

Political Science B.A. Colloquium

PLSC 29800, Section 5 – Autumn 2013

Time: F 3:00-4:50
Room: CL 405

Instructor: Christopher D. Berk
Email: chrisberk@uchicago.edu
Office Hours: By appointment
Pick Hall, Room 123

Description

The colloquium is designed to help students carry out their B.A. thesis research and offer feedback on their progress. The class meets weekly in the autumn and every other week in the winter.

Course Structure

This is a seminar course, and many of the sections will be run as a peer workshop.

Requirements & Grading

Participation (30%): Your participation grade has two components. First, students are expected to read or complete assigned material before class and to *contribute to discussion regularly* and thoughtfully. Please bring the papers or readings to class, as we will reference texts in discussion. Attendance is mandatory. Students with two unexcused absences will fail the participation section of the course.

Second, starting on week 4, you are required to *post a prepared question* about that week's papers on the Chalk discussion board by midnight before each class session. Be prepared to present your question at the beginning of class. A good question is one that directly engages the methods, assumptions, or arguments of the workshop paper. Your question should cite a specific passage, term, or concept that you are puzzled about, and you should also offer a possible interpretation or answer.

Papers (70%): There are *four writing assignments* for this course, three shorter papers (10% each) that build up to a final, fleshed-out proposal (40%). The shorter papers will be due at about the 4th, 6th, and 9th weeks of the quarter, depending on the group to which you're assigned (A or B). Your final proposal is due on **December 9th**.

- * **Writing assignment 1 (Research Question):**
3-4 pages. Define the debate, pose your question, and identify and define central concepts.
- * **Writing assignment 2 (Literature Review):**
3-4 pages. Elaborate the scholarly context. Identify different sides of the debate, and different literatures. What is at stake in these debates?
- * **Writing assignment 3 (Study Design):**
8-10 pages. Describe in detail your question, its importance in a larger intellectual debate, and how your study design can answer that question.
- * **Writing assignment 4 (Final proposal):**
8-12 pages. Revise your third writing assignment.

Except in documented cases of illness or emergency, late papers will lose 5 percentage points per day. However, each student may, at his or her discretion, take a 24-hour extension for one of the assignments, no questions asked. If you are using your extension please indicate this on the first page of your paper.

Please submit all papers electronically in an *editable* format (.doc, .docx, .odf, etc.) to chrisberk@uchicago.edu no later than 5pm on the due date. All papers should have a title, pagination, and be double-spaced in size-12 Times New Roman font.

Computer Use During Class

You're welcome to use a computer (tablet, etc.) in class, but if you bring a computer you will be expected to post copies of your class notes on the course wiki (on Chalk, in the "Tools" submenu) following the class session to share with others. If you are not willing to do this, do not bring a computer with you.

Disability Accommodation

Students in need of accommodation for an impairment and/or disability should contact me as soon as possible. You should also contact the Coordinator for Disability Services (773-834-4469), as outlined in the Student Handbook, to document your needs and determine a reasonable accommodation.

Colloquium Schedule

Week 1

10.4

- * Introduction. Bring to class a one paragraph description of your topic [300 words].

Week 2

10.11

- * Library Resources Training Session. Meet at 3PM in room 523 at the Reg [JRL 523].

Week 3

10.18

- * Outline & Annotated Bibliography. The outline should be no more than a 1000 words and include your topic area and research question. The annotated bibliography should have at least 5 sources.

Week 4

– [Group A & B] Writing assignment 1 due Oct. 21 –

10.25

- * Group A.

Week 5

11.1

- * Group B.

Week 6

– [Group A] Writing assignment 2 due Nov. 4 –

11.8

- * Group A.

Week 7

– [Group B] Writing assignment 2 due Nov. 11 –

11.15

- * Group B.

Week 8

– *[Group A] Writing assignment 3 due Nov. 18* –

11.22

* Group A.

Week 9

– *[Group B] Writing assignment 3 due Nov. 25* –

11.29

* NO CLASS

Week 10

12.6

* Group B.

– *[Group A & B] Final Proposal due Dec. 9* –

Updated September 28, 2013