Politics 403/404: Senior Honors Seminar

Chris Howell & Jade Schiff
2013-14

Class: King 327, Wednesdays 2:30-4:20pm

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Professor Schiff
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Professor Howell’s office hours: Monday 10:30-noon; Tuesday 2:15-3:15pm, or by appointment. Please sign up online for office hours at: http://tiny.cc/Ywoje

Professor Schiff’s office hours: 1:30-3:30, Tuesdays and Thursdays. There will be sign-up sheets on her office door.

The honors seminar in the Politics Department is an integral part of the honors program for seniors writing their theses and taking the written and oral exams. It does not substitute for a close individualized relationship between adviser and student, which remains the core of the honors program in the senior year. The individual honors advisers remain the primary people responsible for supervising the thesis and preparing the students for the exam. The Honors seminar complements the system of honors advisors by providing opportunities for collective deliberation and creating a framework for common discussion of how to prepare and write a major piece of research in political science. Elements of the course will include: selection of research question; appropriate methodology; appropriate literatures; preparation of precis; workshopping of research proposals and drafts of sections of the honors thesis; preparation for the exams. Where appropriate, there will be assigned readings. These might be readings for the entire class or readings specific to sub-groups of students depending upon field and area of interest.

The honors seminar is required for all senior honors students in the Politics Department. It is a two-semester course (POLT 403 in the fall and POLT 404 in the spring). Students have the option of taking the class for 1 full credit (equivalent to 4 credit hours) or for 1.5 full credits (equivalent to 6 credit hours) each semester. The full credit option is 403F and 404F. The 1.5 credit option involves registering for 403F + 403H in the fall and 404F + 404H in the spring.

The class will meet most weeks in the fall, and less frequently in the spring. The schedule of classes listed below is tentative because the precise meeting dates, topics and readings will depend upon the
number of students in the class, their distribution across fields, and the research topics that they choose.


**Schedule for Honors Seminar (POLT 403) Fall 2013:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes (readings, workshop)</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Introductory Class</td>
<td>No reading</td>
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| 9/11  | Research Topic; moving from topic to question   | Students share initial research topics
Lipson, chapter 1 & 2 (pp. 9-33)                                                   |
| 9/18  | Research topic 2                                | Presentation of refined topics
Lipson, chapters 4 & 7 (pp. 66-86 & 110-119)                                         |
| 9/25  | Library Presentation                            | No reading                                                                               |
| 10/2  | Research question: What makes a good one?      | Students share initial research question                                                  |
| 10/9  | Research question 2                             | Presentation of refined question                                                          |
| 10/16 | Methods 1                                       | Discussion of proposed methods, strengths and limits
Lipson, chapters 3, 5 & 6 (pp. 37-65, 89-109)                                         |
| 10/30 | Methods 2                                       | Readings TBA depending upon research methodologies (maybe from Lichbach & Zuckerman
Katzenelson & Milner)                                                                    |
| 11/6  | Honors Prospectus                               | Discussion of expectations for the honors prospectus
due a week later.                                                                        |
| 11/13 | Discussion of Prospectuses                      | Include a chapter/section outline and an annotated bibliography                           |
| 11/20 | Writing                                         | Lipson, chapters 8-10 (pp. 123-176)                                                      |
| 12/4  | Research Presentations                          | Students present a section/chapter of thesis                                              |
| 12/11 | Research Presentations                          | Students present a section/chapter of thesis                                              |