MEMORANDUM

TO: All Political Science Majors with a January or May 2020 expected graduation date  
FROM: Shanna Kirschner, Chair, Department of Political Science  
RE: POLSC 600 and the Senior Project Proposal Process  
DATE: November 2018

The purpose of Political Science 600, a two-credit graded course, is to complete a senior project research proposal before advancing to Political Science 610, The Senior Project. The proposal must be acceptable to one's thesis advisor and the thesis committee (comprised of the advisor and a second faculty member).

Majors may complete Political Science 600 in either the spring semester of their junior year or fall semester of their senior year. **All students must enroll in Political Science 600 with the department chair.** Double majors need to write DOUBLE on their signature card, with the names of the two departments and my signature and that of the other major department. Polsc 600 is then followed in the next semester by the project itself, Political Science 610.

Political Science 600 has four principal phases and deadlines:

1. Attend Information Meeting with Chair on **Wednesday January 16 at 4:00 p.m.** in Quigley 122.

2. **INITIAL MEETING**  
The first meeting will occur between a Political Science major and at least one potential thesis advisor. This meeting must occur by **Friday January 25 at 4:00 p.m.** The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the topic of the project with members of the Political Science faculty and to relate the relevant coursework (including junior seminar) that will enable the student to pursue the topic. Following this meeting, **but no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday January 25**, the student should submit to the department chair (by email in a Word Document), a brief summary of their intended research question as well as a list of relevant coursework and **two or three** potential first readers for the project. The department will then assign a first and second reader for the project based on student interest as well as an equitable distribution of projects among the department’s faculty.

3. **INTERIM REPORT**  
At about the midpoint of the semester, the 600 student will submit an interim report to the primary reader. **Students may turn the interim proposal directly to their first reader.** This will be due on **Wednesday March 6 by 4:00 p.m.** Failure to submit the interim proposal on time will result in a grade penalty. The interim report should include:
⇒ A one-paragraph statement of central question.
⇒ A brief description/summary of the argument, debate, or conversation within which the comp figures (literature review).
⇒ A description/justification of the analytic methods (i.e. case study, historical, quantitative, etc.) that will move the comp from simple description to description and analysis.
⇒ An annotated bibliography of at least ten scholarly sources, representing a suitable mix of such things as books, government documents, journal articles, newspaper/magazine articles, websites, and interviews.

4. **FINAL PROPOSAL**

Two copies of the the finished (final) proposal will be due on **Wednesday April 3 by 4:00 p.m.**

**All final proposals must be submitted to the building coordinator, Sarah Holt, who will log submissions in, by this time. Please do not put proposals in faculty mailboxes.** Students who fail to submit by the designated date and time and will need to petition the Department to be allowed to continue (see below). After the submission of the completed proposal, students will participate in a proposal presentation conference with two faculty members (primary and secondary readers). This conference will last approximately 30 minutes (see dates below) and will be held (generally) in the office of the first reader. This completed proposal should include the following:

⇒ A clear statement of the comp question.
⇒ An informed, supported description of the scholarly conversation into which the comp would enter or to which it would contribute, together with a discussion of the analytic techniques to be employed in the comp. Students should include working hypotheses in this section (i.e., what do you expect to find based on the literature review?).
⇒ A detailed working outline of the comp. Senior Projects typically consist of 3-4 chapters, with a short introduction.
⇒ An annotated bibliography of 25 scholarly sources, with additional non-annotated sources also listed.

Proposals are typically 5-7 pages or so in length (not including the annotated bibliography). Please provide sufficient context so as to give second readers a good sense of the field/area you are writing about. Please note that your Senior Project Committee will consist of one of your chosen first readers, and a second member of the Political Science Department, both determined by the Department Chair. In the case of double majors, the Department typically does not assign a second reader from the Department. Double majors whose first major is not Political Science, follow guidelines determined by their first major, but are responsible for keeping their Political Science reader up-to-date and informed of their progress.

**PETITIONING THE DEPARTMENT:** Political Science 600 (and 610) are department requirements/classes. Thus, all decisions regarding these classes, including grades, are made by the Department as a whole. To that end, if final proposals (and Senior Projects) are not turned in by the designated deadlines, the Department must vote on whether the student is allowed to continue the process and receive a grade. Students who do not comply with the above deadlines for the final proposal must
write a letter to the Department, addressed to the Department Chair, explaining why the proposal was not submitted on time. (Letters may be submitted to the Chair electronically). No oral conferences will be held until the Department votes to approve the student’s continued enrollment in PS600.

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