

## **Honor Essay Guidelines**

The Honor Essay Project allows you to apply the skills that you have developed during your political science education to a research question of your choice. The question must be of a causal nature. That is, the papers are to be analytic, with an empirical component.

The paper should be approximately 30-40 pages. Your paper **must** include a title page, page numbers, proper citation format (APA format) and a bibliography. Furthermore, the papers **must** be double-spaced and printed in 12 point font. Margins should be one inch top/bottom and left/right margins.

Students are encouraged to follow the timeline outlined below:

The **proposal** should be submitted by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the appropriate semester.

A copy of the first draft should be submitted to your instructor by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> week.

The final paper should be tendered by...

Below is a guideline for the Honor Essay Project for students.

### **I. Introduction: The Problem**

- General statement of the problem.
- Importance of the problem: Why is it interesting? Why is it significant?
- Previous research in this problem area—any substantive and methodological limitations?

### **II. Literature Review**

- Identify relevant theories, trends and happenings about your research topic (i.e. tell the story behind your topic).

- Review the literature that pertains to your question. Outline the key variables (independent/dependent) associated with your research question.
- Provide statistics or other types of data if possible/applicable.

### **III. Hypotheses and Model**

- This is a critical element of your paper. Make sure you define all relevant variables (independent/dependent).
- Outline your hypotheses with respect to your research question. What are the relationships among the variables? Is the relationship a positive or negative one?

### **IV. Research Design**

- Identify what events, institutions, or people you plan to investigate. What sample size (or cases) will you use?
- How are you going to measure these variables?
- What methodological approach are you going to utilize? Is it a quantitative or qualitative approach? Indicate how the chosen methodology is suitable to evaluating/testing your hypotheses.
- Data collection issues: Illuminate the type of method you plan to use (interviews, survey, case studies, comparative methods, historical archival, statistical and so on). Why is the chosen method appropriate? Sources of the data?
- If quantitative methods are utilized describe the dataset (include in an appendix).
- Are there limitations of the chosen method?
- Analysis

### **V. Conclusion**

- Summarize your findings
- Were your hypotheses supported or refuted?
- What conclusions will you try to draw from the research?
- What objections might your colleagues raise?
- Are there avenues available for further research?