

**M.A. COLLOQUIUM
POLSCI 775
Fall 2020/Winter 2021, Term 3**

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Meeting times: Every second Monday,
11:30 am-2:20 pm
Meeting location: Virtual—MS Teams

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email tporter@mcmaster.ca to request a
meeting.

Contents

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	3
Required Materials and Texts	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview.....	4
Course Evaluation – Details.....	4
Create your profile page in the Class Notebook in Teams, due Wed. SEP 23, midnight.....	4
MRP-related assignments I: sample research question, due Thur. OCT 22, midnight.	4
MRP-related assignments II: formal proposal, for presentation to your Topic Group, due Thurs. JAN 7, midnight.....	5
MRP-related assignments III: “First findings” report and presentation, due Mon. FEB 22, 2021.....	5
MRP-related assignments IV: Update on your research, due Wed MAR 31, 2021.....	5
Subfield-related assignment: prepare a subfield group statement for the subfield Roundtables in the Winter term.....	6
Alumni connections: connect with one or more graduates of our MA program and share what you learn with the Colloquium.....	6
Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy assignments.....	6
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings	7
Week 1 (SEP 14) Introduction to the MA Colloquium	7
Week 2 (SEP 28) Library and CRESS presentations	7
<i>Note: There is no session of the Colloquium on October 12, which is Thanksgiving and the start of the fall break.</i>	7
Week 3 (OCT 26) Research Shop and community-based research presentation	8

Week 4 (NOV 9) How to create a good research question for your MRP	8
Week 5 (NOV 23) Research Ethics	9
Week 6 (DEC 7) MRP plans and fall term wrap-up.....	9
Week 7 (JAN 11) MRP proposal discussion	9
Week 8 (JAN 25) Political Theory Roundtable.....	9
Week 9 (FEB 8) Global Politics Roundtable	9
Week 10 (FEB 22) MRP “First findings” research presentation	10
Week 11 (MAR 8) Canadian, Comparative and Public Policy Roundtable	10
Week 12 (MAR 22) Discussion of Mapping Conference.....	10
Week 13 (APR 5) MRP research update reports	10
Course Policies	10
Submission of Assignments.....	10
Grades.....	10
Late Assignments	10
Absences, Missed Work, Illness	11
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy	11
Academic Integrity	11
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection	11
Courses with an On-Line Element.....	12
Online Proctoring.....	12
Conduct Expectations.....	12
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	12
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)	13
Copyright and Recording	13
Extreme Circumstances.....	13
Course Modification	13

Course Description

The MA Colloquium is a required part of the MA degree in the Department of Political Science. Its principal aim is to give students an opportunity for collegium-building both among one another and with the department faculty and to participate in training and briefing sessions about topics relevant to the degree. The MA Colloquium provides a somewhat less formal setting in which to interact with speakers and participants. Structured as a series of synchronous and asynchronous presentations, seminars and group discussions, the MA Colloquium will primarily be meeting via Microsoft Teams, with the possibility of switching to a face-to-face format in the Winter term if the pandemic conditions permit.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Move towards completion of the Major Research Paper, having obtained advice and feedback on the process in the MA Colloquium
- Be familiar with key characteristics associated with the Department of Political Science's main subfields
- Experience and reflect on the graduate student conference Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy
- Be aware of career experiences that previous graduates of the Department's MA program have pursued.

Required Materials and Texts

- You may be required to review certain documents and publications or to view certain video content in advance of some sessions to be better prepared for them.

