

[Professor Sheri Berman](#)
Political Science
Barnard College
Fall 2007

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Senior Research Seminar in Comparative Politics
POL BC 3761x
Tuesdays, 11-12:50 pm, 118 Reid Hall

This course is designed to help you get through the process of writing a senior thesis. Writing your senior thesis should be the high point of your undergraduate career. It is an opportunity for you to develop and research a topic of your own choosing—to investigate and become expert in a pressing question in political science. However, completing a year-long research project is no easy task. It will probably require more organization and focus than you are used to. This class, accordingly, will guide you through this process. We will begin by developing topics and discussing research techniques and strategies. Once the writing process begins regular meetings with the professor as well as your peers will help keep you on track and ensure that the thesis progresses in a structured and timely fashion.

Requirements:

The most important requirement, of course, is a completed thesis of 50-100 pages due on **April 23, 2008 at 4:00pm**, in Sulzberger Hall. The precise format of the thesis will be discussed in class. In addition to the thesis, students will have to complete a number of intermediate assignments throughout the fall.

These will include:

- a preliminary research proposal (**due on September 25**)
- a revised proposal and annotated bibliography (**due October 8**)
- chapter outlines (**due October 22**)
- a draft of chapter 1 (**due October 29**)
- revised draft of chapter 1 and revised chapter outlines (**November 12**)

In addition, students are expected to attend *all* class sessions and participate in class discussions and critiques.

Readings:

The Kogan and Van Evera readings are available for purchase at Labyrinth Books and will also be on reserve at the Barnard library.

Class Meetings

Week 1 (September 4): Introduction.

Week 2 (September 11): Class Meeting to begin discussion of topics and argument evaluation.

Readings:

-Teresa Pelton Johnson, "Writing for International Security: A Contributor's Guide," International Security, 16, 2, Fall 1991.

http://bcsia.ksg.harvard.edu/publication.cfm?ctype=article&item_id=380&pv=yes

-Nataly Kogan, "Conquering Your Undergraduate Thesis."

Week 3 (September 18): Individual Meetings.

Week 4 (September 25): Individual meetings to discuss research proposal and bibliography.

**One page preliminary research proposals and bibliographies should be emailed to me by 10 a.m. on September 24.*

Week 5 (October 2): Optional Individual Meetings.

Week 6 (October 9): Class Meeting to discuss research progress and critique research proposals and design.

**Revised research proposals and annotated bibliographies should be emailed to me and your colleagues by 10 a.m. on October 8.*

Readings:

-Stephen Van Evera, Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science.

Week 7 (October 16): Optional Individual Meetings.

Week 8 (October 23): Individual meetings to discuss chapter outlines.

**Chapter outlines should be emailed to me by 10 a.m. on October 22.*

Week 9 (October 30): Individual meetings to discuss progress on chapter 1.

**Chapter drafts should be emailed to me by 10 a.m. on October 29.*

Week 10 (November 13): Class meeting to discuss and critique first chapters and chapter outlines.

**Revised drafts of your first chapters and chapter outlines should be emailed to me and your colleagues by 10 a.m. on November 12.*

Week 11 (November 20): Individual meetings to discuss chapter 2.

Week 12 (November 27): Optional individual meetings.

Week 13 (December 4): Class meetings to discuss semester's progress and plans for the spring term.