Senior Honors Thesis Seminar, Semester II
Political Science 684. Spring 2013. W 3:15-4:30pm, Humanities 2631
Kathy Cramer Walsh
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office: 265-3679
hours: 1-2pm Tuesdays and by appointment

Purpose of the course:
This semester you will complete the research and writing of your senior thesis. You each have a great deal of work ahead of you, but a great amount of intellectual pleasure and personal satisfaction as well. The purpose of our seminar this semester is to provide instruction on the process of researching and writing your thesis, and a forum for you to benefit from the insight and enthusiasm of the others in the seminar.

You have each developed a timeline complete with due dates tailored to fit your particular thesis. You will be responsible for sticking to these deadlines. Failure to do so will result in a lower final grade. You have the right to revise these deadlines, as long as you do so a week in advance of your next deadline. You must turn in a draft of all chapters no later than three weeks before the final due date—without exception.

Your grade in this seminar will depend in large part on the final product, but your adherence to deadlines, participation in seminar, and quality of chapter drafts will affect your final grade as well. The faculty member who serves as your substantive advisor and I will jointly assign a final grade to your thesis, which will constitute the majority of your final grade. A description of A quality and B quality work is below.

In the interests of saving paper, I am requiring you to turn in all of your drafts this term as Word documents sent to me as email attachments. Please do not send .pdf files, as I will be inserting my comments into your drafts in “reviewing” (editing) marks. I expect that all of your drafts turned in from this point on will be thoroughly proof read, contain thorough and accurate attribution and use a proper form of citation. Each of your drafts should be accompanied by a note in your email explaining what the purpose of this section of writing is, how it fits into your overall thesis, and any specific sections or

1 A great resource is Kate L. Turabian. 1996. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. University of Chicago Press.
issues you would like me to focus on. When turning in a revision, you do not need to include previous drafts, because I will store them on my computer.

You will be required to maintain weekly or biweekly appointments with the Writing Lab.

Periodically throughout the term, you will be required to provide feedback on the work of other seminar participants during our class sessions.

Feel free to use our course email address to discuss issues related to the class. The address is polisci684-1-s13@lists.wisc.edu. I may occasionally use this for course announcements, but I will also repeat these announcements in class.

All assignments are due to me as email attachments by 5 pm on the due date you have set for yourself.

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

**An A performance in this seminar will have the following characteristics:**
1. Attendance at and active participation in all seminar meetings.
2. On-time and prepared weekly or biweekly appointments with writing center advisor.
3. Consistent meeting of chapter deadlines.
4. Draft chapters that exhibit a central argument, consistent development of that argument throughout the chapter based on thorough and careful research, lucid writing, accurate attribution, and formal citations.
5. Evidence of sincere and consistent effort in completing the thesis.
6. A final thesis that has the following qualities:

   - A clear and compelling central thesis that is stated early within the introductory chapter.
   - An introduction which, besides stating the central thesis, describes the motivation for the topic, its importance to bodies of scholarship and the public at large, and gives a brief overview of methodology.
   - Chapters structured to develop this thesis, each with its own internal central argument that it develops through careful and thorough analysis based on careful and thorough research. This analysis actively considers counterarguments and addresses them with the use of evidence.
   - A methods section, chapter, or appendix in which your methods of gathering and analyzing data are clearly and thoroughly described.
   - A conclusion which summarizes the empirical chapters (briefly), synthesizes the results across the chapters while restating the central argument, applies the results of the thesis to the bodies of scholarship you have drawn from; and discusses the implications of your results for the broader public.
   - Careful citation and attribution throughout.
   - Consistent and accurate labeling of all tables and figures.
   - Clear and lucid writing that is thoroughly proof read.
• FORMAT OF FINAL THESIS: all pages double spaced, 10 to 12 point type, and numbered. Includes a title page, table of contents, and a reference list.

A B performance in this seminar will have the following characteristics:
1. Attendance and active participation in all but a few seminar meetings.
2. On-time and prepared weekly or biweekly appointments with writing center advisor.
4. Consistent meeting of the vast majority of chapter and peer review deadlines.
5. Draft chapters that exhibit a central argument, development of that argument throughout the chapter based on research that is typically thorough, clear writing, accurate attribution, and formal citations.
6. Evidence of sincere effort in completing the thesis during the majority of the year.
7. A final thesis that has the following qualities:

  • A clear central thesis that is stated early within the introductory chapter.
  • An introduction which, besides stating the central thesis, describes the motivation for the topic, its importance to bodies of scholarship and the public at large, and gives a brief overview of methodology.
  • Chapters structured to develop this thesis, each with its own internal central argument that it develops clearly.
  • A methods section, chapter, or appendix in which your methods of gathering and analyzing data are described.
  • A conclusion which summarizes the thesis briefly and applies the results of the thesis to the bodies of scholarship you have drawn from as well as develops its implications for the broader public.
  • Careful citation and attribution throughout.
  • Consistent and accurate labeling of all tables and figures.
  • Clear writing that is thoroughly proof read.
  • FORMAT OF FINAL THESIS: all pages double spaced, 10 to 12 point type and numbered. Includes a title page, table of contents, and a reference list.

CALENDAR

1/23
1. Check-in and preparation for the semester.

1/30
2. No class. Personal research and writing time.

(continued next page)
**DUE:** Confirmation that you have set up a weekly appointment with a writing lab instructor (an email with your weekly appointment time and the name of your advisor will suffice.)
BRING TO CLASS One chapter, outline, or piece of writing (of your choosing) to share with a classmate for feedback.

4/3
10. Seminar.
BRING TO CLASS One chapter, outline, or piece of writing (of your choosing) to share with a classmate for feedback.
4/10
11. No class. Personal research and writing time.
I will be out of town this afternoon.

4/17
BRING TO CLASS One chapter, outline, or piece of writing (of your choosing) to share
with a classmate for feedback.

4/24
13. No class. Personal research and writing time.
Drop by my office for one-on-one appointments with me as necessary.

5/1

5/8
15. FINAL SEMINAR. PRESENTATIONS.

THESIS DUE Tuesday, May 14 by 11:59 pm