

Seminar Snapshot

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			9/6: Course Introduction		9/8: Library Session <i>Library 206</i>	
	9/11: Work Session <i>Project Proposal DUE (via Drive)</i>		9/13: Workshop Project Proposals		9/15: Writing a Literature Review <i>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</i> <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	
	9/18: Work Session <i>Exploratory #1 Draft DUE (via Drive)</i>		9/20: Workshop Exploratory Drafts		9/22: Theoretical Framing	
	9/25: Work Session <i>Revised Exploratory #1 DUE (via Moodle)</i> <i>Yom Kippur</i>		9/27: Positionality		9/29: TBD	
	10/2: Work Session		10/4: Describing Methods/Research Design		10/6: <i>No meeting</i>	
	10/9: Work Session <i>Exploratory #2 Draft DUE (via Drive)</i>		10/11: Workshop Exploratory Drafts		10/13: Effective Public Presentations	
	10/16: Work Session <i>Revised Exploratory #2 DUE (via Moodle)</i>		10/18: Visual Communication		10/20: Work Session	
	10/23: Ongoing Project Presentations #1		10/25: Ongoing Project Presentations #2	<i>FALL BREAK</i>		
	10/30: Brass Tacks Work Session		11/1: Brass Tacks Discussion <i>Brass Tacks DUE by the start of class (via Drive)</i>		11/3: <i>No meeting</i>	
	11/6: Work Session Publications/Presentation Plans DUE (via Moodle)		11/8: Outstanding Writing		11/10: Work Session	
	11/13: Work Session <i>Rough Draft +Memo DUE (via Drive)</i>		11/15: Workshop Rough Drafts		11/17: Titles, Abstracts, and Audience	

	<p>11/20: <i>No meeting at regular time</i></p> <p>6:30-7:30 pm Optional celebratory gathering</p> <p><i>Epic Paper DUE (hard copy)</i></p>		<i>THANKSGIVING BREAK</i>		
	11/27: Work Session		11/29: Colloquium Planning and Tasks (e.g. publicity, program, intros by chairs)		12/1: Slide-Making Tips & Tricks
	12/4: Work Session		12/6: Presentation Rehearsals		12/8: Capstone Colloquium #1 <i>Harmon Room</i>
	12/11: Capstone Colloquium #2 <i>Harmon Room</i>		12/13: Final Work Session & Course Surveys		
	12/18: <i>Final Paper DUE (via Moodle)</i>				

Senior Research Seminar

M-W-F 9:40-10:40 am / Fall 2023 / Library 250

Facilitator: Paul Dosh

Email: dosh@macalester.edu

Office: Carnegie 203H

[Office Hours Sign-Up](#)

[Course Resources Page](#)

APSA Style Guide

[Anonymous Question/Suggestion Box](#)

COURSE OVERVIEW

- Publication and Presentation Options
- Expectations
- Students with Special Needs
- Students in Crisis
- Readings

ASSIGNMENTS

- General Notes on Assignments
- Summary of Assignments and Due Dates
- Links to Assignment Descriptions

SYLLABUS

- Peer Review Form for Research Papers

ASSESSMENT

Welcome! This research seminar is a workshop where Political Science majors come together to complete capstone projects with regular peer review and instructor guidance. Academic capstones are a work of original political science research and usually take the form of a major research paper suitable for publication or public presentation.

In addition to peer review and peer support and encouragement, our colloquium is also a place to advance your broader professional agenda. If you need to rehearse for an upcoming conference presentation, practice for a job interview, or refine a fellowship application, our seminar is a welcoming and supportive place to do so.

Publication and Public Presentation Options

You will develop a plan to publish or present your work in an academic or community forum. Typically, your publication or presentation will not occur until after the conclusion of our seminar, so whether or

not you follow through is ultimately up to you, but you are expected to set your plan in motion this semester. The four standard options are:

1) **Academic Journal Publication.** You submit a 25-30 page version of your paper for publication to an academic journal. [See list of journals and conferences.](#)

2) **Community Publication.** You submit a shortened and jargon-free version of your findings to a non-academic community publication. You will communicate with the editor prior to submitting your work, to ensure a good fit. Thus, it is likely you will have secured a commitment to publish your work before the end of the semester. Another option is to publish a version of your findings in a country that you studied, in English or another language.

