

**Wheaton College  
Norton, Massachusetts**

**Honors Thesis Guidelines  
Political Science Department**

**Requirements and Deadlines**

1. B+ average or better in major and in independent work (Pol. Sci. 500 a, b) for the thesis, and a B average or better in all courses.
2. Two semesters of independent work (Pol. Sci. 500 a, b) **beyond the 10 courses required for the major**. In general, no one-semester thesis projects will be approved by the Department.
3. Faculty thesis advisor must approve the general thesis topic before a student registers for the first semester of 500 work.
4. Student must submit a copy of the research proposal to all members of the Political Science Department no later than October 5. The research proposal should be about 3-5 typed pages and should follow the research proposal guidelines listed below. All members of the Political Science department must approve the proposal (albeit with suggestions) in order for the student to continue with the work.
5. With the approval of the thesis advisor, student should establish deadlines for the completion of various stages of the research and writing. All thesis students must complete and turn in to their advisor a draft of at least half of the thesis during the first week of the second semester. The thesis advisor will make a decision before the drop/add deadline as to whether the student should continue with the second semester of thesis work.
6. In consultation with the thesis advisor, student should select a faculty committee consisting of the thesis advisor, one or two other members of the department, and at least one member from another department by the end of the first semester. The student is responsible for keeping all faculty members on the committee informed of progress on the thesis. The committee will conduct the oral examination on the thesis during final exam week of the second semester. The student is responsible for providing each member of the committee with a copy of the thesis one week before the oral examination.

7. The examining committee will determine the final grade for the two semesters of individual research and the thesis. The grade shall be based on the thesis, the oral examination, the student's general knowledge in the major, and the extent of his/her initiative and independence in carrying out the project.
8. Students should follow the Registrar's guidelines regarding due dates and format for completion and submission of the final copies of the thesis.

### **Research Proposal Guidelines**

The proposal should be approximately 3-5 typed pages (double spaced) and should contain the following information:

1. A clear, concise statement of the general topic.
2. The question (or questions) that you will answer in the thesis or the hypothesis that you will test, along with a statement about why these questions are important or interesting.
3. A statement of how you intend to carry out the research, what kind of data you will gather to answer your research questions, the source of the data, any problems that you anticipate in gathering the data or accessing appropriate sources. In other words, you need to show that you have thought, in some detail, about how you are going to conduct the research.
4. A brief discussion of what you expect you will find once you conduct the research, and a general outline of how you intend to develop your topic in the thesis.
5. A working bibliography of sources that you have or intent to consult for the project. While this does not have to be a complete bibliography, it must be extensive enough to indicate your familiarity with the resources in this area.