Class Format

In the fall term the course will be online, with a mix of synchronous and asynchronous communications. The primary platform will be Microsoft Teams, supplemented with other online platforms such as Zoom, Avenue2Learn, and Slack. The meeting time slot is every second week (with one session canceled due to the fall break) between 11:30 am and 2:20 pm. In each of these time slots there will be a synchronous session that may not last the full time. More details appear below. Each student will also be assigned to one each of two types of groups. The first set of groups will be differentiated by subfield. The primary purpose of this first set of groups ("Subfield Groups") is to lead discussion related to your subfield on the December 7 session, and to prepare for the subfield roundtables in the winter term as explained in more detail below. The second set of groups will be focused on research topics ("Topics Groups"), with one main purpose: to provide feedback on MRP topics. Colloquium participants will be expected

to attend at least one session of the graduate student conference Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy, which is scheduled from Friday March 12 through Saturday March 13, 2021. Note that some parts of the regular 11:30-2:20 pm time slot remain unscheduled but are likely to be used for Colloquium activities such as those involving alumni.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Assignments
2. Attendance
3. Participation

Course Evaluation – Details

Create your profile page in the Class Notebook in Teams, due Wed. SEP 23, midnight.

Create a page in the Class Notebook introducing yourself to the Colloquium. You may use any format and you may comment on your research interests, prior academic or extra-curricular experiences, or anything else you think might be interesting to Colloquium participants. The Class Notebook is a version of OneNote and can support images, text, and links to external content. The Class Notebook will be viewable only to participants in the Colloquium. This is due by Wednesday September 23, at midnight. You may view other participants' profile pages, but you should not edit them.

MRP-related assignments I: sample research question, due Thur. OCT 22, midnight.

Formulate a draft sample research question for your MRP and share it with your Topics Group members and the instructor by Thursday October 22, at midnight. This will consist of a written statement of up to 500 words. It should include (a) a title which conveys the topic and is interesting; (b) the central question being researched; (c) the reason your topic is important or interesting; (d) an argument or hypothesis; and (e) what kind of evidence will be needed to support your argument or hypothesis and show that your argument or hypothesis is better than the strongest competing argument or hypothesis (which you should identify). This is an opportunity to get practice in formulating a research question in preparation for the session about MRP topics on November 9. You have no obligation to actually choose this topic for your MRP. Your Topics Group members will provide you feedback on this topic at the October 26 session of the Colloquium. This assignment will be submitted to a file folder in your Topics Group channel on Teams. For this assignment you may wish to review in advance the readings on research questions listed in the November 9 session of the course outline below.

Note: MRP supervisors will be assigned near the end of the fall term. You should get in touch with your supervisor once you have been assigned one. Please see the course outline for the MRP (POL SCI 708) for further details on the MRP requirements and timelines.

MRP-related assignments II: formal proposal, for presentation to your Topic Group, due Thurs. JAN 7, midnight.

Write up a 750-1250 word proposal for your MRP which includes the same elements as the sample research question assignment above (a-e) plus (f) a brief statement of what you will have accomplished by February 22 and April 5 and (g) a non-annotated bibliography with at least ten items (such as scholarly publications, government documents, think tank reports, new articles) as an illustration of the types of sources you will draw upon in your MRP research (you do not need to have read all of these). The bibliography is not included in the word count for this assignment. You will receive feedback on this from your Topic Group in the session on January 11. This proposal will be submitted to a file folder in your Topics Group channel on Teams.

MRP-related assignments III: “First findings” report and presentation, due Mon. FEB 22, 2021.

For this assignment you are to create a speech that is absolutely no longer than three minutes, which at an optimal speaking speed is 375 words. This speech will present the most interesting original finding from your MRP research so far. The speech should not be about what you hope or plan to find, but what you have already discovered. Ideally your discovery should be new to the world, but at least it should be new to Colloquium participants, and not just to you. The newness could be in your perspective, in some new information you have found, or some new mix of theory and empirics. You should convey your finding in a way that maximizes its interest to the Colloquium. You should create a transcript of your speech that is a maximum of 375 words and practice it before delivering it to ensure it falls within the time limit. You should budget each word for maximum impact. You should post your transcript to the Teams channel for this assignment, and if we are still online in the winter term you should record your speech on video, and provide the link in the same Teams channel. Your topic group will be responsible to watch your video and provide feedback. The images in your video can be you talking, a slide show, or any other content. Instructions for creating the video will be available on Teams. If we are meeting face-to-face in the winter term then you will present your speech to the Colloquium session on February 22 instead of creating a video, while still submitting the transcript to the Teams channel.

MRP-related assignments IV: Update on your research, due Wed MAR 31, 2021.

