

Lang Politics
Senior Thesis Guidelines
As of 10/19/11
Questions: LangPolitics@newschool.edu

GUIDELINES FOR LANG POLITICS SENIOR THESIS

Students must do an Independent Senior Written Thesis to complete the Senior Capstone Requirement. Procedures for independent senior theses are described below.

Senior Thesis Proposal Guidelines: For Students

Thesis Description

Completely self-directed, independent senior theses are individual research projects developed in close consultation with a faculty advisor. A thesis proposal must be submitted to the program chair for approval, as described below. Theses should be limited in scope in order to allow design and completion in one year. Successful completion of an Independent Senior Thesis is required for graduation in Politics.

Schedule and Procedure

Penultimate Semester

By week 3: meet with faculty advisor to discuss thesis concept; notify and receive approval from DUS for faculty advisor

By week 5: submit draft proposal to faculty advisor (see guidelines for proposal, below)

By week 7: submit final proposal to faculty advisor for approval

Oct. 30 (spring graduation) or March 8 (fall graduation): approval by DUS of proposal

Final approval by the chair of the thesis must be reported to the senior class advisor by the first day of advance registration for the following semester (generally mid November for spring and early April for fall).

Final Semester

A minimum of 5 meetings with your faculty advisor is required throughout the writing process.

Fall Semester Theses are due the first week in December, and grades due by winter break;

Spring Semester Theses are due the first week in May, **and** grades due by graduation.

Nature of the Senior Thesis

All Senior Theses must be based in *research*. Creative elements are possible, but these *must* be accompanied by research papers that are relevant and substantial. The goal of research projects is to engage with an existing literature in the field of Politics in relation to a specific *question* or *set of questions*. Generally, Theses must therefore be comprised of the following general parts:

- (1) clear articulation of the research question and its importance
- (2) a review and analysis of relevant literature in the field, with clear explication of relevance to the question at hand, and
- (3) exploration of the research question with supporting evidence

Requirements

Demonstrated familiarity with the relevant literature is required. Students should expect to complete a research thesis of 20 to 40 pages.

Step-by-Steps for working on your Proposal

Step 1: Pick a topic you wish to work on (ideally, an extension of a topic you already have some familiarity with) and find an advisor who is willing to work with you. Advisors must be full-time faculty members from the Politics Department. Full-time faculty outside of the department will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the DUS.

Step 2: Start working on your proposal in the summer. Proposals should be 6-8 pages long (double-spaced) and contain the following:

- a. Working title of proposed research paper/creative thesis.
- b. Name of advisor.
- c. A 2-page description of the key idea being explored.
- d. A 2-page description of the methods of investigation to be employed.
- e. 1 page on the relevance of the thesis to the field of Politics and/or one of its sub-fields.
- f. A 1 page on work already accomplished, such as initial research completed.
- g. A 1-2 page bibliography or relevant sources to be consulted.
- h. 1 page on likely results or conclusions that are desired from this work.

Grading

Active and conscientious participation in the thesis process is essential to a successful senior thesis. This includes (1) fulfilling the requirements outlined in this document, (2) meeting with the thesis advisor consistently, (3) providing material for review to the advisor in a timely manner (giving sufficient time for feedback to be provided), and (4) engaging with advisor feedback in a constructive manner. In general, senior theses are graded in accordance with the degree of success of the final product. Though to a lesser degree than in a course, the process that led to the final product and the student's participation therein are taken into account as well.

Guidelines for Senior Thesis Faculty Advisors

AN OVERVIEW

Students complete a senior work thesis over two semesters. In the first semester, students write a proposal for approval by their faculty advisor and the department DUS; and in the second semester, the approved thesis described in the proposal is actually completed. Theses should exhibit a culmination of a student's skills and experiences acquired through studying in a particular concentration. Although the purpose is to help students understand the nature of academic work in their respective fields, each thesis should be framed such that it could be reasonably completed in one semester. If you review the attached guidelines, you will have more detailed information about the expectations for students.

