Workshop Leader   Olivia Lau (olau@fas.harvard.edu)
Sections   Wednesdays, 5-6pm (Knafel N-450)
                            Wednesdays, 6-7pm (Knafel N-450)

There will be 12 sessions between September and March. Nine of these meetings will be held in the fall semester, and three in the first weeks of the spring semester. The main purpose of the workshop is to complement the advice that you will receive from your senior thesis advisor, and to provide general guidance throughout the thesis-writing process. We will do this through group discussions on the problems associated with producing political science scholarship, using examples of your own work, in addition to examples from a successful sample thesis.

For students who are using statistical analysis, we will hold workshops (dates to be announced) covering the basics of statistical modeling using SPSS. The sessions will be led by an advanced graduate student, Michael Kellermann (kellerm@fas.harvard.edu), who will also offer limited office hours for students requiring individual attention.

We hope that you will rely on one another for feedback throughout the year. If you have a question, you should raise it; other students probably have the same concerns, and everyone will benefit from discussing them. Please feel free to raise any issue at any time during the course.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS
This course is graded pass/fail, based on attendance and progress on your thesis. In order to earn credit for the fall semester and be allowed to continue in the spring, you must:
1) Attend this course regularly
2) Submit a 1,000 word prospectus to the Gov Tutorial Office by October 19th
3) Submit 7,500 words (about 30 pages) to your thesis advisor by December 19th

You cannot receive a passing grade on your thesis if you do not attend and pass Government 99.

COURSE MATERIALS
- Sample thesis
- Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner. (2005) Chapter 4, "Where Have All the Criminals Gone?" in *Freakonomics.* New York: Harper Collins.
- Robert D. Putnam. (1992) "Measuring Institutional Performance," in *Making Democracy Work.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- John Gerring. (2001) Chapter 9, "Methods," in *Social Science Methodology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ian S. Lustick. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *APSR*, 90:3 (Sep. 1996), pp. 605-618.
- Senior Honors Handbook, 2006-2007

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1, September 27: What makes a good thesis question?
We will cover how to design a thesis question, and how to write a successful thesis. Course materials distributed.

Session 2, October 4: Exchange and discussion of questions
ASSIGNMENT: State in 25 words the question you will address in your thesis. Circulate this question to the group by e-mail *no later than Monday, October 2, 12pm*. READING: The circulated thesis questions, and the introduction to the sample thesis. Be prepared to identify and discuss the question examined in this thesis.

October 11: No meeting

Session 3, October 18: How to answer your question
ASSIGNMENT: thesis prospectus due to the undergrad office *by Thursday, October 19*
READING: *Freakonomics*, Chapter 4
We will discuss how to identify and justify potential explanations. How do you begin considering answers to the question you are investigating? How do you identify and use comparable cases? How do you extract potential answers from the broad theoretical paradigms of political science or your particular subfield?

Session 4: Library Session
Meet the Lamont research librarians at one of the following times:
      Wednesday, October 18, 7-8:30 pm
      Wednesday, October 25, 7-8:30 pm
      Wednesday, November 1, 4pm-6pm
      Wednesday, November 1, 7-8:30 pm
RSVP to Sue Gilroy (sgilroy@fas) or Meghan Dolan (dolan2@fas).

Session 5, October 25: Concepts and measurements
READING: Putnam, "Measuring Institutional Performance."
We will focus on the ways to generate and justify definitions and measurements of the variables in your thesis.

Session 6, November 1: Writing a literature review
READING: Literature review chapter of the sample thesis. Come prepared to discuss.

November 8: No meeting

Session 7, November 15: Exchange and discussion of your literature reviews.
ASSIGNMENT: Prepare a 10-15 page lit review. Circulate it by e-mail *no later than Monday, November 13, 12pm.*
READING: Your classmates' literature reviews. You will be divided into groups for this assignment. Come prepared with *written* comments for the members of your group.

November 22 (Thanksgiving week): No meeting

Session 8, November 29: Testing explanations
READING: Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, pp. 200-229;
　　　　　Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science."
We will discuss issues related to the empirical chapters of your thesis: hypothesis testing, case selection for those doing single case studies or comparing a small number of cases, and model specification for those pursuing statistical or formal approaches.

December 6:   No meeting

Session 9, December 13: Exchange and discuss empirical chapter
ASSIGNMENT: Circulate an empirical chapter from your thesis to your thesis group, no later than 12pm (noon) on Monday, December 11th.
READING: Empirical chapter of sample thesis *and* the circulated chapters. You will again be divided into groups for this assignment. Come prepared with written comments for the members of your group.

December 19: 7,500 words due to your senior thesis advisor

Session 10, Week of February 5: Exchange and discuss theory chapter.
ASSIGNMENT: Circulate the theory chapter from your thesis to your classmates at least 48 hours before Session 10 meets.
READING: The theory chapter of the sample thesis *and* the circulated chapters. You will be divided into groups for this assignment. Come prepared with written comments for the other members of your group.

Session 11, Week of February 12: The big picture
READING: Introduction and Conclusion of the sample thesis.
We will discuss how to justify the significance of your work.

Session 12, Week of February 19: The final countdown
READING: Relevant sections of the thesis handbook.
Formatting, timetable, etc.

March 15: Thesis due to Government Tutorial Office by 5pm