

Advanced Academic Programs
Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences
Johns Hopkins University

Course and Instructor Information

Course Number

470.850 Research and Thesis I

Semester and Course Duration

Spring 2022, 15 weeks

Instructor

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301-358-2639

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Office Hours

Virtual by appointment only

Credit Hours

3

Class Times

Online via Blackboard

Course Location

Online via Blackboard

Course Prerequisites

None. Government and Politics and at least one additional substantive course are strongly recommended.

Course Description

The purpose of this core course in the Government Program is for students to refine their thesis topic, develop their research design and complete a working outline for their thesis. Students will begin to research and write their thesis during this class in earnest. The course format is working sessions focused on specific research-oriented tasks. Students will also complete by semester end a preliminary chapter of their thesis papers and work with the professor to develop a plan for the other two papers that will comprise the portfolio thesis.

Program Learning Objectives

By the end of this program, you will be able to:

- P1: Demonstrate expertise and leadership skills through course work and the thesis process in one or more areas of American politics, including: American political thought, political communication, the media and politics, political parties and elections, federalism, constitutional law, and political psychology and behavior. In addition, Students may gain deeper perspectives in these areas through the study of courses in comparative democracies. Demonstrate expertise through course work and the thesis process in one or more areas of American politics, including: American political thought, political communication, the media and politics, political parties and elections, federalism, constitutional law, and political psychology and behavior. In addition, Students may gain deeper perspectives in these areas through the study of courses in comparative democracies.
- P2: Evaluate the interplay of American political institutions, their political development, the political processes that take place within them, and the crafting of key decisions in the areas of politics and public policy-making.
- P3: Demonstrate proficiency with qualitative or quantitative research methodologies and exhibit critical thinking skills in important academic or public policy areas through the completion of the thesis portfolio.
- P4: Develop oral and written communication skills that enhance leadership qualities and career objectives in public sector, non-profit and private organizations.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- C1: Identify research questions in scholarly literature (P1, P2, P3, P4)
- C2: Select a topic for a thesis portfolio (P1, P2, P3, P4)
- C3: Articulate and identify original research questions for thesis papers (P1, P2, P3, P4)
- C4: Produce and critique critical literature reviews that motivate original research (P1, P2, P3, P4)
- C5: Collect, analyze, and critique quantitative and/or qualitative evidence to answer the chosen research question (P1, P2, P3, P4)

Required Texts and Other Materials

Textbooks

Please note that textbook requirements may vary by section.

These are all excellent reference books that you will find useful as you move into other RT courses.

- *The Craft of Research (4th Edition)*, Booth et al. (\$15)
- *They Say, I Say (4th Edition)*, Graff and Birkenstein (\$24)
- *Thinking Like a Political Scientist*, Howard (\$30)
- *Political Science Research Methods (9th Edition)*, Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff (\$32)
- *Reading and Writing for Civic Literacy (3rd Edition)*, Lazere and Womack (this is available as an ebook through JHU library)
- *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations (9th Edition)*, Turabian (older editions are acceptable and available at low cost used)
- *Methods for Policy Research: Taking Socially Responsible Action (2nd Edition)*, Majchrzak and Markus. (this is available as an ebook through JHU library)

Other equipment/software/websites/online resources

Zoom, PowerPoint.

Specific Technology Requirements & Skills for this Course

This course a computer with an Internet connection.

This course is taught online. Learning online requires basic knowledge of computer technology. At a minimum, you need to be able to:

- Use Blackboard. (Refer to the Blackboard Student Orientation course on your “My Institution” page.)
- Use MS Word documents; (Review [MS Word training and tutorials](#) for PC users, [Word Help](#) for Mac users.)
- Search the Internet.
- Manage files on your computer.
- Use email.

Evaluation and Grading Policy

Below is a brief description of the course requirements. These may vary by section.