3) **Academic Conference Presentation.** You present a 25-30 page version of your paper at a local, regional, or national conference. It can be an undergraduate, graduate, or professional conference. [See list of journals and conferences.](#)

4) **Community Presentation.** You arrange a presentation of your research findings in a community venue. This can be in the Twin Cities, in your hometown, or another place that you will visit over winter or spring break. Your presentation could be its own event or part of some larger gathering. If your project focuses on a community group, you could present your findings to the group that you studied.

Expectations

I expect us to co-create this seminar so that it is an equitable and inclusive experience for all participants. Our seminar should be a positive and supportive part of your capstone experience.

This syllabus offers a plan of action that may appear rigid, but is actually flexible. The syllabus is my effort to provide you with a “default” roadmap. We will collaboratively shape the contours of our seminar including setting dates, groups, and expectations for peer review.

I expect you to respect the work of your peers through thoughtful and constructive written and verbal critiques. Each of us must be open to the idea that we have good ideas to offer and that we can learn from each other.

I expect you to communicate with me about your needs, and if possible to communicate in advance if you will be late or absent. If you are feeling sick, *please do not attend class*. Get some rest, let me know, and I'll help you get caught up and adjust deadlines as needed. If you are isolating due to illness, but have no symptoms, you are welcome to Zoom into class.

We will invest in our learning community outside of seminar, by making an effort to attend each other's presentations, games or events, and a dinner with Paul and his family.

I expect you to choose a research topic about which you are enthusiastic! We want our seminar to be a place where students come together to work on exciting and important projects. Many alumni look back on capstones as one of their favorite college experiences, where they immersed themselves in a project.

I expect you to give equal attention to this 4-credit seminar as you would another class. Early in the semester, you should spend about six quality hours on your project (e.g., reading, taking notes, looking for sources, consulting with others, writing, thinking, making phone calls, visiting sites). Some weeks you will need to spend time reading assigned texts or reviewing the work of your peers. When a deadline approaches, you will spend more time writing, but these are guidelines to help pace yourself in the early weeks.

Students with Special Needs

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Students seeking accommodations based on disabilities should meet with [Disability Services](#). Students are encouraged to address any special needs or accommodations with me as soon as you become aware of your needs. I'm committed to working with you to develop creative solutions and accommodations that fit your needs.

Students Experiencing Challenge or Crisis

Macalester has professionally trained staff to support students experiencing crisis. When a personal challenge or crisis occurs, it has an academic impact and may require flexibility around course responsibilities. In such situations, talking to a trusted professor can be helpful. If I can be of help, please don't hesitate to talk to me.

Please be aware that I am not a confidential resource. Faculty are mandatory reporters of sexual violence—I am required to report any information you share about an experience of sexual violence (whether it occurred on or off campus, or before or after you came to Macalester) with the Office of Title IX & Equity. This allows the Office of Title IX & Equity to follow up to offer resources and options for support. To find confidential resources, visit <https://www.macalester.edu/title-ix/find-support>.

Readings

Most of your readings will be from a list of your own creation, focused on your project, as well as reading peer drafts. I will present on topics such as research design, theoretical framing, manuscript preparation and submission, and methodological issues, but much of our time will be devoted to workshopping each other's drafts. You will give informal updates and presentations on your project most weeks of the semester.

