

SENIOR SEMINAR: CRITICAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Political Science 344

Fall 2011

Wednesdays, 1:30 - 4:20 pm, Old Main 205

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Chris's Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
other times by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW: This seminar will examine in detail five presidential elections whose conduct and outcome have affected the course of U.S. politics and history. Five decades ago the political scientist Walter Burnham coined the term **critical elections** to describe presidential races that sparked a fundamental realignment of support for the two major political parties. This seminar will interpret “critical” more broadly, focusing on elections that have had significant, long-term impacts on the events that followed. The course readings will demonstrate different approaches to election analysis, helping to guide student choices about how to structure thesis research.

The seminar covers these five elections:

- **1796 and 1800:** The landmark 1800 election, with the same major candidates as in 1796, marked the first transition of power from one political party to another under the Constitution, and is also noteworthy for the outcome being decided in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- **1912:** Woodrow Wilson prevailed in a three-way race where the Republican vote split between two candidates; significant strains of the Progressive movement were constrained by Wilson's win, and the question of American involvement in World War I and the nascent movement toward international institutions are also greatly affected by this election.
- **1960:** Significant for several reasons: the heightened importance of television and image, the first presidential debates, and the election of the first Catholic president.
- **1996:** Probably the least significant in an historical sense, this election nonetheless highlights some trends that have endured and deepened in future races. Most notably, 1996 shows the importance of running continuously from beginning to end, something Bill Clinton successfully accomplished on his road to an easy reelection victory. All the other aspects of modern campaigns that analysts focus on – which we will also review in Stephen Wayne's **The Road to the White House 2012** – are highlighted in this race.

THESIS TOPICS: Research projects in this seminar may cover **any single presidential election**, but not any of the elections covered in detail during the seminar: that is, any election besides 1796, 1800, 1912, 1960, and 1996. Covering all aspects of an election is not possible or desirable given the time and expected paper length; therefore you will have to **focus** on some aspect(s) of your chosen election. This can include, for example: the historical context (that is, the political events leading into your chosen election OR the long-term impact of your chosen election), an analysis of one or

more candidates, analysis of some third party candidate; evaluation of intraparty politicking (e.g. the nomination process, the party convention), the impact of significant campaign events such as debates or advertisements on the outcome, analysis of voter choices and electoral patterns; or some other significant aspect. *It will be acceptable for more than one student to write about the same election.*

CLASS FORMAT: Class time will be devoted to short presentations by the instructor; discussions of readings led by the instructor or students; and whatever simulations, small group activities, or other such methods that seem appropriate. This is a seminar that requires the efforts of all participants; **you are responsible for all reading in advance of class, as an obligation to your classmates and instructor.** If you read and think about ideas in advance, our discussions will be far more stimulating and productive, perhaps even fun.

BOOKS: These five required books are available in the Book Mark:

- James Chace, **1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft and Debs – the Election that Changed the Country**
- Gary Donaldson, **The First Modern Campaign: Kennedy, Nixon, and the Election of 1960**
- John Ferling, **Adams vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800**
- Gerald M. Pomper et al., **The Election of 1996: Reports and Interpretations**
- Stephen Wayne, **The Road to the White House 2012 (9th edition ONLY)**

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:

Take-home exam (due December 7)	25%
Attendance/participation/discussion q's	15%
Leading class	5%
Poster (due December 14)	5%
THESIS PAPER (due December 19)	50%

(several smaller assignments related to the thesis paper will also be required)

GRADING SCALE:

A =	93.000 average and above
A- =	90.000 through 92.999
B+ =	87.000 through 89.999
B =	83.000 through 86.999
B- =	80.000 through 82.999
grades C+ and lower	calculated on same scale; minimum avg. for passing (D) = 60.000

TAKE-HOME EXAM: This exam will cover the readings discussed in the course and will consist of two or three short essays (no more than 6 total pages). More details will be forthcoming as the exam approaches.