Assignment	Brief Description	Evaluation	CLO #s
Course Engagement	Students will engage with discussion board assignments throughout the course.	40 points	All
Progressive Drafts	Students will submit interim drafts of their chapter.	60 points	All
Final Draft	Students will submit a final draft of their research paper.	400 points	All

Grading Scale and Criteria

This course will follow the [Advanced Academic Programs Grading Policies](#). The grading scale for students enrolled for credit is A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F.

The points earned in the course are divided by the total number of points in the class. The resulting percentage is converted to a letter grade as follows:

A	=	94-100%
A-	=	90-93.9%
B+	=	88-89.9%
B	=	84-87.9%
B-	=	80-83.9%
C	=	70-79.9%
F	=	below 70%

How the Final Paper is Evaluated

In the M.A. in Government program, your final thesis submission prior to graduation is typically evaluated as High Pass, Pass without revisions, Pass with Revisions, or Pass with Revisions and Review. Occasionally, we strongly urge students to delay their defense and enroll in thesis continuation to ensure that their final product is ready for defense. In rare cases, where a student refuses to enroll in thesis continuation, a thesis committee will fail a student at a defense.

Accordingly, your letter grade on the final paper will be based on an assessment of your final submission in alignment with the following characteristics of a successful thesis:

- Readily identifiable central thesis that makes an understandable claim.
- Synthetic, objective, efficient review of previous research that provides an overview of key background information and scholarship. A well-crafted literature review gives the reader the context required to understand how the paper advances a broader scholarly or policy conversation. The literature draws on peer reviewed sources (typically at least 20).

- Original and creative intellectual contribution and/or argument that draws on a carefully executed and well-supported theoretical or empirical analysis.
- Conclusion that summarizes key findings, identifies the original contribution of the paper, and suggests future avenues of inquiry.
- Excellent written composition skills, including skillful organization and transitions.
- Appropriate conventions and citation format.

Your letter grade is determined, converted to a percentage grade as follows, then multiplied by 400 total possible points to determine the number of points towards your final course grade.

A+ (100%) grade: A stellar project of superior quality. The instructor could imagine seeing this paper or something very similar to being submitted to an academic conference with only minor revisions. Note that while it is possible to earn an A+ on this individual assignment, the JHU grade scale for a course has a maximum of A.

A (97%) grade: The chapter displays a high degree of skill and care in preparation. While there may be ways these papers could be improved against some hypothetical “gold” standard, these papers show great effort and/or outstanding creativity in analysis and presentation. Revisions would serve to improve an already strong project, not to remedy any significant deficiency in the draft.

A- (92%) grade: The chapter aligns with assignment guidelines but would benefit from some degree of revision before it would be an exemplar of the assignment objectives. There are some identifiable but readily correctable shortcomings with this work. Minor substantive, structural or stylistic revisions would meaningfully strengthen the final product. On the whole, the quality of the work suggests that the student could follow up on these revisions successfully without further guidance.

B+ (89%) grade: The chapter falls significantly short on at least one guideline of the assignment or represents a marginal or incomplete effort in multiple dimensions. Significant revision is needed. At least one section of the paper (introduction, literature review, analysis, or conclusion) needs major reworking, or, alternatively, there is a significant flaw that runs throughout all sections of the document. Very roughly, this submission would require an amount of revision corresponding to approximately 25% of the total effort involved in producing the document.

B (86%) or *B-* (82%) grade: This is deficient on multiple dimensions, similar in nature to the problems with a B+ submission but to a greater or much more extensive degree. Several features of the paper could merit this assessment. The quality of writing could be inconsistent with graduate level expectations. The analysis could be superficial, poorly supported, based on untrustworthy sources, or be deceptive. There may be no cognizable central claim of the paper. The review of previous literature could be incomplete or overlook important context. This submission requires major, wholesale revision or reworking. In particular, students that earn a B- should consider it an indication that, unless they improve in future courses, they may be at risk of failing at their defense stage or be required to go into thesis continuation.

