

Political Science Honours Thesis Procedures, Guidelines, and Forms

The following regulations and procedures govern the writing and defense of an undergraduate honours thesis in the Department of Political Science at Concordia University.

The process of writing a thesis encompasses two stages:

- (i) POLI 396 (Honours Tutorial), a three-credit, one-on-one course with the intended thesis supervisor tailored to familiarizing the student with the literature relevant to the thesis and culminating in the writing of a thesis proposal;
- (ii) POLI 495 (Honours Thesis), a six-credit, one-on-one course with the thesis supervisor during which the thesis is written, revised, and defended; this course may be scheduled to be completed over the course of one or two academic terms, typically following immediately after the completion of POLI 396.

The following rules and procedures apply to this process:

1. The Undergraduate Program Director (UPD) is responsible for approving requests to schedule POLI 396 and POLI 495. Students are therefore strongly advised to discuss their thesis plans and potential supervisors and second readers who would be appropriate for their intended topic with the UPD at an early stage. It is then the student's responsibility to secure a suitable supervisor and, with the help of the supervisor, a second reader.
2. To ensure continuity, only full-time, tenure track faculty members can act as thesis supervisor. Students should check with the Undergraduate Program Director (UPD) if they are unsure about a faculty member's status.
3. The departmental form to request the scheduling of POLI 396 (Thesis Tutorial) must reach the UPD no later than four weeks before the first day of the term during which the course is to be scheduled. It must include all required parts and be signed by the student and the intended supervisor.
4. POLI 396 prepares the student for the writing of the thesis. It is a reading course focused on the literature relevant to the chosen topic. It consists of a series of one-on-one meetings of the student with the supervisor and involves written work, ideally with multiple opportunities to learn from feedback, that builds toward a firm grasp of the relevant literature and research design. The course's final, mandatory product is a thesis proposal. The proposal must clearly state a researchable question or problem that the thesis will investigate and situate it in the relevant literature (note: posing a question or outlining a problem is different from naming a topic or general theme). In addition, it must outline how (methods, sources) this question or problem will be investigated. A substantial, pertinent bibliography is required. (A proposal will typically be between 1500 to 2500 words of text.)
5. Once the supervisor has approved the thesis proposal and all other work for POLI 396 has been completed, the student may request the scheduling of POLI 495 (Honours Thesis). (POLI 396 may be a stand-alone course, i.e., POLI 396 does not commit the student to POLI 495). At this point, the student, secures a second reader for the thesis. The supervisor, if desired, can help with this process. Prospective second readers must be provided with a copy of the thesis proposal, on the basis of which they will decide whether to serve as second reader. Feedback on the proposal to the student at this stage is encouraged. To accommodate this process, the proposal must be completed and accepted by the end of classes of the term during which POLI 396 is scheduled (if POLI 495 is requested to follow immediately after POLI 396). Supervisor and student must set out a schedule to ensure the timely completion of the proposal. The POLI 495 departmental request form must reach the UPD no later than three weeks before the first day of the term during which the course is to be scheduled. It must include all required parts and be signed by the student, the intended supervisor, and the intended second reader.
6. The thesis must be completed in the semester(s) during which the student is registered for POLI 495. If it is not completed, the student must apply for a grade of INC and complete the thesis by the resulting

deadline. It is strongly recommended to schedule POLI 495 as a two-semester course. This implies that the thesis preparation and writing process will typically span three academic terms, and that it therefore must commence at least three terms before the intended graduation date.