ATTENDANCE: Reading the material in advance, and thinking about it, are minimal expectations for this class. However, there is no substitute for the classroom setting as a place to reinforce, rethink, and/or extend what you have read. Hence **I expect you to attend every Wednesday without exception.** If for some reason you cannot attend, I expect to be notified in advance and I expect that you will make up the missed class in some reasonable manner of my choosing.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in a seminar class certainly involves more than just talking; listening to your classmates and professor, and showing your engagement with the course material and classroom work, are also forms of participation that I will take note of. Speak when you have something to say, not simply because it's expected of you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: For each class session, someone will be designated to lead class (either Chris or a pair of students, see next paragraph for details). **ALL other students not leading class that week** will be expected to send one or two discussion questions to me (cgilbert@gustavus.edu) **by 7 pm on the evening before class (Tuesday evenings)**. I will compile these questions and post them to the course website by 9 pm Tuesday evening. **Everyone is responsible for printing the questions, looking them over, and bringing them to class on Wednesday afternoons.**

LEADING CLASS: Once during the semester, **pairs** of students (a pair is equal to two people) will be responsible for leading at least **the first hour** of our three-hour class period. The schedule for who leads when will be determined at the second class meeting (September 14). Your responsibilities:

- Meet with each other **the week before you are leading** to discuss what you intend to do during your time in charge.
- Prepare a brief (no more than one double-spaced page) handout (to be distributed in class) highlighting crucial aspects of the reading, the most important points from your perspective, and areas for further discussion. This handout should NOT include discussion questions (since the rest of the class is responsible for these). This handout should also be e-mailed to Chris so it can be posted on the class website.
- Prepare an activity of some sort during your hour – examples include some small group activity, a video clip (not to take more than 15 minutes), a simulation, perhaps some short additional reading that relates to the day's topic, anything – and be prepared to lead the class through the activity. Your activity should engage the entire class in some fashion that helps to illuminate and further discuss the day's reading. It is acceptable for your activity to end up taking more than just the required one hour.

THESIS PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS: During the final class session (Wednesday, December 14), each student will make a brief presentation on his/her thesis, including the final version of your poster (see below for more). More presentation details will be posted before the final class session.

POSTERS, RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM on HONORS DAY: All political science thesis writers participate in the political science research symposium on Honors Day (Saturday, May 5, 2012) by preparing a poster. To facilitate this for students taking a seminar in the fall, preparation of your poster is built into this class. Your poster is due at the final class session, and will be stored in the Poli Sci department until Honors Day, when it will be displayed (whether or not you can attend). See pages 14-15 for full poster details.

THESIS DETAILS: All things related to your thesis are explained starting on page 7.

IMPORTANT CLASS POLICIES

HAND THINGS IN ON TIME, PLEASE: Generally, grades for specific assignments will be reduced at least one letter grade for each day late. P. 13 details the penalties for handing your thesis in late.

CELL PHONES, IPODS, and other such electronic devices: Turn them OFF when class is in session – no ringing, no vibrating, no IM, no distractions for yourself or your classmates. Using a laptop to take notes is acceptable as long as you perform NO non-class-related tasks while doing so (e.g. do not disrespect your professor and classmates by checking Facebook during class!!).

SCHEDULE CONFLICTS: Students with advance notice of schedule conflicts (e.g., school-related activities that conflict with our class time) should present a list of these to Chris as soon as the conflict dates are known. There should be few or no schedule conflicts that cannot be resolved – the key is early notification. The Academic Schedule Conflicts policy found in the *College Catalog* exists to inform you of your obligations and to help us work out any problems.

