

GV994-8-FY

Professional Development Seminar

2016 – 2017

Module Supervisors

Robert Johns

Tel: 01206 872508

E-mail: rajohn@essex.ac.uk

Room: 5.021

Office Hours: Tue 4-5; Thu 12-1

Dominik Duell

01206872211

dominik.duell@essex.ac.uk

5.423

Monday, 12-14

Module Administrator

Alex West (awestb@essex.ac.uk)

Module Description

This seminar provides training and support for the research capacity and professional development of all doctoral candidates in the Department of Government. Most sessions are aimed at – *and are compulsory for* – first-year students but there is also a series of optional sessions for more advanced students. The seminar focuses on writing and presenting a research proposal for the thesis, as well as other significant aspects of socialization into the discipline of political science. We aim to help PhD candidates develop a wide range of professional skills.

Doctoral candidates in the Department carry out their research in a wide variety of areas on a diverse set of topics, using a wide range of different approaches from nomothetic-deductive formal modelling, to quantitative and qualitative comparative studies, to normative political philosophy. Healthy exposure to these different perspectives in the scholarly study of politics provides an opportunity to improve general knowledge and background, and even provide new ideas for specialised areas of research. This seminar is not aimed at any sub-field or methodological tradition in particular – *and, if you feel that your particular approach or interest is being neglected, please do let us know so that we can change things.*

Inevitably, the primary focus here is the academic profession. We will therefore practise a number of specific skills such as drafting research proposals, presenting results, and publication strategies. However, many of the sessions are also highly relevant for the other kinds of professions in which PhD graduates often find employment. Whatever your target, we aim in this seminar to provide a constructively critical atmosphere in which to hone various skills.

There is no formal assessment in GV994. But we have an overriding aim which is to prepare first-year doctoral candidates for having their research proposals accepted by the Research Students Progress Committee in the summer term. The research proposal will be developed, presented and defended in various formats throughout the seminar:

1. In Weeks 9-11, each student must deliver a 10-minute presentation of their proposed doctoral research. The presentation should (1) identify the research question, (2) outline the type and sources of evidence to be used, and (3) begin to consider the implications of different possible findings.

2. In Weeks 20-21, there will be peer review sessions during which the module supervisors and your fellow students will comment on your draft proposals. Guidance on the content of these drafts will be provided in Week 3.
3. In Week 23, there will be no standard seminar session but instead a poster session – to which all PhD students and staff will be invited – at which you will present a poster outlining your planned research. The previous week’s session will provide training on poster design.

Module Objectives

By the end of this module, then, participants should have:

1. summarised a research proposal for the thesis work and had it critically appraised;
2. developed presentational skills both in regard to research, professional meetings and job-seeking;
3. accumulated general ‘know-how’ about the political science profession.

Schedule

Autumn term sessions take place in Room 2.408 on Mondays between 4 and 6 p.m.

Spring term sessions take place in Room 2.410 on Thursdays between 2 and 4 p.m.

Week	Topic	Aimed mainly at:	
		1 st -years	2 nd /3 rd -years
2	The basics: expectations, managing time, and PhD life	✓	
3	What a PhD proposal should look like	✓	
4	Locating your network	✓	
5	Seeking and applying for funding	✓	✓
6	Conference submission and strategy		✓
7	Preparing articles for journal submission		✓
8	Writing a good CV		✓
9	Presentation of PhD proposals	✓	
10	Presentation of PhD proposals	✓	
11	Presentation of PhD proposals	✓	
VACATION			
16	Preparing a job talk		✓
17	Mock job talks		✓
18	Mock job talks		✓
19	Promoting and publicising your research		✓
20	Peer review of draft PhD proposals	✓	
21	Peer review of draft PhD proposals	✓	
22	Designing and presenting posters	✓	
23	Poster presentations to Department		

Note: Relations between GV994 and Supervisory Boards

Supervisors and Boards have the first and the final say about how PhD work is conducted. This seminar merely supplements the Supervisory Boards and does not supplant them. There will inevitably be a certain amount of overlap between the two, since it is more interesting and economical to discuss papers based on on-going research. Generally, supervisors welcome all critical and informal discussion of research, but in the event of a significant contradiction the supervisor’s opinion prevails.