

# GUIDELINES FOR THE HONORS PROGRAM

**Department of  
Political Science**



Updated August 27, 2024

# Political Science Honors Program

## Overview of Requirements

The Honors Thesis Program in the Department of Political Science offers students a chance to explore a specific question in political science in great depth through independent research. Students who complete and successfully defend an honors thesis graduate with honors in political science. Majors who have maintained at least a 3.5 average in courses taken within the Political Science Department 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 department's 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 by 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 (PSCI 299, Directed Study) 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 whom 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 fall semester Honors Thesis Colloquium.

## Program Timeline

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

Early during the spring of the junior year, students planning to apply for the Honors Thesis Program should approach a thesis advisor and discuss potential research topics. **A draft of the thesis proposal is due to the thesis advisor by the Friday after Spring Break. A second draft is due to the advisor one week later.** An official application for admission to the Program must be submitted to the Honors Committee on **April 1**.

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

**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 faculty member to the Honors Committee stating that they are 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 thesis is going to contribute to the existing literature (this is the preliminary literature review).
- 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 already consulted.

The Honors Committee will let students know within approximately two weeks 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 for consideration.

### 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 the 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 PSCI 297 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 (Independent/Directed Study in Political Science). Those students who successfully complete the honors thesis receive a letter grade for both semesters upon completion and defense of the thesis in the spring semester of senior year. 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 student registers for Honors (PSCI 297). Chapters or sections of the thesis must be presented to the advisor according to a defined schedule, worked out between student and advisor. 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 early in spring semester (January/February).** Regular communication with all committee members is encouraged. The honors thesis committee will meet to hear the 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*, or *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 of support. To apply, you must submit a brief cover letter requesting support.

### **Schedule and Checklist for Honors Thesis Program**

- √ A draft of the thesis proposal is due to the thesis advisor by the Friday after spring break. A second draft is due to the advisor one week later.
  
- √ An official application for admission to the Program must be submitted to the Honors Committee on April 1 – submission of application, including research proposal with your unofficial transcript, to Judith Barton, the Political Science Department Assistant, at [jbarton@clarku.edu](mailto:jbarton@clarku.edu), and to your thesis advisor.

- √ Mid-April, 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 1, Senior year – a draft chapter, a detailed outline, and a full bibliography are presented to the thesis advisor, who in turn recommends continuation or withdrawal.
- √ Spring semester, Senior year – student registers for Honors (PSCI 297) on a graded basis.
- √ January/February, Senior year – student asks two other faculty to serve on the thesis committee (at least one of these, in addition to the thesis advisor, must be a faculty member in the Political Science Department).
- √ March, Senior year – student presents a first draft of entire thesis to advisor.
- √ April 1, Senior year – student submits final draft of thesis, including any revisions suggested by advisor, to designated Thesis Committee.
- √ April 15, Senior year – Oral defense and final decision by thesis committee.
- √ Participation in ClarkFest, if required.
- √ 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 Oral Defense so that the Honors Thesis Committee can sign it for approval.**

## (Sample Title Page)

A Senior Honors Thesis

**Title of Thesis**

Submitted by:

**Student's name**

Political Science Department

Clark University

**Date of oral defense**

Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member Approval:

Reader 1 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader 2 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader 3 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader 3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Former Honors Thesis Titles