POLICY ON EXCEPTIONS: Plan on taking all exams at the appointed time and completing all other work by indicated due dates. Because of events beyond your control (e.g. a major illness), sometimes this is not possible despite good-faith efforts on your part. Therefore, exceptions and extensions will be considered on an individual basis. **NOTE: nonacademic personal commitments and end-of-semester travel plans are NOT valid reasons for requesting extensions or exceptions. Nor are activities scheduled well in advance, e.g. extracurricular activities or obligations for other classes.** As with class attendance, please inform Chris well in advance of such conflicts. This policy is consistent with the Academic Schedule Conflicts policy found in the *College Catalog*. For further discussion of this issue, see the **Incomplete grades** section on page 9 of the syllabus.

ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH: Support for English Language Learners (ELL) and Multilingual students is available via the College's ELL Support staff person, Andrew Grace (agrace@gustavus.edu or x7395). He can meet individually with students to consult about academic tasks and to help students seek other means of support, including providing students with a letter to me that explains and supports academic accommodations (e.g. additional time on tests, additional revisions for papers). In addition, ELL and multilingual students can seek help from peer tutors in the Writing Center. **I am very happy to discuss this process and determine accommodations based on specific individual needs with any student who qualifies.**

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES: Gustavus Adolphus College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or you think you may have a disability of any nature) and, as a result, need reasonable academic accommodation to participate in class, take tests or benefit from the College's services, then you should speak with the Disability Services Coordinator, for a confidential discussion of your needs and appropriate plans. Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course outcomes. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; therefore, to maximize your academic success at Gustavus, please contact Disability Services as early as possible. Disability Services (<https://gustavus.edu/advising/disability/>) is located in the Advising and Counseling Center; Disability Services Coordinator Laurie Bickett (lbickett@gustavus.edu or x6286) can provide further

information. **I am very happy to discuss this process and determine accommodations based on specific individual needs with any student who qualifies.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Plagiarism or cheating in any form corrupts the intent of all that we do as a community of scholars. Consistent with the Gustavus Academic Honesty Policy (found in the *College Catalog*) and the Honor Code (also in the *College Catalog*), the policies and procedures for this course are as follows:

- Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy will result in at least a grade of 0 for the specific assignment, and failure for the course in the case of egregious violations. Students accused and/or penalized for these violations, AND students who become aware of such violations, have specific rights and responsibilities, as outlined in the Honor Code section of the *College Catalog*.
- Your take-home exam and your thesis must contain the Honor Code statement "**On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.**" Your signature should accompany this statement.
- Students CAN consult with each another and with the professor while working on assignments and preparing for exams; these are examples of "authorized aid." Individual papers should consist only of each student's own work.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE: TOPICS, READING, ASSIGNMENTS

The web version of this syllabus will have links to the discussion questions under the "Class topic, readings" column; handouts from student-led classes will also be posted. If our semester schedule changes for some reason, the web version will be changed and should be considered the "official" schedule; I promise not to change the schedule without alerting you first!

(Left column dates listed are WEDNESDAYS/class days, except at the very end)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Class topic, readings</i>	<i>Thesis assignments & other assignments</i>
September 7	Introduction to presidential election analysis; review syllabus, thesis guidelines, library resources Nothing to read for today	Start to figure out your thesis topic! Consult with Chris individually this week or next
September 14	The "basics" of presidential elections: a one-week crash course Read Wayne 1, 3, 7, 9	Consult w/ Chris individually by end of week Dates for students leading class will be determined in class this week