7. The thesis is typically between 10,000 and 13,000 words in length (excluding front matters and references). Stylistic conventions must be followed. Consult and follow the relevant sections (pp.16-19) of the School of Graduate Studies Thesis Preparation Guide:
<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/sgs/docs/handbooks/thesispreparationguide.pdf>
8. The thesis is defended in front of the Honours Thesis Committee consisting of:
 - The Department's Undergraduate Program Director (Committee Chair)
 - Supervisor
 - Second Reader
9. Both supervisor and second reader have two weeks to read and make comments on all drafts of the thesis. Students should expect that both the supervisor and the second reader will ask for revisions. In consultation with the supervisor, the student must set out a schedule for submission of drafts that will ensure timely completion of the thesis. Typically, this requires that a good, full draft of the thesis be submitted to the supervisor no later than six (!) weeks before the end of the (final) term during which POLI 495 is scheduled. Once the supervisor has approved the draft, the student is required to submit this approved draft to the second reader. The second reader can ask for changes to the thesis prior to the scheduling of a defense.
10. When both the supervisor and the second reader have approved the thesis for a defense, a copy of the thesis is submitted to the UPD and a date for a defense is set.
11. The defense takes place before the Thesis Committee. The committee makes one of the following recommendations by secret majority vote at the defense:
 - Accepted as Submitted
 - Accepted Pending Revisions
 - RejectedThis recommendation is recorded on the departmental Thesis Assessment Form Section A.
12. Once the thesis is accepted – either as submitted at the defense or when required revisions have been approved by both the supervisor and the second reader—the supervisor and the second reader may discuss an appropriate grade. Both individually assign a grade on the Thesis Assessment Form Section B, sign it, and submit it to the UPD. The UPD averages the supervisor's and second reader's grades (using GPA conversion and assigning the letter grade numerically closest to the averaged GPA, rounding up in cases where the average is exactly between grades, i.e., a 3.85 becomes an A, not an A-) and informs the supervisor, who enters the resulting grade.

POLI 396 HONOURS TUTORIAL REQUEST FORM

This form is to be completed by the instructor (intended supervisor) and the student. Students must attach a copy of their current **student record** and a **preliminary bibliography** of readings for the course. The completed application is to be returned by email to polisci@concordia.ca.

Family Name: _____ Concordia Student ID: _____

Given Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____ **Please ensure that your phone number, email address, and mailing address are correct and up to date in your Student Center.**

Term: _____

Preliminary Thesis Topic and Course description (Please attach a preliminary bibliography):

Nature and number of assignments and preliminary deadline for submission of thesis proposal to the supervisor:

Meeting schedule: _____

Supervisor: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved Denied

UPD Signature: _____ Date: _____

POLI 495 HONOURS THESIS REQUEST FORM

This form is to be completed by the instructor (supervisor), the second reader, and the student. Students must attach a copy of this/her current **student record** and a **preliminary bibliography** of readings for the course. The completed application is to be returned by email to polisci@concordia.ca.

Family Name: _____ Concordia Student ID: _____

Given Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____ **Please ensure that your phone number, email address, and mailing address are correct and up to date in your Student Center.**

Term: _____

Preliminary Thesis Title (Please attach the thesis proposal):

Preliminary deadline for submission of the thesis to the supervisor:

I hereby approve the attached thesis proposal and indicate my willingness to act as supervisor:

Supervisor: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

I hereby approve the attached thesis proposal and indicate my willingness to act as second reader:

Second Reader: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved Denied

UPD Signature: _____ Date: _____

POLI 495 HONOURS THESIS ASSESSMENT FORM SECTION A

This form is to be completed by the supervisor, the second reader, and the UPD following the defense of the thesis.

Student information:

Family Name: _____ Given Name: _____

Concordia Student ID: _____

Date of the Defense: _____

Thesis Title: _____

By (secret) majority vote, the defense of the above thesis yielded the following assessment:

Accepted as Submitted

Accepted Pending Revisions (to be submitted to supervisor and second reader)

Rejected

Supervisor: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Second Reader: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

UPD: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

POLI 495 HONOURS THESIS ASSESSMENT FORM SECTION B

Separate copies of this form are to be completed by the supervisor and the second reader, and submitted to the UPD once the final version of the thesis has been accepted (at the defense in cases of acceptance as submitted or after revisions have been received and assessed in cases of acceptance pending revisions).

Student Family Name: _____ Given Name: _____

Thesis Title: _____

Letter Grade: _____

Supervisor/Second Reader: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____
