

# Final dissertation seminar

**Lecturers**

Emilie VAN HAUTE (Coordinator) and Alena PROKOP SOBOTOVA

**Course mnemonic**

POLI-D543

**ECTS credits**

10 credits

**Language(s) of instruction**

English

**Course period**

First term

## Course content

The theoretical part of the course questions what political science research is. It presents the main theoretical approaches and research methods in political science and international relations. In preparation of each lesson, students are required to have read the corresponding reading material. Each class is dedicated to discussing and illustrating these theoretical approaches and research methods, based on examples.

The exercises aim at applying the political science research process. Each class is dedicated to a step in the process of scientific reasoning, which is explained, illustrated with examples, and then applied by the students.

## Objectives (and/or specific learning outcomes)

**Intended Student Learning Outcome**

- To be able to find, read, understand and interpret most research published in political science journals
- To understand the major theoretical approaches to political science research
- To be familiar with various research methods in political science
- To be able to identify and apply these approaches and methods in a research paper
- To be able to develop a research design
- To sharpen critical thinking
- To develop writing skills

## Teaching method and learning activities

**Class Format**

The class format is organized around three equilibriums: theory and exercises, accumulation of knowledge and critical thinking; explanation and application. The workload is spread between the theoretical course and the exercises. The theoretical part is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the main theoretical approaches and data collection and data analysis methods, as well as illustrations based on existing research. The exercises are organized as a seminar, with regular assignments and presentations by the students. Each class consists of an explanation of a step in the research process (with illustrations), and an active application of the step in the research process by students (via practical exercises and development of their own research design for the Final Dissertation). Overall, the course rests on an active preparation by the students. Students are expected to have read the material in preparation for each week.

## Contribution to the teaching profile

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the terminology, concepts, theoretical approaches and research methods in political science. The course intends to teach students how to develop scientific research designs. Together with the exercises, the course prepares students to the writing of their final dissertation.

## References, bibliography and recommended reading

**Useful research methods references**

Johnson J.B., Reynolds H.T., *Political Science Research Methods*, London, Sage, 2012, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

Burnham P. et al, *Research Methods in Politics*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.

Heywood A., *Key Concepts in Politics*, New York, St Martin's Press, 2000.

## Other information

### Contact(s)

**Emilie van Haute**

- Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 (starts 21/09; ends 14/12 – no office hours on November 2)
- Contact: S building – Office S.11.125; Phone: 02/650.48.82; Email: evhaute@ulb.ac.be

## Programmes

### Programmes proposing this course at the faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences

MA-PINT | Master in Political Sciences : International Relations | finalité World/unit 2 and MA60-POLI | Master in Political Sciences : General (60 credits) | option JOUR/unit U