September 21	1796/1800: Adams v. Jefferson, take one Read Ferling chapters 1-8	M September 19: e-mail Chris your general topic by today 1 paragraph about topic due in class Peer groups will be set up, posted by class time on Wednesday
September 28	1800: analyzing the rematch Read Ferling 9-end	F September 30: preliminary source list due to Chris by 5 pm
October 5	NO CLASS – NOBEL	Peer groups to meet this week
October 12	1912: the main players Read Chace Prologue, 1-8	M October 10: organization and progress report due to Chris and peer group by noon Peer groups meet this week to discuss progress reports
October 19	1912: evaluating the outcome and consequences Read Chace 9-end	F October 21: annotated bibliography due to Chris by 5 pm
October 26	1960: setting the stage Read Donaldson, <i>First Modern Campaign</i> Preface, 1-6	Consult with Chris this week or next
November 2	1960: assessing the outcome Read Donaldson, <i>First Modern Campaign</i> 7-end	Consult with Chris by end of this week F November 4: first 4-5 pages and outline of thesis due to Chris, peer group by 5 pm
November 9	Modern election analysis: a second, one-week crash course Read Wayne 2, 4, 5, 6	Peer groups meet this week to discuss first 4-5 pages & outlines
November 16	1996: setting up Dole v. Clinton Read Wayne 8 AND <i>The Election of 1996</i> , Intro (Burnham), 1 (Mayer), 2 (Just), 3 (Keeter)	Keep researching and writing!!
November 23	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving break	T November 22: “first half” (12-15 pages) of thesis due to Chris before you leave for Thanksgiving break
November 30	1996: how Clinton won, what it means Read <i>The Election of 1996</i> , 4 (Corrado), 5 (Pomper), Conclusion (McWilliams)	Chris to return “first half” papers with comments by class time Take-home exam posted on November 30

December 7	NO CLASS MEETING; everyone will meet with Chris on this date, during the usual class time, for a progress report (likely a 10-minute meeting)	W December 7: take-home exam due by 5 pm F December 9: complete rough draft of thesis due to Chris and peer group by 5 pm
December 14	Presentations, with posters	Poster due in class today
F December 16 (1 st day of final exam period)		By this date: peer group members will return thesis drafts & comments to authors, send overall comments to Chris Chris will have all thesis drafts ready for return by this date
Monday December 19 (next to last day of final exam period)		ONE paper copy of thesis due by 12 NOON at Chris's office, without exception!! E-copy (pdf preferable) of thesis also due by 12 noon

THESIS DETAILS!!

This section of the syllabus spells out all expectations for your thesis. This information, plus regular meetings and feedback on your research and writing from me and from one another, will assist you in completing an excellent piece of scholarship by the end of the semester.

THESIS TOPICS (reprinted from pp. 1-2): Research projects in this seminar may cover **any single presidential election**, but not any of the elections covered in detail during the seminar: that is, any election besides 1796, 1800, 1912, 1960, and 1996. Covering all aspects of an election is not possible or desirable given the time and expected paper length; therefore you will have to **focus** on some aspect(s) of your chosen election. This can include, for example: the historical context (that is, the political events leading into your chosen election OR the long-term impact of your chosen election), an analysis of one or more candidates, analysis of some third party candidate; evaluation of intraparty politicking (e.g. the nomination process, the party convention), the impact of significant campaign events such as debates or advertisements on the outcome, analysis of voter choices and electoral patterns; or some other significant aspect. *It will be acceptable for more than one student to write about the same election.*

GENERAL GUIDELINES: Your thesis represents the most sophisticated, in-depth body of work you will complete for the political science major. To be considered an effective piece of scholarship, the thesis should make reference to relevant existing works in the academic literature, discussing them as necessary; it should offer some unique angle of analysis or commentary on your subject; and it should draw some clear conclusions based on what you have done. *It may include your own opinions*

and ideology, but as a scholarly work the conclusions must be supported by more than simply personal opinion. The thesis represents the capstone to your political science major, and it should contain the best work – in terms of in-depth research and effective writing – you have to offer.

LENGTH, FORMAT: The thesis should be about **25-30 pages** in length; 20 pages or less is considered marginally acceptable and will be graded as such. Some theses are much longer, but quality is far more important than quantity. As a polished scholarly work, the final product should be absolutely free of spelling and other grammatical errors. **It MUST appropriately reference all types of sources with some standard citation format (in-text citations, footnotes and/or endnotes), and it must have a complete bibliography.** No facts or ideas should be used without proper reference to their source(s) of origin. Use the style guidelines set forth in an approved style guide such as the one published by the American Political Science Association; I will make copies available at my office and in the department lounge area.