C (75%) or F (<70%) grade: These failing grades are reserved for submissions that indicate disengagement with the course, frustration of the course purposes, or a need for remediation. When a student earns a C or F, he or she must repeat Research and Thesis I, because the work this semester creates serious doubt as to whether the student will be able to complete the thesis portfolio.

How Course Engagement Factors into Your Grade

The most important component of your grade in this course is the final project. However, graduate education is in significant part about being able to collaborate with your peers and faculty members in building an intellectual environment and fostering your own scholarly and intellectual development. Recognizing this, excellent or poor course engagement can affect your grade, to a degree, as specified below.

In an online asynchronous course, engagement consists of active and meaningful participation in course discussions, presentations, and peer review. Throughout the semester, you will be presented with discussion topics and opportunities to review your peers' work. It is your responsibility to engage in these activities consistently and substantively, in a timely fashion.

For course engagement activities and progressive drafts, your submissions are assessed using the following procedure, with point values as specified in individual assignments posted on the discussion board.

- Full credit = 100%
- Submitted but below expectations = 92%
- Submitted but *de minimis* effort = 82%
- Not submitted = 0%

Assignment Submission

The instructor uses the [SafeAssign](#) tool for written assignments. Please review the JHU Ethics Statement below prior to submission.

Assignment Feedback

The instructor will aim to return assignments to you within 5-7 days following the due date, depending on the length of the assignment.

Late Policy

The instructor will accept late work without prior arrangement in the case of extenuating circumstances (such as hospitalization, childbirth, major accident, injury or bereavement). Students who suffer such a circumstance must notify the instructor as soon as possible of the extenuating circumstance that prevented them from submitting work on time and determine a deadline with the instructor for submitting the work.

If you know you are going to miss a deadline, please contact the instructor before the due date. Late work submitted more than seven days after the due date, without explanation, will not earn better than an A- (92%).

If you do not submit your final assignment in the course before the final day of the class, the

instructor will evaluate your most recent draft submission as if it were the final course assignment. As such, you should both email your final project to the instructor and post it to the course site.

Additional Course Logistics

Synchronous Sessions

The instructor may hold live, synchronous sessions in Zoom. Attendance for synchronous sessions, while not required, is highly recommended. If you cannot attend a synchronous session, you will be responsible for watching the recording at a later time.

Time Management Expectations

It is expected that you look ahead to schedule your time. Plan to complete coursework across several days of the week rather than all in one day. Be sure to consider how group activities impact your schedule as well.

Some assignments require that you work on them for multiple weeks. Be sure to review the assignment directions at the beginning of the course so that you can plan your time accordingly. Please seek help before becoming frustrated and spending a significant amount of time to resolve an issue.

Directions for Students

Next Steps: Carefully review the remaining sections of the syllabus before beginning the first week's activities, which are located in the **Lessons** area of the navigation menu in your online course.

Once you feel that you are ready to dive into the first week's activities, select **Lessons** on the navigation menu. Then, select **Week 1** to begin.

Course Schedule

This course is 15 weeks in length and includes individual and group activities in a weekly cycle of instruction. Each week begins on a Monday and ends on the following Sunday. Please review the course syllabus thoroughly to learn about specific course outcomes and requirements. Be sure to refer to the Checklist each week, which provides a week-at-a-glance and shows targeted dates for the completion of activities.

Course Participation

You are expected to log into Blackboard regularly throughout the week - a daily check-in is recommended. It is your responsibility to read all announcements and discussion postings within your assigned forums. You should revisit the discussion multiple times over the week to contribute to the dialogue.

Online Etiquette

In this course, online discussion will primarily take place in our online Voice Thread discussion

board. In all Voice Thread online communication, it is important to follow proper rules of online etiquette - communicating with others in a proper and respectful way. For helpful tips, please see these [Ground Rules for Online Discussions](#).

Course Protocols and Getting Help

Amendments to the Course

Changes to the course will be posted in the Announcements section of your course. Please check announcements every time that you log into your online course.

