GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S THESIS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Students in the Political Science M.A. Program must take the Comprehensive Examination or complete a master's thesis. Students who are keenly interested in a particular topic they want to explore in depth may apply for the thesis option. Students considering pursuing the thesis should meet with the Graduate Director to discuss the process, and for guidance in assembling a committee. Students should ideally plan to spend two semesters working on the thesis, and would register for 3 thesis credits during each of those semesters.

Content
A. The thesis is to be a substantial piece of work, more than simply the size of two Individual Study papers. It is difficult to specify size, but an M.A. thesis should generally be about 60 to 80 pages of text, plus bibliography, and any relevant tables or appendices.

B. It is expected that there will be theoretical content to the thesis. That is, the work will include a framework for analyzing substantive information, and discussions of a larger context into which the particulars fit. To accomplish this, one section of the thesis will be a review of relevant theoretical literature.

Procedure
A. Applications for permission to do a thesis should be submitted to the Graduate Director and Thesis Advisor during the semester prior to the one in which the work is to start.

B. The application should be in the form of a thesis proposal and should include:
   1. A statement of the problem to be researched, and its significance.
   2. A preliminary outline, in some detail.
   3. A preliminary bibliography.
   4. A list of graduate courses (and instructors) for which the student has written a formal research paper.

C. Once the proposal is approved, students will register for 790:697 and 698 in consecutive semesters, for six credits total.

Evaluation
A. For each thesis, the Graduate Director will, in consultation with the master's candidate, appoint a Faculty Supervisor, and two additional faculty members who will serve as the Thesis Committee. The Committee will examine drafts of the thesis, suggest revisions, and generally advise the candidate. On completion of the thesis, the Committee will conduct an oral examination. Acceptance of the thesis and passing of the examination will result in the award of 6 credits, with an assigned grade.

B. If the thesis is judged to be not acceptable, the committee may at its discretion award the student six credits equivalent to those of regular course work, but direct that the student must take the Comprehensive Examination.