

Research Workshop

Boston University
Political Science 903
Spring 2016

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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 3-4:30

Seminar location: Political Science conference room (232 Bay State Rd., rm. 312B)

Seminar time: Friday 12–1:30

Course Description

This course is designed to serve graduate students in political science at all stages of the program. This includes second-year students who are working on their stand-alone research paper (required of all students prior to advancement to candidacy), third-year students working on their dissertation prospectus, fourth- and fifth-year students working on their dissertation, students in their final year preparing a job talk, and all students working on grant and fellowship proposals or preparing to present at a conference. By combining these features into a single course, we hope that students at different stages of the Ph.D. cycle will learn from each other, as well as from the instructor. In particular, students at earlier stages of the program will benefit from the experience of their more advanced colleagues, while those at later stages will get a chance to give back and to practice mentoring others, an important career skill. Moreover, exposing students to each others' research interests should generate opportunities for collaboration and co-authorship with colleagues, hopefully resulting in publications.

During most weeks, each seminar meeting will consist of a discussion of the research of 1–2 students. Written work must be circulated in advance, by the Tuesday evening prior to the seminar. Students are expected to carefully read and prepare comments on the papers for discussion each week. Practice job talks or conference presentations will take place during the seminar itself, with discussion to follow. During weeks in which a talk is scheduled in the Research in American and Comparative Politics (RAC) Workshop, the seminar meeting will consist of required attendance at the RAC presentation, which occupies the same time slot and is held in the same location as this course. Students should keep an eye on the schedule at <http://www.bu.edu/polisci/workshops-seminars/workshop-in-american-comparative-politics/>.

The course will be offered every semester for 2 credits (Pass/Fail). A passing grade requires regular attendance and participation, in terms of giving feedback on colleagues' work and presenting one's own at least once during the semester. A limit of 4 units may be applied toward the fulfillment of the degree requirement. Ph.D. students in the second year or above are encouraged to enroll in the course during all semesters except those when they are away from

Boston. Students who are not enrolled because they are out of town during the semester are nonetheless encouraged to attend during visits back to Boston. This course is a complement to PO 702, Professional Development for Ph.D. Candidates in Political Science, which focuses on practical professional skills (e.g., how to craft a C.V.) rather than substantive research and is taken only once.

Other than the student research circulated in advance of each meeting, there are no required readings. However, several works on research and writing are suggested below.

On research and writing

- Becker, Howard S. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McDonald, Susan Peck. 1994. *Professional Academic Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Peters, Robert. 1997. *Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning an M.A. or a Ph.D.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Schedule

January 22: Regular meeting (Mike)
January 29: Regular meeting (Cantay)
February 5: RAC seminar (Emily Thorson, Boston College)
February 12: Regular meeting (Claire)
February 19: Regular meeting (Laura)
February 26: RAC seminar (Marco Hauptmeier)
March 4: No class (instructor out of town)
March 18: Regular meeting (Breno)
March 25: Regular meeting (MPSA presentations: Sahar, Cantay)
April 1: Regular meeting (MPSA presentations: Laura, Pilar)
April 8: Regular meeting (SeulAh)
April 15: RAC seminar (Jeffrey Berry, Tufts)
April 22: Regular meeting (Valeriya, Bil)
April 29: RAC seminar (David Lewis, Vanderbilt)