Course Communication

You should communicate often with your classmates and the instructor. The majority of communication will take place within the Discussion forums. When you have a question about an assignment or a question about the course, please contact your instructor, or post your question in the course's "Syllabus & Assignment Question" forum.

Email Communication

For questions regarding course activities and assignments that would be general interest to other students, please post those in the Discussion forum. If you have a question regarding course activities and assignments of a personal nature, please send an email message to the instructor and observe the following guidelines:

- Include the title of the course in the subject field (e.g., JHU Insert Name of Course).
- Keep messages concise, and check spelling and grammar.
- Sign your full name (the sender's email is not always obvious).

Feel free to contact your instructor with comments, questions, and concerns. All email messages will be sent to you via your JHU email account, so you should be in the habit of checking that account every day or you should ensure that your JHU email account forwards messages to another account of your choice.

Email messages will be responded to within 24-48 hours.

University Policies

General

This course adheres to all University policies described in the academic catalog. Please pay close attention to the following policies.

Academic Conduct

All JHU students assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the Johns Hopkins University's mission as an institution of higher education and with accepted standards of ethical and professional conduct. Students must demonstrate personal integrity and honesty at all times in completing classroom assignments and examinations, in carrying out their fieldwork or other applied learning activities, and in their interactions with others. Students are obligated to refrain from acts they know or, under the circumstances, have reason to know will impair their integrity or the integrity of the University. Students and faculty in Advanced Academic Programs are required to adhere to the academic integrity guidelines and process laid out in the [Graduate Academic Misconduct Policy](#). Refer to the website for more information regarding the academic misconduct policy.

If you use Safe Assign or Turnitin or any other plagiarism detection tool add the following: Please note that student work may be submitted to an online plagiarism detection tool at the discretion of the course instructor. If student work is deemed plagiarized, the course instructor will follow the policy and procedures governing academic misconduct.

Ethics & Plagiarism

JHU Ethics Statement: The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor.

Read and adhere to JHU's [Notice on Plagiarism](#).

Copyright Policy

All course materials are the property of JHU and are to be used for the students' individual academic purpose only. Any dissemination, copying, reproducing, modification, displaying, or transmitting of any course material content for any other purpose is prohibited, will be considered misconduct under the [JHU Copyright Compliance Policy](#), and may be cause for disciplinary action. In addition, encouraging academic dishonesty or cheating by distributing information about course materials or assignments which would give an unfair advantage to others may violate AAP's [Code of Conduct](#) and the University's [Student Conduct Code](#). Specifically, recordings, course materials, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed

for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any purpose other than use by students enrolled in the class. Other distributions of such materials by students may be deemed to violate the above University policies and be subject to disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

Johns Hopkins University is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities. Students with documented disabilities should contact the coordinator listed on the [Disability Accommodations](#) page. Further information and a link to the Student Request for Accommodation form can also be found on the [Disability Accommodations](#) page.

Dropping the Course

You are responsible for understanding the university's policies and procedures regarding withdrawing from courses found in the current catalog. You should be aware of the current deadlines according to the [Academic Calendar](#).

Getting Help

You have a variety of methods to get help on Blackboard. Please consult the resource listed in the "Blackboard Help" link for important information. If you encounter technical difficulty in completing or submitting any online assessment, please immediately contact the designated help desk listed on the [AAP online support page](#). Also, contact your instructor at the email address listed in the syllabus.

Title IX Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe and inclusive learning environment on our campus. I also have mandatory reporting responsibilities related to my role as a Responsible Employee under the Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures (which prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking), as well as the General Anti-Harassment Policy (which prohibits all types of protected status based discrimination and harassment). It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information that I learn of regarding sexual misconduct, as well as protected status based harassment and discrimination, with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). For a list of individuals/offices who can speak with you confidentially, please see Appendix B of the [JHU Sexual Misconduct Policies and Laws](#).

