

## **Political Science 540a/541b**

### **RESEARCH AND WRITING**

Bryan Garsten and Nikolay Marinov  
Fall 2006 (first eight weeks): Wednesday 3:30-5:20pm

#### **Course Description and Requirements:**

The objective of this year-long course is to provide a forum in which students propose, develop, and complete a research project that produces a journal-length paper of publishable quality. This is a required course for all second-year students in the political science program. In order to complete the course and receive credit for both semesters, students must turn in a final draft of the paper on May 15, 2007.

The course meets during the first half of the fall semester and the first half of the spring semester. During the fall semester, students will concentrate on developing a topic, designing the research, and preparing a preliminary draft of the paper. That draft must be turned in to the instructors on January 16, 2007. Students who do not turn in a preliminary draft by that date will not be able to take PLSC 542b.

During the second and third weeks of the fall semester, students will read and discuss a number of articles that represent various sub-fields and analytic approaches. The objective will be to consider how the authors frame their research, how they embed it in a literature, what kinds of evidence they deploy, and what kinds of inferences and conclusions they draw from their analysis. By the end of those two weeks, students will be expected to have made arrangements with a member of the faculty to advise their research. In consultation with the adviser, they will begin formulating the research topic and prepare a two-to-three page proposal that presents the research problem or question, locates it in some of the relevant literature, and describes the research the student plans to undertake.

In the following four weeks, the class will discuss the research proposals. Students should send a copy of the proposal to all members of the class and the instructors by the Monday Noon of the week in which their proposal is being considered. The discussion of each proposal will be started by a lead discussant who will speak for 5-10 minutes on the research design and the analytic and substantive issues raised by the proposal, after which the other members of the class and the instructors will offer their views. After all of the proposals have been discussed, students will continue their research, meeting regularly with the faculty adviser, conducting the research, and preparing the preliminary draft of the paper. All students must submit to the instructors a copy of the proposal that is signed by the faculty adviser, indicating that he or she approves the project as proposed, by November 16, 2006.

During the spring semester, the class will discuss the preliminary drafts. As in the fall, the discussion of each draft will be led by a discussant, after which the other students and the instructors will offer their views. The discussions will concentrate on the organization of the paper, the problem or question with which it is concerned, its presentation and interpretation of data and evidence, the

conclusions, inferences, interpretations, and generalizations it draws, and the clarity of the writing. On the basis of that discussion, and working with their faculty advisers, students will undertake whatever additional research or revision is deemed appropriate and complete the final draft of the paper. That draft must be submitted to the instructors by May 15, 2007.

### **Office Hours and Contact Information:**

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### **Schedule:**

#### Week 1 September 6: Introduction

Sign-up for presentation of research proposal and as lead discussant for at least one sample article and one student proposal.

#### Week 2 September 13: Discussion of selected articles

Krause, Sharon. "Partial Justice," *Political Theory* 29 (June 2001): 315-37. ([Download from JSTOR](#))  
Discussants:

Schickler, Eric and Andrew Rich. 1997. "Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Oct., 1997), pp. 1340-1375.  
([Download from JSTOR](#))

Discussants:

Lijphart, Arend. "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation." *American Political Science Review* 90 (June 1996): 258-268. ([Download from JSTOR](#))

Discussants:

#### Week 3 September 20: Discussion of selected articles

Schulz, Kenneth. 1998. "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crises" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 92, No. 4, pp. 829-844. ([Download from JSTOR](#))

Discussants:

Iversen, Torben and David Soskice. 2001. "An Asset Theory of Social Policy Preferences." *The American Political Science Review* > Vol. 95, No. 4 (Dec., 2001), pp. 875-893. ([Download from JSTOR](#))

Discussants:

Von Stein, Jana. 2005. "Do Treaties Constrain or Screen? Selection Bias and Treaty Compliance." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4, pp. 611-622. (Download from Cambridge)

Discussants:

Week 4 September 27: Discussion of selected articles

Austen-Smith, David and John R. Wright. 1994. "Counteractive Lobbying." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 1. (Feb., 1994), pp. 25-44. ([Download from JSTOR](#))

Discussants:

Frank, Jill. "Citizens, Slaves and Foreigners: Aristotle on Human Nature." *American Political Science Review* 98 (Feb. 2004): 91-104. ([Download from JSTOR](#))

Discussants:

Week 5 October 4: Discussion of research proposals

Week 6 October 11: Discussion of research proposals

Week 7 October 18: Discussion of research proposals

Week 8 October 25: Discussion of research proposals