ROLE OF THE SENIOR THESIS ADVISOR

Senior Work Proposals

It is important that advisors comply with all deadlines regarding drafts and final submission of the proposal. Students requesting you as their Thesis advisor should contact you by the **third week of their penultimate semester** with some concept formulated for a thesis. If you are agreeable to advising the thesis, you should encourage the student to immediately begin writing a first draft of the proposal. The draft should be completed by the **fourth or fifth week** in the penultimate semester (and a revised draft by the **seventh week**). After you have approved the proposal, please refer it to the DUS. **The deadline for the proposal to be submitted is October 30th for May graduation and March 8th for December graduation.** The DUS will inform the student about any required revisions, and provide confirmation of final approval; the DUS must also approve the assigned advisor.

Once you have signed off on a proposal, you are committing to assist the student with revisions of the proposal (based on suggestions and feedback from the chairperson), as well as working with the student through the following semester until completion of the thesis. **Note: Final approval for advisor assignments is determined by the DUS.**

Approval Criteria for Proposals

As an advisor, you should endorse the proposal if and only if it satisfies the following criteria:

1. Proposals should be in the format stipulated in the “Senior Thesis Proposal Guidelines,” and include all the components required by those guidelines. In addition, the proposal should be well-written be free of spelling and grammatical errors.
2. The proposal should exhibit an appropriate level of scholarship; it should display the format and tone acceptable to professionals in the specific academic field or specialization.
3. The proposal should be well-reasoned and thoughtful, and ideas expressed should follow from one another in a logical manner. The motivation and methodology for the thesis should be described with as much detail as possible
4. Proposed theses must be reasonably accomplished in one semester. One of your prime responsibilities as the potential thesis advisor is to help students contain their ambitions and focus on a thesis of appropriate size.

Senior Thesis

During the second semester, you are committed to meet with your advisee ***at least*** 5 times during the term. In this phase of the senior thesis, you are responsible for the following:

- Advising students on appropriate and effective ways to implement ideas delineated in the proposal (for example, practical advice about data collection and analysis, suggestions about translating concepts into creative expression, etc)
- Helping students to designate interim goals and preliminary deadlines to ensure completion of the senior thesis on time
- Reinforcing the importance of following professional guidelines for manuscript preparation, and recommending corrections wherever deviations from these guidelines might occur
- Reviewing thesis drafts for overall quality and soundness, and submitting final grades by the deadline

Fall Semester Theses due the first week in December, and grades due by winter break;

*Spring Semester Theses due the first week in May, **and** grades due by graduation.*

**SENIOR THESIS
PROPOSAL/ADVISOR FORM: Please attach to your proposal**

To be completed by the students undertaking individual senior thesis

STUDENT'S LAST NAME: _____ FIRST NAME: _____

STUDENT I.D. #: _____

TITLE/SUBJECT OF THESIS: _____

To be completed by the Senior Thesis advisor:

SENIOR THESIS ADVISOR'S NAME:

NEW SCHOOL AFFILIATION? ☐ YES; DIVISION:

☐ NO

FULL-TIME NEW SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBER? * ☐ YES ☐ NO

*If you are NOT a New School Faculty member, has your advisee contacted the DUS for approval?)

PHONE: (one of these telephone numbers should be a number with voicemail)

Work: _____ Home: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Please read and check statement below then sign it:

_____ I have read and discussed the Senior Thesis Proposal with the above named student, and *approve it to be forwarded to the Director of Undergraduate Studies or designee for final approval.* If revisions are deemed necessary I agree to further develop the proposal with the student.

Signature: _____

Eugene Lang College
Contact Meetings with Advisor Form
(For use once your proposal is already approved)
Senior Work Thesis

To be completed by the student:

Last Name _____ **First Name** _____

Student ID# _____

Title of Senior Work Thesis _____

To be completed by the advisor:

Advisor Name _____

E-mail _____

Phone (one of these telephone numbers should be a number with voicemail)

Work _____ **Home** _____

Address _____

My senior thesis advisee and I have had our first meeting and have set up a mutually agreeable meeting and deadline schedule to work on the thesis during the final semester.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Advisor Signature _____ Date _____

Return this form to the departmental chair or designee by the deadline published.