Common readings are hosted on Moodle but can be downloaded here if you are logged in to Moodle:

- Acevedo, Sara Maria, et al. 2015. "Positionality as Knowledge: From Pedagogy to Praxis." *Integral Review*, Vol., 11, No. 1: 28-46.
- Dolan, Julie. 2004. "Gender Equity: Illusion or Reality for Women in the Federal Executive Service?" *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (May-June): 299-308.
- Dosh, Paul. 2002. "Peace After Terror: Reconciling Justice and the Rule of Law in Argentina, El Salvador, and Guatemala." *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 29 No. 4 (July): 98-104.
- Mueller, Lisa. 2018. "Personal Politics without Clientelism? Interpreting Citizen-Politician Contact in Africa." *African Studies Review*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (July): 28-54.
- Peet-Martel, Jasper. 2014. "Deceptive Development and Democratization: Stadium Construction and Securitization in the FIFA World Cup Host Countries of South Africa and Brazil." *Journal of Politics and Society* (Spring): 140-154.
- Rebert, Trudy. 2005. "The Alternative Street: Gangs as Sites of Urban Governance." Exploratory paper written for Urban Politics in Latin America, Macalester College (Spring).
- Sample Titles and Abstracts (updated 2022).
- Saul, Dylan. 2015. "[Capacity and Necessity: The Appropriateness of Judicial Policymaking in Affirmative Action.](#)" *Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Fall): 58-76.
- Smith, Julia. 2011. "The Essential Role of Education in the Microfinance Strategy: A Commentary on Contemporary Neoliberalism." *Journal of Undergraduate International Studies*, Vol. 11 (Fall): 64-75.
- Strickling, Robert. 2012. "Funding, Coordination, and Public Opinion: Political Obstacles to Electrical Grid Modernization in the Americas." Paper presented at the European Commission for Political Research, in Exeter, England (June 28).
- Stüven, Merrit. 2017. "The UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Exceptionalism and Women's Reproduction in the Debate Around U.S. Ratification." *Journal of Politics and Society* (Fall): 97-111.
- Trostle, Hannah. 2015. "[Media, Identity, and Violence: American Indian Occupations 1969-1973.](#)" *Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring): 22-38.

ASSIGNMENTS

Default Citation Style: Use the APSA Style Guide to format citations and bibliography. If you use another style guide, you should include the name of the style guide along with your name/date at the start of paper.

Deadlines and Submission Format: Documents for peer review are due **via Drive, by midnight**. Written assignments to be graded due **via Moodle, by midnight**, except for the Epic Paper (due November 20), which should be submitted in hard copy.

Courses Resources Page: Access sample work [here](#).

On-Time Work Policy: Setting and meeting deadlines is an important professional skill. College is an important time to develop a reputation as someone who gets things done and gets things done on time. The syllabus provides "default" deadlines for assignments. I expect you to either meet these deadlines or set alternate deadlines in advance. If you cannot meet a deadline, it is your responsibility to *communicate*. Missing deadlines without communication will lower your Class Engagement grade.

Work for Peer Review: Because our daily agenda often *is* to review each other's rough drafts, meeting deadlines for peer review is important. Even if you are not satisfied with your draft, we are counting on you to circulate your work with enough time for us to read it.

Finished work to be graded: Deadlines for finished work can be more flexible, so long as you communicate. The most firm deadline is November 20, when your Epic Paper is due. If you miss this deadline, your assignment grade will be lowered one-third of a grade for each day late.

Final Date for Work to Receive Credit: The latest that work can be received in order to still receive partial or full credit is 1 week after the standard deadline.

Exception: The last day the Revised Final Paper can be accepted for credit is December 20 (the last day of the semester).

Policy on Incompletes: Please see the [College Catalog policy on Incompletes](#).

Capstone Assignments

Most papers to be read/graded only by Paul are submitted via Moodle.
Drafts for peer review are shared via Drive.

Due Date	Grade Percent	Assignment
Ongoing	15%	Class Engagement
Sept 11 (via Drive)	*	Project Proposal
Sept 18 (via Drive)	*	Exploratory Paper #1 Draft (& Memo to reviewers)
Sept 25 (via Moodle)	10%	Exploratory Paper #1
Oct 9 (via Drive)	*	Exploratory Paper #2 Draft (& Memo)
Oct 16 (via Moodle)	10%	Exploratory Paper #2
Oct 23, Oct 25	10%	Ongoing Project Presentation
Nov 1 (via Drive)	*	Brass Tacks
Nov 6 (via Moodle)	*	Publication/Presentation Plans
Nov 13 (via Drive)	*	Rough Draft (& Memo)
Nov 20 (hard copy)	20%	Epic Research Paper
Dec 8, Dec 11	15%	Final Project Presentation
Dec 18 (via Moodle)	20%	Revised Final Paper **



* Ungraded assignments contribute to Class Engagement grade.

