MA MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER
POLSCI 708
2021 - 2022

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Contents

Course Description

In addition to completing 18 units of graduate level coursework, students enrolled in the MA programs are required to complete a Major Research Paper (MRP), The MRP process will begin in the fall term with brainstorming about the topic, and will be completed in the spring/summer term following their coursework. MRPs are to be no longer than 10,000 words including all front matter, references and bibliography.

Course Objectives

The Major Research Paper (MRP) is an opportunity for students to do an extended piece of research on a topic of their choosing. Additional guidance on the MRP will be provided in the MA Colloquium (POLSCI 775).

Students will be assigned a faculty supervisor in consultation with the MA Convenors and the MA Colloquium Convenor. Students will be informed of their supervisor near the end of the fall term.

Required Materials and Texts

As noted in the course outline for the MA Colloquium (POL SCI 775) there are two readings on formulating a research question that are useful for you to read:

- 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.

Class Format

- n/a

Course Evaluation – Overview

Various assignments and expectations of students in the MA Colloquium course are related to the development of the MRP. More details on these are available in the course outline for the MA Colloquium. For convenience, some key deadlines for these are included in this list:

1. Sample research question, due Mon. Oct. 18, 2021, midnight
2. Formal proposal, for presentation to your Colloquium Topic Group, due Thurs. Jan. 13, 2022, midnight
3. MRP "First findings" report and presentation, due Mon. Feb. 14, 2022
4. Update on your MRP research, due Fri. Mar. 24, 2022
5. First full MRP Draft, due Friday, May 6, 2022
6. Second Draft, due Monday, May 30, 2022
7. MRP (final version), due Monday, June 27, 2022

Course Evaluation – Details

Details on expectations and evaluations of items #1-4 in the above list of deadlines are available in the MA Colloquium course outline. Some further details about items #5-7, the first, second, and final drafts of the MRP, are here:

First Draft Copy, due Friday, May 6, 2022

Your first draft copy is to be submitted to your Supervisor by this deadline. Comments will be returned to you on or about Monday, May 17, 2022.

Second Draft Copy, due Monday, May 30, 2022

Your revised second draft is to be submitted to your Supervisor by this deadline. Comments will be returned to you by or about Friday, June 11, 2022.

MRP Final Copy, due Monday, June 27, 2022 by 4:00 p.m.

An electronic copy (PDF) of your MRP in finished form must be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant, Manuela Dozzi at dozzim@mcmaster.ca by 4:00 p.m. EST.

Research Ethics and Research Risks

This section provides information on requirements related to research ethics and risks that may be relevant when you start thinking about your MRP topic. We will have opportunities to discuss these in the MA Colloquium, and you are always welcome to ask for clarifications from the MA Colloquium convenor, or from others in the Department.

The McMaster Research Ethics Board requirements

Research that is based on public documents or secondary sources only does not require research ethics clearance. Almost any research that involves human

participants will require research ethics clearance. For social science research at McMaster University the body that provides this clearance is the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB). In Canada the overall research ethics regime has been developed and managed by the three federal granting councils (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR) and the key governance document is the "Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2018)." The key purpose of the regime is to protect human participants from the risks of research. In political science, for instance, such a risk could be associated with a researcher's careless treatment of personal interview information in a war zone. Typically obtaining clearance from the MREB can take several weeks following the preparation and submission of an MREB application form. The research ethics clearance process can be a valuable learning experience itself, but it requires additional time and planning which should be factored in when you start thinking about your MRP topic.

Research on Indigenous issues

Indigenous communities have a long and fraught history of researchers doing research about Indigenous communities for their own purposes, with no benefit, and often with harmful effects on Indigenous communities. If you are considering doing an MRP that addresses Indigenous issues then it is important to read Chapter 9 of TCPS 2 "Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada." Chapter 9 came about after a long process of consultation and input involving Indigenous communities and representatives. The research ethics expectations and rules for research on Indigenous issues go beyond the focus on individual participants that is sufficient for other types of research. As noted in Chapter 9, Section B of TCPS 2:

> "Historically, the well-being of individual participants has been the focus of research ethics guidelines. In this Policy, the principle of **Concern for Welfare** is broader, requiring consideration of participants and prospective participants in their physical, social, economic and cultural environments, where applicable, as well as concern for the community to which participants belong. This Policy acknowledges the important role of Indigenous communities in promoting collective rights, interests and responsibilities that also serve the welfare of individuals…The interpretation of Concern for Welfare in First Nations, Inuit and Métis contexts may therefore place strong emphasis on collective welfare as a complement to individual well-being."

An implication of this is that if your MRP is on Indigenous issues, even if it does not directly involve interactions with human participants, it will likely be important to consult and solicit advice with Indigenous individuals, communities, or representatives.

Your personal risks when doing field research

The MREB's primary concern is with risks to those involved with your research other than you, but McMaster University also has responsibilities and rules with regard to your personal risk in doing research. The key document is "Field Trips, Student Placements

and Research Activity Planning and Approval Program" Risk Management Manual 801 (RMM 801). If for your MRP you are considering doing research in a country deemed by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to have any significant security concerns, even if you have lived there for many years and have family there, you will be required to explain how you will manage these risks. It is likely that you will not be permitted to conduct research in countries for which GAC is recommending that travel be avoided. You should factor in the time needed for approval under RMM 801 if you are doing field research in other countries. Travels for conferences and travel not related to your academic program fall outside the scope of RMM 801 and do not need approval through this procedure.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments
An electronic copy in PDF form must be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant, Manuela Dozzi at dozzim@mcmaster.ca by Monday, June 27, 2022 by no later than 4:00 p.m. EST.

Your MRP must be prepared with a word processor, double-spaced, set to a paper size of 8 ½ x 11" paper. The MRP must be in either 10 or 12 point Arial font. Top and left margins should be 3.8 cm and the right and bottom margins should be 2.5 cm. All pages are to be numbered EXCEPT the title page and all pages should have header information containing the degree program, author's name, McMaster University and the department, e.g.

> MA MRP – A. Smith; McMaster University – Political Science

Sources must be documented according to the conventions of a recognized academic style (MLA, Chicago, etc.).

Grades
Your MRP will be read and marked by your Supervisor and a second reader, normally chosen by your Supervisor and/or MA Convenor.

The MRP is marked on a pass/fail basis. Truly outstanding papers may be given a pass with distinction (P+). We will collate comments from both markers and pass them on to the students by August 31, 2022.

MRPs will be graded and grades will be released informally via email on or about Monday, July 18, 2022. The release of final grades with comments from the Supervisor and second reader will be forwarded via email on or about Monday, August 15, 2022. A student whose MRP receives a failing grade will normally have the opportunity to revise and resubmit for August 15, 2022.

Late Assignments
Those who fail to submit the final copy by the due date risk not graduating.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness
Please note that INCOMPLETES will only be granted for legitimate medical or other properly documented reasons.

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.