Clark, Jonah	Spring 2024	Hate Thy Neighbor: The Effects of Political Christianity on Public Attitudes in the Polish, Czech, and Hungarian Republics from 2010-2023
Kersting-Mumm, Sarah	Spring 2024	A Case Study of the Worcester, Massachusetts Unmet Legal Need Crisis: A Neoliberal Obstacle Course with a Street-Level Solution
Massimi, Shanay-Mariam	Spring 2024	Goals and Tactics: An Analysis of Violent Resistance During the Palestinian National Movement
Walker, Anna	Spring 2024	Beyond Sovereignty: Envisioning a Future for the Antarctic Continent
Garbeil, Jessica	Spring 2023	The Post-Apocalypse and Anxieties of a Global Future: How Fears of International Conflict and Violence are Reflected Onscreen
Hoffman, Alec	Spring 2023	Jordanian National Identity, Black September, and the Salience of Trauma
Jardiniano, Isabel	Spring 2023	Causes and Consequences: Corruption in the Philippines
Mela, Jacob	Spring 2023	Healing and Hatred: Law Enforcement and Alternative Solutions in the Fight against White Nationalism
Flanagun-Burt, Atticus	Spring 2022	The YPJ in the Popular Press: The Nexus of Ideology, Agency, and Gender
Kuanda, Kadijah	Spring 2022	Comparing U.S. and Germany Support for Multilateral Cooperation: The Impact of National Identity Construction on Foreign Policy Behavior, 1989 – 2019
Medcraft, Evan	Spring 2022	A Fork in the Road: How Cause Lawyers of the Right and Left Differ in Ideology, Methods, and Tactics
Dorshow, Aaron	Spring 2021	Law and Power: The Future of Personal Data Protection in China
Taban, Mahi	Spring 2021	From Kabul to Peshawar: The Politicized Lives and Lyrics of Pashtun Women
VanDerWielen, Curan	Spring 2021	Identifying Challenges to Effective Global Climate Governance
Vontzalides, Andrew	Spring 2021	Local Demographic Change and Anti-Migrant Political Party Support in France, the UK, and Sweden
Castillo, José	Spring 2019	The Political Determinants for Effective Regional Economic Integration
Dey, Padmini	Spring 2019	The Securitization of Undocumented Immigration: An Exploration of Discourse and Technology in the Trump Era

Michaelsen, Juliet	Spring 2019	Absolutely MAD or Just Plain NUTS? How Adversarial Relationships and Conventional Capabilities Affect Nuclear Strategic Doctrine
Mooney, Brandon	Spring 2019	What Makes a Man? A Content Analysis of Chinese Politics' Effect Upon Perceptions of Masculinity
Nikoladze, Maia	Spring 2019	Energy Dependence and Foreign Policy: Analyzing Small States of the Former Soviet Union
Shawa, Salma Muna-Faysal	Spring 2019	International Human Rights Norms: Universal Rights or Hegemonic Righteousness?
Macey, Jessica	Spring 2018	Dynamic Disputes: Causes of change in press-government conflicts
Alexander, Katherine	Spring 2017	From Trials and Truth to Amnesty and Amnesia: Transitional Justice in Argentina and Spain
Biasi, Sam (Samuel)	Spring 2017	Holiday in Syria: Hizbullah's Rise to Proto-statehood
Yukio	Spring 2017	The Range of Responses to the Rise of China in the South China Sea
Lynch, Garrett	Spring 2016	The Blind Man of Eurasia: Russia's Strategic Mishandling of the Ukraine Crisis and Its Negative Repercussions on Russian Foreign Policy
McLoughlin, Kallie	December 2016	Is Everybody Doing It? Sex Education in the United States: A Comparison of Five States
Bogen, Katherine	Spring 2015	Reproductive Rights in Latin America: Authoritarianism, Identity Framing, Religious 'Morality', and Sexual Health in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile since 1970
Burchat, Patrick	Spring 2015	Anti-American Propaganda in Cuba: Stability through Fear
Ko, Kimi	Spring 2015	Theravada Buddhism's Political Significance under the Military Junta (1992-2011) and President Thein Sein's Democratizing Government (2011-) in Myanmar
Salmonsens, Chelsea	Fall 2013	The Inside Account: The Future of the Massachusetts Republican Politics According to Massachusetts Republican State Legislators
Furman, Matthew	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
Hall, Daniel	Spring 2013	The American Response to the Arab Spring: A Study of Regional Security Strategy and Crisis Intervention
Said, Samer	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 Territorial Disputes in Cyprus and Beyond
Bainbridge, Samantha	Spring 2010	Pride and Prejudice: Nationalism and Xenophobia in Russian Immigration Policy
Bokhan, Kristen	Spring 2010	Examining 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	Nationalism and Religion: A Match Made in Heaven. A Study of Religio-Nationalist Movements and the Islamic State in Palestine and Afghanistan
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
Clark, Jocelyn	Spring 2005	The First Lady: Her evolving role and the effect of gendered expectations on her portrayal
Xhacka, Olta	Spring 2005	Humanitarian Intervention in the Post Cold War Era: Dilemmas of Development Assistance in Kosovo
Cale, Branwen	Spring 2004	A Synthesis of Human Needs and Realist Theories: Towards a New Theory of International Relations
Harris, Ian	Spring 2004	Digital Dissent: The Independent Media and Democracy in Milosevic's Serbia and Khomeini's Iran
Castillo, Heather	Spring 2003	Creating an Atmosphere for Victory: A Study of the Relationship Between Public Distrust of Government and Congressional Action Regarding the Independent Counsel Law and Campaign Finance Reform
Orlowski, Piotr	Spring 2003	The Rise and Fall of Solidarity: Social Movement in Politics of Polish Transition to Democracy
Couture, Richard	Spring 2002	The International Criminal Court and its Effects on State Behavior and World Order
Wittman, Amanda	Spring 2002	The Changing Role of Women Within the United Nations Secretariat, 1948-2001: From Marginalized to Mobilized
Bresette, Daniel	Spring 2001	Congressional Roles in Foreign Policymaking
Cordova, Fabiola	Spring 2001	Seeking Real Partnership in Development: Bilateral versus Multilateral Development Aid Policies
Hamilton, Cheryl	Spring 2001	Lessons from Lewiston: Reconceptualizing the Global Refugee Crisis
Nikiforova, Irina	Spring 2001	Taming the Wild Animal: Government Control Over the Internet