For more information on both policies mentioned above, please see: [JHU Relevant Policies, Codes, Statements and Principles](#). Please also note that certain faculty and other University community members also have a duty as a designated Campus Safety Authority under the Clery Act to notify campus security of certain crimes, as well as a duty under State law and University policy to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Diversity

Johns Hopkins is a community committed to sharing values of diversity and inclusion in order to achieve and sustain excellence. We firmly believe that we can best promote excellence by recruiting and retaining a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff and by creating a climate of respect that is supportive of their success. This climate for diversity, inclusion, and excellence is critical to attaining the best research, scholarship, teaching, health care, and other strategic goals of the Health System and the University. Taken together these values are recognized and supported fully by the Johns Hopkins Institutions leadership at all levels. Further, we recognize that the responsibility for excellence, diversity, and inclusion lies with all of us at the Institutions: leadership, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

For more information on JHU's commitment to diversity, please visit the [Diversity at JHU](#) website.

Student Conduct Code

The fundamental purpose of the Johns Hopkins University's (the "University" or "JHU") regulation of student conduct is to promote and to protect the health, safety, welfare, property, and rights of all members of the University community as well as to promote the orderly operation of the University and to safeguard its property and facilities. As members of the University community, students accept certain responsibilities which support the educational mission and create an environment in which all students are afforded the same opportunity to succeed academically.

For a full description of the code please visit the [Student Conduct Code](#) website.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, please complete the online course evaluation survey. These are an important tool in our work to improve the quality of our instruction and programs. The results of the course evaluations are kept anonymous – I will only receive aggregated data and comments for the entire class. An email with a link to the online course evaluation form will be sent to your JHU email address close to the end of the semester.

Appendix A

Tentative Course Schedule

Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each week's corresponding lesson in Blackboard. If you have any questions, please contact me at: cpaschall@jhu.edu.

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Any changes will be posted via Announcements in Blackboard.

Week	Program/Course Objectives (refer to assigned number. E.g. P1, C1, etc.)	Topics	Activities & Assessments
1	C1, C2, C3	Introducing the Thesis Project	DB
2	C1, C2, C3, C4	Writing Analytically	DB
3	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5	Social Inquiry	DB
4	C1, C2, C3, C4	Policy Research	Research Stmt
5	C4, C5	Engaging with Scholarly Research	DB
6	C4, C5	Research Design	DB; Draft 1
7	C4, C5	Qualitative Methods, Pt 1	DB
8	C4, C5	Qualitative Methods, Pt 2	DB
9	C4, C5	Qualitative Methods, Pt 3	DB; Draft 2
10	C4, C5	Writing Mechanics	DB
11	C4, C5	Concepts and Measurement	DB
12	C5	Quantitative Methods, Pt 1	Draft 3
13	C5	Quantitative Methods, Pt 2	
14	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5	Final Submission	Final Paper
15	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5	Presentations	Presentation

Appendix B

Course Topics & Readings

Week 1

Craft of Research, Chapters 1-4 (required); 5-6 (recommended)

Week 2

Rosenwasser and Stephen, Chapters 1 and 4
Lazere and Womack, Chapters 2, 5, 9

Week 3

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, Chapters 1-4

Week 4

Majchrzak and Markus, Chapters 1-5 (required), 6-7 (recommended)

Week 5

Graff and Birkenstein, Chapters 1-4, (5-7 recommended)

Week 6

Howard, Chapters 1-4

Week 7

Howard, Chapter 4 (review)
Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, Chapters 7-8

Week 8

Howard, Chapter 5

Week 9

Collier, David. "Understanding process tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823-830.

Zelizer, Julian E. "What political science can learn from the new political history." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 25-36.

Week 10

Turabian, Chapters 20-26

Week 11

Gerring, John. "What makes a concept good? A criterial framework for understanding concept formation in the social sciences." *Polity* 31, no. 3 (1999): 357-393.

Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. "Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research." *American political science review* (2001): 529-546.

Week 12

Howard, Chapter 7

Week 13

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, Chapters 12, 14