You will provide a brief written report (500-1000 words) on the progress of your MRP research that explains what you have done since your “First findings” report, what you anticipate your final conclusion and distinctive research contribution to be, and likely

conceptual or practical challenges that you will face in completing your MRP. This will be submitted to a file folder in a channel on Teams that will be set up for this. You will receive feedback on this in the Colloquium session of April 5 and you will be expected to provide feedback on reports provided by others.

Subfield-related assignment: prepare a subfield group statement for the subfield Roundtables in the Winter term.

You will meet with your subfield group prior to the Roundtable for your subfield and prepare answers to three questions:

1. What are the big current issues in the subfield (the real world or the discipline)?
2. What are the analytical or research tools we have developed that can be applied to a pressing emerging or ongoing problem of concern that the subfield is well positioned to address?
3. What do you love about the subfield, and how, if at all, would you like to see the subfield change?

Before or on the day that the Roundtable is scheduled your group will present your answers to these questions, either by video or, if we are meeting face-to-face, in the classroom. The faculty members participating in the Roundtable session will be addressing the same set of questions. A goal of the presentations will be to initiate more general discussion about these questions. Questions will also be solicited from all Colloquium participants for all Roundtables.

Alumni connections: connect with one or more graduates of our MA program and share what you learn with the Colloquium.

In the summer of 2020 we are getting in touch with graduates of our MA program to identify which of them would be interested to meet virtually with current students in the program, to share their career experiences following their graduation. In the fall of 2020 we aim to connect each MA student with one or more of these graduates. You will then be responsible to arrange a meeting with the graduate using Zoom or a similar platform. One or more of these graduates may wish to speak themselves to the Colloquium as a whole, but in most cases students will summarize what they learned and communicate this to the Colloquium at one of the sessions in the Winter 2021 term.

Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy assignments

You are responsible to attend at least one panel in this graduate student conference, which is scheduled from Friday March 12 through Saturday March 13, 2021. You will prepare a 300-500 word critique of the panel, upload this to the appropriate Teams channel, and be prepared to speak to your critique and others in the Colloquium session on March 22.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and is expected of all graduate students.

Participation

Participation is ongoing. Students will be evaluated according to their participation in the Colloquium.

Grades

The grade for the Colloquium is assessed on a P (pass) /F (fail) basis. You must perform satisfactorily on all the above assignments to pass the course.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Note that some parts of the regular 11:30-2:20 pm time slot remain unscheduled but are likely to be used for Colloquium activities such as those involving alumni.

Week 1 (SEP 14) Introduction to the MA Colloquium

We will discuss the plan for the MA Colloquium course. The following will make brief presentations and answer questions:

- Student Advisor (Pol Sci/PPP): Dr. Michelle Dion
- Student Advisor (Global Politics/IR): Dr. Alina Sajed
- Mapping conference representatives: Rebekah Pullen (current coordinator) and Mike Gordon

Note: your profile page on the Class Notebook is due on Wednesday September 23, midnight.

Week 2 (SEP 28) Library and CRESS presentations

Research library presentation, 11:30 am – 1 pm

Our library's Research and Advanced Studies Librarian Olga Perkovic and Data Specialist Vivek Jadon will make a presentation on how best to benefit from the valuable library resources available to MA students.

Centre for Research in Empirical Social Sciences (CRESS) presentation, 1:15 am – 2:20 pm

CRESS Executive Director Allison Van will present and answer questions on the activities of [CRESS](#) and their relevance to MA students.

Note: There is no session of the Colloquium on October 12, which is Thanksgiving and the start of the fall break.

Note: Your sample research question is due Thursday October 22, midnight.

Week 3 (OCT 26) Research Shop and community-based research presentation

Research Shop presentation, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

C.A. Klassen, Community-Based Research Coordinator at the McMaster Research Shop, will present on the activities of the Research Shop and on community-engaged research more generally. The [Research Shop](#) brings together graduate students and senior undergraduate students to work with public, non-profit, and community organizations in Hamilton to provide plain-language answers to research questions.

