaching Our Democratic Potential: The Shortcomings of Election Law in the United States and Recommendations for Reform

Lopez Duarte, Andrea  
Spring 2006  
The Future of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and Its Implications for U.S. Hegemony in Latin America

Mehra, Nivedita  
Spring 2006  
Welcoming Globalization, Neglecting the Masses? India’s struggle to reduce economic inequalities

Middlebrook, Wendy  
Spring 2006  
Corporate Social & Environmental Responsibility in Peru

Williams, Helen  
Spring 2006  
Can Presidential Media Relations Bridge the Expectations Gap? A Study of President George W. Bush and the War in Iraq.

Blake, Ashley  
Spring 2005  
The Stars Were Aligned: Tracking the Switch from Manager Council to Strong Mayor Government in Hartford, Connecticut
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<td>Is Scottish Independence Inevitable? A Look at the Factors that may Further Independence</td>
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<td>The United States Government and the Japanese Government: What Type of Security Relationship Do They Have?</td>
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