The thesis should start with a **title page** and it should have an **interesting title**, too. It should be divided into appropriate sections/chapters with headings and subheadings, to make the paper easier for the reader to comprehend and follow. These also make it easier for you to write! Theses are usually written chapter by chapter – it has worked in the past and it will work for you, too.

SOME GENERAL ADVICE: For any large project, organization is critical. **Decide** what the appropriate sections/chapters are, determine **how much research and writing time** is needed for each one, and **allocate** your time accordingly. Write the chapters in whatever order makes sense to you. Finally, the conclusion is ALWAYS best if written last, but the conclusion still needs to be written well; a poorly (often hastily!) written conclusion detracts from the quality and impact of the entire thesis. Give the conclusion the time and effort it deserves.

THESIS GRADING GUIDELINES

Generally speaking, an "A" paper covers a topic thoroughly, presents a clear theme with convincing evidence to support your argument, is **very** well written, and has well chosen, high quality, properly documented sources. An "A" is earned by meeting **all** of these criteria, not just some of them. Papers that meet the substantive criteria but which contain numerous writing errors will not earn an "A" grade.

A "B" paper covers a topic well, presents a clear theme, but may not be completely logical or organized in presentation of supporting evidence, has writing problems or is somewhat sloppy in presentation. Research for a "B" paper tends to be substantial but not detailed enough.

A "C" paper has no consistent theme, does not cover a topic in much depth, has logical or organizational flaws, has significant writing problems, and has a bare minimum of sources with less than consistent citation of sources. Papers with inconsistent citations – even if well-written otherwise – are likely to earn a "C" grade and no more.

"D" papers fail even to reach these low standards; "D" papers are short, poorly researched and written, and poorly cited. A paper that cites direct quotes and nothing else is likely to earn at best a "D."

"F" papers are bad papers in all respects. A thesis that is extremely short and/or poorly conceived in several ways can also be given a failing grade (yes, it has happened). Plagiarism, or a near-complete failure to document sources, will definitely result in an "F" grade. Note that a student can receive an F on a thesis and still pass POL-344 with solid grades on other assignments; a student can also pass the thesis but still fail the class. Failing POL-344 means you also receive an "F" for POL-099; another research seminar must then be successfully completed to graduate with a political science major.

Plus and minus grades are given where appropriate.

INCOMPLETE GRADES: The *College Catalog* states that grades of I (incomplete) are to be given "at the discretion of the **instructor** when a student is unable to finish coursework because of medical disability or problems of comparable seriousness beyond the student's control." Read and consider this policy **carefully** – note the stated reasons for giving an Incomplete, and note what's missing (example: you were busy and did not begin your thesis until [insert any date you can think of] = no incomplete). All decisions about granting Incomplete grades will be consistent with this policy. In addition, if I agree to give you an Incomplete grade, you and I will make a written agreement on a specific due date for completion of the final thesis; *this date becomes binding, with appropriate penalties for theses that are turned in beyond the new due date*. Under College rules, an I grade automatically becomes an F if not completed by the end of the following semester (May 2012). **The specific assignments and intermediate due dates outlined in the next section are designed in large measure to eliminate the likelihood of an Incomplete grade being contemplated by you – get them done and it's nearly impossible not to complete a good thesis.**

STEPS IN COMPLETING THE THESIS

Each of these assignments is **REQUIRED**; failure to complete any of them will reduce your final thesis grade. **Regular, steady progress from the outset is the way to complete a thesis.** Note that your thesis-related assignments overlap with other seminar requirements; **you need to plan on being ready for each class, AND finding time to work on your thesis step by step.**

Wednesday, September 7 (first class meeting): As part of the introduction to the course, Chris will review the library's online POL-344 guide about appropriate sources available for studying presidential elections. We will schedule some library time as a class later on, if the class feels this will be helpful.