** If grade on Revised Final Paper is less than a C-, then final semester grade cannot be higher than a D+ (i.e., in order for the course to fulfill the Poli Sci capstone requirement, your Revised Final Paper must earn at least a C-).

SYLLABUS

Date (meeting dates in bold)	Agenda	Assignment
Weds, Sept 6	Course Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introductions •Seminar overview •Asking a good research question (“Describe what, ask why, explain how”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DUE by 5 pm on Thursday, Sept 5: Complete this brief survey from our Research Librarians, to help them prepare our Sept 8 library session.
Fri, Sept 8	Library Session	
Mon, Sept 11	Work Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduce Exploratory Paper assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DUE: Project Proposal, via Drive (include your name in file title) (Word or gDoc format)
Weds, Sept 13	Workshop Project Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Write comments on each proposal. Either hard copy or electronic comments are fine.
Fri, Sept 15	Capstone Components: Literature Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Check in about Exploratory topics. •Discussion of Institutional Review Board (IRB) •Discuss sample Rebert (2005) exploratory paper •Discuss sample Dosh (2002) review essay •Work session / Consultations with Paul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rebert and Dosh discussion questions •Read Rebert (2005) •Read Dosh (2002) (read pp. 98-99; skim pp. 99-104)
Mon, Sept 18	Work Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review APSA Style Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DUE: Exploratory #1 Draft (via Drive)
Weds, Sept 20	Workshop Exploratory #1 Drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Comment on drafts of Exploratory #1
Fri, Sept 22	Capstone Components: Theoretical Framing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify how these articles <i>name</i>, <i>review</i>, <i>summarize</i>, or <i>engage</i> other scholarship to frame their own arguments. Do they situate their argument relative to one specific scholar or many? Or to specific approaches? Which articles cite literature more directly connected to their central question/argument? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read: Dolan 2004 (pp. 299-300); Mueller 2018 (pp. 28-31).
Mon, Sept 25	Work Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DUE: Exploratory #1 (via Moodle)
Weds, Sept 27	Capstone Components: Position and Positionality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss Acevedo (2015), position, and positionality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Acevedo discussion questions •Read Acevedo (2015)

Fri, Sept 29	TBD	
Mon, Oct 2	Work Session •Check-in about plans for Exploratory #2	
Weds, Oct 4	Capstone Components: Describing your Methods/Research Design Handout on Research Design/Methods	•DUE: Exploratory #2 Draft (via Drive)
Fri, Oct 6	<i>No meeting</i>	
Mon, Oct 9	Work Session •Introduce Ongoing Project Presentation assignment •Set Ongoing Presentations dates	•DUE: Exploratory #2 Draft (via Drive)
Weds, Oct 11	Workshop Exploratory #2 Drafts	•Comment on drafts of Exploratory #2
Fri, Oct 13	Capstone Components: Effective Public Presentations •We will watch and critique the initial minutes of sample lectures.	
Mon, Oct 16	Work Session •Introduce Publication/Presentation Plans assignment.	•DUE: Exploratory #2 (via Moodle) •To give you some inspiration for deciding what you'll propose in your Publication/Presentation Plans, glance at: Stüven (2017), Peet-Martel (2014), and Smith (2011).
Weds, Oct 18	Capstone Components: Visual Communication •Critique sample slides	
Fri, Oct 20	Work Session	
Mon, Oct 23	Ongoing Project Presentations #1	
Weds, Oct 25	Ongoing Project Presentations #2	
	<i>FALL BREAK</i>	
Mon, Oct 30	Brass Tacks Work Session •Introduce Brass Tacks assignment •Work time to begin Brass Tacks •Talk through your initial work in small groups. •Continue working on Brass Tacks	
Weds, Nov 1	Brass Tacks Discussion	•DUE by start of class: Brass Tacks (via