Feedback on sample research questions, 12:45 pm – 1:45 pm

We will break down into Topic Groups and discuss the sample MRP research questions that everyone submitted, to prepare for the next session on research questions.

Week 4 (NOV 9) How to create a good research question for your MRP

Roundtable discussion of how to identify research questions

Identifying a research question that is interesting and feasible is a major challenge and first step in any research project, including your MRP. This Roundtable will provide insights into how to do this, following by a general discussion. The Roundtable participants are:

- Dr. Katherine Boothe
- Dr. Michelle Dion
- Dr. Peter Nyers

In preparation for this session you should read and be prepared to discuss the following:

Bachner, Jennifer, (2012). [The Common Mistakes Students Make When Crafting Research Questions](#) American Political Science Association 2012 Teaching & Learning Conference Paper.

Day, C., & Koivu, K. L. (2019). [Finding the Question: A Puzzle-Based Approach to the Logic of Discovery](#). *Journal of Political Science Education*, 15(3), 377–386.

Vicki Squire (2013). "Attuning to *mess*," in Mark B. Salter and Can E. Mutlu, eds., *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge), pp. 37-41 [this reading will be posted in a file folder in Teams].

Week 5 (NOV 23) Research Ethics

This seminar will be hosted by Dr. Greg Flynn who sits on the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB). If you do interviews or field research with human participants for your MRP you will need MREB clearance. He will talk about the importance and content of research ethics.

Week 6 (DEC 7) MRP plans and fall term wrap-up

This session will discuss the steps in your MRP and will include some general discussion about the experience of the first term and plans for the winter term.

Note: Your formal MRP proposal, for presentation to your Topic Group, is due Thursday January 7, midnight.

Week 7 (JAN 11) MRP proposal discussion

You should come to this session prepared to give feedback on the MRP proposals that were submitted by students in your Topic Group.

Week 8 (JAN 25) Political Theory Roundtable

The following faculty members will speak to the three questions about subfields noted above and below, from 11:30-12:45 pm:

- Dr. Catherine Frost
- Dr. Inder Marwah

1. What are the big current issues in the subfield (the real world or the discipline)?
2. What do you love about the subfield, and how, if at all, would you like to see the subfield change?
3. What are the analytical or research tools we have developed that can be applied to a pressing emerging or ongoing problem of concern that the subfield is well positioned to address?

If you are in the Theory Subfield Group your group will also be presenting in this session.

Week 9 (FEB 8) Global Politics Roundtable

The following faculty members will speak to the three questions about subfields noted above, from 11:30- 1 pm:

- Dr. Marshall Beier
- Dr. Lana Wylie
- Dr. Robert O'Brien

If you are in the Global Politics Subfield Group your group will also be presenting in this session.

Week 10 (FEB 22) MRP “First findings” research presentation

You will present your 375-word speech as explained in the Assignments section above.

Week 11 (MAR 8) Canadian, Comparative and Public Policy Roundtable

The following faculty members will speak to the three questions about subfields noted above, from 11:30- 1 pm:

- Dr. Adrienne Davidson
- Dr. Peter Graefe
- Dr. Shafiqul Huque

If you are in these Subfield Groups your group will also be presenting in this session.

Note: the Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy conference is scheduled to take place Friday March 12 and Saturday March 13, 2021

Week 12 (MAR 22) Discussion of Mapping Conference

Discussion of the conference, drawing on the panel critiques everyone has submitted.

Note: your Update on your MRP research is due Wednesday March 31, 2021.

Week 13 (APR 5) MRP research update reports

You will speak briefly to your written report on your progress on your MRP and receive feedback on it. See instructions in the Assignment section above for more details on the written report.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Assignments will be submitted through folders in Teams, unless otherwise noted above.

Grades

The grade for the Colloquium is assessed on a P (pass) /F (fail) basis. You must perform satisfactorily on all the above assignments to pass the course.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the date indicated. If you are unable to do so, please contact the instructor.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Regular attendance is expected of all graduate students. Please contact the instructor in advance (or as soon as possible) via email if you are going to be absent.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Courses with an On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.