First two weeks of semester (by Friday, September 16): consult with Chris (either in person or via e-mail) to discuss your thesis topic or possible topics.

Monday, September 19 (start of week 3): **TOPIC TO BE SETTLED.** Everyone should have a topic (an election to be studied) by this date. **E-mail Chris your general topic by this date.**

Wednesday, September 21 (third class meeting): **DUE IN CLASS: 1 paragraph about your topic.** What election will you study and what is the general focus of your thesis? Why have you chosen this? What background knowledge (if any) do you have pertaining to this topic? Where are you going first to begin your research?

Wednesday, September 21: PEER GROUPS ESTABLISHED by this date: Based on your topics, Chris will set up groups of 3-4 students each, matched by election and/or topic in as logical a manner as possible. You will meet with your peer group a limited number of times during the semester, outside of class time. Peer group assignments are final once established. It is a good idea to organize your peer group as soon as possible, to establish meeting times that work for **everyone** in the group.

Friday, September 30 (end of week 4): **PRELIMINARY LIST OF SOURCES DUE BY 5 PM.** This list is of course not the final list, but it should include sources you have identified so far; a list of 6-10 sources would be appropriate by this point. Start researching sources as soon as you have a topic in mind. This list of sources does not have to be in “perfect” bibliographic format – but it will save you a great deal of time to get the bibliographic formatting right the first time.

Week of October 3 (week 5): because we have no class this week due to Nobel Conference, **PEER GROUPS WILL MEET** this week outside of class time, to get to know each other and become familiar with one another’s topics and concerns. One member of the group should e-mail Chris a brief report about this meeting.

Monday, October 10 (start of week 6): **ORGANIZATION & PROGRESS REPORT DUE BY NOON.** This report should be e-mailed to Chris AND to your peer group. Your report must include the following:

- **Paragraph with research question and thesis statement:** A revised, more specific version of your “1 paragraph” that was due September 21. Your revised paragraph should include your research question and what you think the main theme or argument will be. Articulating an overall thesis statement/argument early is helpful for structuring your research and helps avoid writing a paper that simply explores a topic without ever taking a stand or making an argument.
- **Rough outline of thesis:** Explain how you are going to organize your paper. This could take the form of an outline, probably general at this point but do begin to consider what the major sections/chapters will cover. The more details, the better; it is not good enough to say your paper will have an introduction, a main section, and a conclusion.
- **Plan of action:** This section should discuss your progress to date: for example the sources you have found so far, and the additional sources you expect to consult. Be honest here – what do you have available and what else do you need? How have you gone about searching and do you need some help with some specific aspects? Also discuss what specifically you intend to do next.

Week of October 10 (week 6): **PEER GROUPS MEET** outside of class time to discuss the progress reports received the previous week. One member of the group should e-mail a brief report to Chris on this meeting. The point of reading each other’s reports and meeting is to HELP you work through this process, both substantively (help each other with problems, give encouragement and feedback) and emotionally (you’re not doing this alone, others have similar concerns, so share these and help each other get through it).

Friday, October 21 (end of week 7, right before Fall Break): **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

DUE BY 5 PM. You might (should!) remember this from Analyzing Politics – you will write brief summaries about the sources you have found. Specifically, this annotated bibliography must include:

- A brief introductory paragraph describing what you've found, what common themes emerge, and what information (if any) is missing or still to be researched.
- A list of 10-15 sources, and each one should have a **complete, proper bibliographic citation** (consult a style guide!) plus a **paragraph describing what the source contains that is relevant for your thesis**. The more information you have in these paragraphs, the better – for your sake. You should give special attention to your estimation of how valuable each source will be; think (and write) about things like possible author biases, the depth of the material in the source (say, a scholarly article versus a newspaper opinion column), the timeliness of the information.

Week of October 24 or October 31 (weeks 8 and 9, right after Fall Break): **Consult with Chris to discuss progress to date and next steps.** Chris will have annotated bibliographies read and commented on by the end of October.