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Initial class time to read each other's Brass Tacks. •Group discussion of Brass Tacks documents. 	Drive)
Fri, Nov 3	<i>No meeting</i>	
Mon, Nov 6	Work Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Check-in and share your Publication/Presentation Plans •Introduce Rough Draft assignment 	•DUE: Publication/Presentation Plans (via Moodle)
Weds, Nov 8	Capstone Components: Outstanding Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss Write Well microlectures •Workshop on revision •Critique Peet-Martel (2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •View any five of the 1-minute Write Well Microlectures •Skim: Peet-Martel (2014) (<i>also, here's a Mac News story about his capstone</i>)
Fri, Nov 10	Work Session	
Mon, Nov 13	Work Session	•DUE: Rough Draft + Memo (via Drive)
Weds, Nov 15	Workshop Rough Drafts	•Your peer review comments are due in class to the author and to Paul
Fri, Nov 17	Capstone Components: Titles, Abstracts, and Audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Critique/edit sample abstracts and Strickling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read all five titles/abstracts in Sample Abstracts. Choose two of them, and line-edit those two titles/abstracts, making your own revisions to improve clarity and style. Please submit this to Paul at the end of class (either email or hard copy). •Skim Strickling (2012). His intended audience is both scholars and policy practitioners. How do his title, abstract, theoretical framework, argument, and visual aids speak to those audiences?
Mon, Nov 20 6:30-7:30 pm	 Epic Paper Celebration!  Optional gathering: Bring your paper to turn in, and enjoy Cafe Latte cakes and conversation.	•DUE: Epic Research Paper (hard copy due @ 6:30 pm)
<i>THANKSGIVING BREAK</i>		
Mon, Nov 27	Work Session	
Weds, Nov 29	Planning for Capstone Colloquium	
Fri, Dec 1	Capstone Components: Slide Tips & Tricks	•Bring a laptop to class.

	•Introduce Final Presentation assignment	
Mon, Dec 4	Work Session	
Weds, Dec 6	TBD	
Fri, Dec 8	Presentation Rehearsals & Course Surveys •Check in about Colloquium tasks. •End-of-course surveys	•Come prepared to practice your presentation/slides for 1-2 classmates.
Mon, Dec 11 <i>Harmon Room</i>	Capstone Colloquium #1: Final Presentations	
Weds, Dec 13 <i>Harmon Room</i>	Capstone Colloquium #2: Final Presentations	
Mon, Dec 18		•DUE: Final Paper (via Moodle)

Peer Review Form for Research Papers

Name of Paper-Writer:

Your Name:

Argumentation

- 1) In one sentence, try and summarize the main argument. If the argument is unclear, make note of this.
- 2) Is the logic of the argument clear? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the argument?
- 3) Does the author introduce alternative explanations? Are they serious alternatives or "straw man" arguments? Does the author convincingly refute these alternatives?

Research

- 4) What parts of the project seem well researched? What areas need further attention?
- 5) Does the paper choose depth, breadth, or a balance of the two? Is this the right choice given the argument?

Writing

- 6) Does the paper's organization fit/support the central argument? How could organization be improved?
- 7) What parts of the paper are best written? What parts need further revision?
- 8) Are topic sentences and transitions clear and helpful? Whether or not subheadings are included, are they necessary? How do/would subheadings help/hinder the communication of this paper?
- 9) Is the paper's length appropriate given its content? Could the argument be made more effectively in fewer pages? Or would the argument be enhanced by a longer paper?

Theoretic Framework

- 10) Does the author engage academic works as scholars in a conversation or as mere fact archives? How could this be improved?
- 11) Is the author contributing to a scholarly conversation or simply summarizing it? What suggestions do you have here?

Creativity

- 12) What creative aspects grab your attention (e.g. visuals, clever framework, innovative approach)?
- 13) What ideas can you offer to make this research project even more engaging?