

Final dissertation seminar

Lecturers

Alena PROKOP SOBOTOVA (Coordinator) and Emilie VAN HAUTE

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, 7th 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

Evaluation method(s)

Other

Evaluation method(s) (additional information)

- Students performances will be assessed as follows:
- Final exam: 50% (10 points out of 20)
- Exercises: 50% (10 points out of 20)

Important

- It is MANDATORY to have a mark for both parts of the course – students who do not have a mark for both parts of the course will be marked as ABS (MISSING) until they do have a mark for both parts of the course POLID543.
- It is also mandatory to register for the Final Dissertation via the online registration system. There are two mandatory deadlines: **Monday, October 30 (pre-FD form)** and **Monday, December 18 (final FD form)**. Students who have failed to meet these deadlines will have a **FAIL** for the course POLID543, whatever their grade for the rest of the course. There is NO later deadline and NO retake session allowed for this part of the course. Students who have not registered on time will NOT be allowed to submit their Final Dissertation during this academic year.

Determination of the mark (including the weighting of partial marks)

- Final exam: grade is based on:
- 2 questions: 1 question on theoretical approaches (5 points), 1 question on methods (5 points)
- January session, retake session in August-September
- Exercises: grade is based on:
- Average score on all Quizzes. A quiz not submitted on time will be marked 0.
- Attendance is mandatory; 1-point penalty (/10) for each unjustified missed class. Students have to sign the registry at the start of each class. Attending half a class will be marked accordingly.
- 2 point penalty (/10) if FD tasks are not submitted
- Bonus for active participation in class

Policy regarding deadlines

Deadlines matter. All assignments must be submitted on time before the deadline. Assignments that are submitted after the due date will not be considered. Only serious and documented circumstances will be accepted as excuses (e.g. serious matters of health or other personal emergencies).

Policy regarding students arriving late in the semester:

If the students show that their late arrival is due to delays in their registration process (based on their letter of admission): they will be allowed to take the missed quizzes. They will have to write a 1-page summary for each missed reading (due for the week after their late arrival). They will have to submit all the missed FD tasks together, due for 2 weeks after their late arrival.

Other students will encounter the corresponding penalty for the missed classes and missed assignments.

Retake Session (August/September)

- No retake session allowed if FD forms were not submitted on time
- Students decide at their own risk whether they want to retake the exercises, the exam, or both
- Students have to notify their choice to Emilie van Haute early July
- Exercises: quizzes have to be taken online before the date of the exam

Main language(s) of evaluation

English

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