Friday, November 4 (end of week 9): **Send the first 4-5 pages (or more) of your thesis to Chris and to your peer group.** This material should also include an outline of the entire thesis – as detailed as you can be about where it's going and what it will look like in the end.

Week of November 7 (week 10): **Peer groups should meet to review first 4-5 pages and outlines.** Read and comment on one another's papers. One member of the group should e-mail a brief report to Chris on this meeting. Chris will also return comments this week on your first 4-5 pages and outlines.

The middle of November, up to Thanksgiving break (through week 12): This is traditionally the time when thesis research and writing gathers momentum – or it is the time when thesis writers fall behind schedule. The more you get done now, the better – get organized, stay focused, finish your major source gathering, and write write write!

Tuesday, November 22 (week 12): Right before leaving for break, send **a full chapter or two** to Chris for review and comments (12-15 pages, which can include revisions of pages previously submitted). A good goal for this due date is to have at least HALF the thesis written in draft form with a clear outline for the not-yet-written sections.

Wednesday, November 30 (week 13): Chris will return “first half” papers with comments, in class.

Week of December 5 (week 14): we will have no class this week, in order to give more time for three important things:

- 1) completing the **take-home exam** (due Wednesday, December 7);
- 2) meeting with Chris for 10 minutes or so during the usual class time on Wednesday, December 7, to give a progress report on your thesis;
- 3) the big one, see below!

Friday, December 9 (end of week 14): **Send a complete rough draft of your thesis to Chris AND**

to your peer group. This draft should include a full bibliography and cover page (with a title for your thesis, too). This draft should also be proofread, spell-checked, and edited. Do not expect your peers to do this for you. Consult the final thesis and grading guidelines – even your rough draft should hit all the requirements for the thesis; this will help your final product to meet the guidelines. The more complete the draft you turn in, the more helpful my comments and the comments of your peers will be.

Wednesday, December 14 (last class session, week 15): presentations of thesis research, using your poster as part of the presentation. You may not have reached all your final conclusions by this date, but you will be expected to present what you've learned so far. I envision presentations of roughly 10 minutes, followed by 3-5 minutes of questions and discussion. **POSTERS ARE DUE at this class session.** Please follow ALL of the guidelines for the preparation of your poster (see pages 14-15). Your poster will be graded and then stored in the Political Science Department until Honors Day in May.

Friday, December 16 (first day of final exam period): **Peer group members should turn in comments to the author by this date.** Authors should notify Chris if they do NOT receive comments from each person in the peer group. This is a VERY important step! Here's what to do:

- Figure on spending at least an hour with each draft (that's a little more than my average time, should be enough for you)
- Make your comments legible! (yes, I'll try to do that, too)
- Put your name, phone number, and/or e-mail address on the draft you are working on, so the author can contact you if necessary to ask questions or clarifications
- Focus on "big picture" issues and NOT on grammar and writing style (it is NOT your responsibility to copy edit your peers' drafts); general comments on writing style/quality are appropriate, however
- I find it best to read a paper once through to begin, without making many comments; highlight sections you want to return to again for commentary (good and bad), and make quick note of sections that are hard to follow
- After you have gone through this way, go back and be specific and helpful – is the thesis statement obvious and clear? Does each section make sense and is the paper logically organized? Are particular passages really good and clear, or really weak and unclear? Find some way to make these things obvious (question marks and exclamation points seem to help) for the author. Note sections that seem to stray from the main topic, and note places where you think more could/should be said.
- Finally, comment specifically on the introduction and conclusion. Rate the intro on a 1-5 scale (5=great) as to whether it engages the reader and effectively presents the topic. Rate the conclusion on the same scale, with 5 for a conclusion that pulls the entire paper together and reaches a strong final point.
- Type and e-mail to the author **and to Chris**, 1) what you thought was the most effective aspect of the thesis, and 2) the most important single revision you think needs to be made. Be specific on both of these points.

