

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Humanities & Social Sciences
Programme:	Political Science
FHEQ Level:	6
Course Title:	Senior Dissertation in Political Science
Course Code:	POLS 6110
Total Hours:	320
Timetabled Hours:	22.5
Supervised Learning Hours:	45
Independent Learning Hours:	252.5
Credit	32 UK CATS credits 16 ECTS credits 8 UK credits

Course Description:

Senior Dissertation in Political Science is the capstone course of the major. Students produce a dissertation of between 6,000 to 8,000 words in length, on a topic relevant to the discipline. Students are guided through the various stages of the dissertation by a supervisor. Students orally present their research according to conference standards.

Prerequisites:

POLS 5301 Research Methods in Political Science and at least 70 Credits.

This course is only open to Political Science students.

Aims and Objectives:

- To help students develop research strategies focusing upon the development of critical thinking and reading skills, the clear articulation of a thesis/argument, and the selection of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks
- To help students identify a viable research project, generate a literature review, and write draft chapters, achieve the submission of a final dissertation, and make an oral presentation of their research
- To help students develop self-directed and more advanced research and writing strategies that reflect a systematic engagement with a key issue related to their specific interests in Political Science
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of Political Science
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

6AII; 6AIII; 6BII; 6BIII; 6CII, 6DI; 6DII

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrates the ability to develop critical responses to, and a systematic understanding of methodological approaches used in Political Science.
- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of key scholars, texts and debates in the discipline of Political Science, and the reflexive relationship between these and empirical practice.
- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of a core problem or issue in Political Science.
- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of major debates in Political Science, and uses sophisticated disciplinary analysis that utilises knowledge from cognate fields as is appropriate.
- Demonstrates the systematic ability to gather, organise and deploy highly complex ideas, evidence and information.
- Demonstrates the ability to act with minimal direction or supervision, to engage in self-reflection, use feedback to analyse own capabilities, appraise alternatives, and plan and implement actions.
- Demonstrates autonomy in taking personal responsibility for ethical and sustainable practices in the discipline and in locating their own normative views and cultural commitments within the practice of research.

Indicative Content:

- Formulating a research proposal with ethical reflection
- Formulating a thesis that binds theoretical and empirical content together.
- Producing rough draft chapters for editing and proof-reading
- Engaging with questions of theory and methodology
- Extending research sources
- Oral presentation of research

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be delivered face to face through a combination of lectures and interactive sessions. In addition to classroom activities, there are guided learning elements that are tutor led and arranged through Blackboard. These activities can be asynchronous online sessions, flipped classrooms, set readings with discussion boards or set guest lectures for example. Set activities are monitored by the instructor to ascertain student engagement. Students are encouraged to prepare for class and to play an active part, to raise questions, following-up ideas and interact with a wide range of provided material.

Indicative Text(s):

- Greetham, B. (2019) *How to Write Your Undergraduate Dissertation*, 3rd edn., Palgrave.
- Jegede, F. (2020) *Writing Successful Undergraduate Dissertations in Social Sciences: A Student Handbook*, 2nd ed., Routledge.
- Roselle, L., Spray, S. and Shelton, J. (2019) *Research and Writing in International Relations*, 3rd edn., Routledge.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First edition - November 2024		