Curran, Melissa	Spring 2000	Is Scottish Independence Inevitable? A Look at the Factors that may Further Independence
Hyder, Zachary	Spring 2000	The Lost Faith: The Impact of Television and Films on Public Perception of the American Legal System
Nadeau, Bethany	Spring 2000	The Effects of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 on Home Health Care Agencies
Leifeld, Katrina	Spring 2000	The Evolution of the Battered Women's Shelter Movement
Pilgrim, Ayana	Spring 2000	The Causes and Consequences of Color Prejudice within Communities of African Ancestry: A Comparative Analysis of Power and Privilege in the US and Brazil
Kolton, Seth	Spring 1999	Technology and the Supreme Court: Freedom of Expression and the Right to Privacy on the Internet
Abrams, Leah	Spring 1996	Another Holocaust: The American Jews in Vietnam
McQuilkin, Scott	Spring 1996	Race and Prosecutorial Discretion in Capital Sentencing
Fetzer, Torston	Fall 1995	The European Union and Perspectives for an Europe des Regions
Yifrah, Danielle	Spring 1995	Track Two Approaches to Conflict Resolution: Determinants of Method
Beck, Gretchen	Spring 1994	Challenging the Independence of the Federal Reserve System
Fattahipour, Darius	Spring 1994	The Evolution and Transformation of the Freedom of Information Act
Gernat, Rachel	Spring 1994	Congressional Term Limits: An Empirical Study
Godrei, Farah	Spring 1994	The Prostitution Industry Surrounding the US Military Bases in the Philippines
Garnett, Molly	Spring 1993	An Exploration of the Effects of the 1970s Congressional Committee Reforms on the House Committee on Ways and Means
Kokalis, Vasiliki	Spring 1993	The Immigration Issue in France
Shioda, Gene	Spring 1993	The United States Government and the Japanese Government: What Type of Security Relationship Do They Have?
Loso, Christopher	Spring 1992	Do Vermont Constituents Know Best? A Case Study on Senator James M. Jeffords
Snyder, Julie	Spring 1992	A Reporter's Sacred View vs. The Law
Tamang, Seira	Spring 1992	Nepali Women as Military Wives: A Feminist Investigation of the Gurkhas

Decie III, Albert	Spring 1991	Weathering the Storm: The Soviet Armed Forces under Mikhail Gorbachev
Pintoff, Craig	Spring 1991	Russian Nationalism: Its Origins and Contemporary Significance
Bouchard, Julie Monica	Spring 1990	A Consideration of the Liberalism of Julie Monica the United States
Buckman, Kirk	Spring 1990	Guizot: A Bridge between Two Political Worlds

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