ALSO on Friday, December 16: Chris's comments on your rough draft (following these same guidelines) will be available for you to pick up at my office no later than this date; some will be available before this date.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19 (last day of final exam period): **FINAL PRODUCT:** The final thesis is due today by **12 NOON** (note penalties below). **Please turn in ONE PAPER COPY of your final thesis paper and send Chris an electronic copy (preferably pdf file).** We keep e-copies in the department records. I will grade and return the paper copy to you via campus mail. It is your responsibility to print and hand in one paper copy of your thesis.

PENALTIES: Please make this section of the syllabus irrelevant – **turn your thesis in on time!!!!**.

- A thesis turned in after 12 noon Monday but before 5 pm Monday will be penalized 10 points (one letter grade) out of 100 total points.
- A thesis turned in anytime between 5 pm Monday and 12 noon Tuesday, December 20 (the last day of fall semester) will be penalized 20 points (two letter grades).
- **Theses not turned in by 12 noon on Tuesday, December 20 will receive a grade of F.**
- **A student who has qualified for an Incomplete grade (see p. 9) will have similar late-submission penalties applied to the new due date established when the I grade is agreed upon.**

POLITICAL SCIENCE HONORS DAY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM POSTER GUIDELINES

PURPOSE:

The Political Science Honors Day Research Symposium (Saturday, May 5, 2012) will feature research conducted by majors in research seminar classes during the 2011-2012 school year. **As part of each research seminar, all students will design and display a poster of their research.** The Political Science Department faculty hope that all fall 2011 seminar students will wish to attend this event and receive due recognition for the hard work you put into your thesis research. Even if you cannot attend Honors Day next May, we will display the poster you complete for this seminar.

The purpose of a poster session is to allow the scholar to share the results of his or her research and to allow viewers to learn from those projects in a semi-formal environment. As a presenter, your poster should communicate the message of your paper through simple and eye-catching means. A viewer should be able to quickly glean the main point(s) and key findings of your research. The poster will not communicate all of your findings, but will provide a starting point for further discussion of your research.

POSTER TIPS:

- Divide the contents of your poster into appropriate sections such as: title and author, abstract, research questions, hypotheses, methodology, data, results, conclusion. For some thesis topics, these categories will not fit very well. In these cases, it may be useful to think of your presentation as a set of overheads to outline your argument, engage visitors to your poster, and stimulate conversations with them about your paper.
- Headings above each poster section can indicate its contents and identify the appropriate order in which viewers should read the poster.
- Use a large, clear font size (absolutely no less than 16 point) since people will be reading your poster from a few feet away. Posters with lettering that is typed will look more professional than posters with lettering that is handwritten.
- Be concise. Concentrate on the visual impact and use your poster as a basis for further discussion with your visitor rather than trying to fit everything on the poster.
- You should be prepared to discuss your project in more detail and you may want to bring one or more copies of your thesis to the presentation for those who might want more information about your project.

ACCEPTABLE POSTER FORMATS:

Posters can take a variety of formats, and the following formats are acceptable for the Political Science Honors Day Research Symposium:

- A maximum of nine 8.5" x 11" papers. This is the most basic poster format and if you opt for this format, you may want to consider ways to make your presentation more visually appealing

through the use of color, graphs, images, etc. These paper will be adhered to a wall or bulletin board.

- Tri-fold project display board (36" x 48"). These "science fair" poster boards are available at all major office supply stores and at the Book Mark. We will provide tables on which to display them.
- Poster board (maximum size: 30" x 40"). You can attach printed sections to a poster board (as opposed to simply writing on the poster board with markers). Poster boards will be adhered to a wall or bulletin board or set on a ledge (like a whiteboard ledge).
- Printed poster (maximum size: 36" x 48"). If you prefer to create your entire poster digitally, media services can print a full sized poster. Printed posters will be adhered to a wall or bulletin board.