

SS498: Senior Thesis

Web: **Sosh Department**
Class Hours: By-student basis
Class Room: TBD

Course Description

This course continues progress made during SS489 in the fall semester in the development of a thesis in International Affairs. Having completed a prospectus presentation at the conclusion of the fall term, students will begin production of their thesis projects in earnest during the course of the spring term. You will be expected to provide regular updates on your progress, meeting with both the course director (CPT Robinson) and your own committees regularly.

You will have a tremendous amount of autonomy in this course; however, you must not underestimate the work required. Though there is no regularly scheduled class time, you will have several check-in requirements to the course director including a short precis of your working dataset, a draft of the project itself, and a deskside rehearsal presentation. Proper time management will be essential for completion of the thesis.

You may be dropped from the course at any of the major time gates at the discretion of the International Affairs stem head, your thesis adviser, or me for failure to progress.

Required Materials

- Completed and approved SS489 prospectus

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Prerequisites: SS489 Advanced Individual Studies

Course Objectives

Successful students:

1. Discover, analyze, and synthesize information in a creative fashion (SLOs: 1,2,3,4,6)
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the literature relating to the project and acknowledge prior scholarship on which the thesis is built (SLOs: 1,2,3,4,6)
3. Describe the methods and procedures used (SLOs: 1,2,6)
4. Present results in a sequential and logical manner in a written thesis and public defense (SLOs: 6)
5. Show the ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results (SLOs: 6)

Course Structure

Class Structure

Students will meet regularly throughout the semester to provide tangible products of the thesis' progression and to engage with the course director regarding research design, methodology, and thesis production. These meeting times will be determined during Week 1 as each student's availability is different.

Assessments

This course requires regular production of research outputs that will help to structure the student's research design path, enforce better time management, and allow both the student and the student's committee to observe whether the student is on trajectory for thesis completion with better granularity. The majority of the points in the course will come from the student's Projects Day presentation and defense and from the final product itself. However, the data presentation, draft requirement, and deskside rehearsal are important steps in the research process as well.

Grading Policy

Grading standards are in accordance with department and stem rubrics for performance of written products. The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

- **50%** of your grade will be determined by the **final thesis product** (*committee*).
- **25%** of your grade will be determined by the student's **defense on Projects Day** (*committee*).
- **10%** of your grade will be determined by the submission of a **thesis draft** (*course director*).
- **10%** of your grade will be determined by performance on a **deskside defense rehearsal** (*course director*).
- **5%** of your grade will be determined by the student's performance on a **short presentation summarizes the thesis' principal dataset** (*course director*)

Schedule and Weekly Research Objectives

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. The learning goals below should be viewed as the key objectives or due-outs for that week as the student progresses through the research design process. Substance will be discussed in consultation with the student's thesis advisor.

Week 01, 01/07 - 01/11: Initial Consult

- Schedule weekly availability for student through AY 19-2 with course director
- Discuss prospectus output and establish research priorities
- Review SS498 requirements and finalize reading committee

Week 02, 01/14 - 01/18: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward data presentation

Week 03, 01/21 - 01/25: Theory and Literature Gaps

- Concerted discussion of the state of the art for the student's field and a refinement of the research question as contributory
- Discussion of student's theory in context of the existing literature

Week 04, 01/28 - 02/01: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward data presentation

Week 05, 02/04 - 02/08: Dataset Presentation

- Student will provide 10-15 presentation summarizing existing dataset, collection or coding schemes, granularity and "ideal" datasets, and proposed use for the project

Week 06, 02/11 - 02/15: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward draft thesis

Week 07, 02/18 - 02/22: Testable Hypotheses and Data Analysis

- Discussion of the thesis' testable hypotheses pursuant to the theory established in Week 3
- Discussion of progress towards meaningful integration of collected data

Week 08, 02/25 - 03/01: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward draft thesis

Week 09, 03/04 - 03/08: Draft Thesis Due

- Draft thesis due to course director no later than 08MAR
- Failure to provide satisfactory draft product may lead to drop from the thesis program

Week 10, 03/11 - 03/15: Spring Break

Week 11, 03/18 - 03/22: Draft Thesis Discussion

- Engagement to discuss structural and substantive comments for draft product

Week 12, 03/25 - 03/29: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward final product and Projects Day defense

Week 13, 04/01 - 04/05: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward final product and Projects Day defense

Week 14, 04/08 - 04/12: Defense Rehearsal

- Student will engage in a rehearsal presentation and mock defense with the course director

Week 15, 04/15 - 04/19: NO MEETING

- Research progression toward final product and Projects Day defense

Week 16, 04/22 - 04/26: Pre-Defense Checks

- Discussion of existing thesis project in development toward final analysis
- Discussion of presentation strategy and defense products in preparation for Projects Day

Week 17, 04/29 - 05/03: Projects Day Defense

- Students will defend thesis to committee at Projects Day

Week 18, 05/06 - 05/10: NO MEETING

- Students will incorporate defense notes and runing guidance from committee and course director into final project

Week 19, 05/13 - 05/17: Final Thesis Due

- Students will submit final thesis product to the course director and committee