



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2017

7,377 | 8,377: MA Thesis Lab

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (40%)

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (60%)

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[7,377,1.00 MA Thesis Lab](#) -- Englisch -- [Freyburg Tina](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

The MIA Thesis Lab is designed for advanced MA students that share an interest in the systematic inquiry of political science questions. It enables students to engage with state-of-the-art theorizing, data, methods and empirical findings in their chosen field of focus in preparation for completing the MA thesis.

Participants should have attended seminars offered by the core faculty of the political science department and have benefitted from basic training in research design and methods.

NOTE: Students preparing or working on their MA thesis are invited to enrol on this class even if they don't need any credits anymore. In this case, they may hand in any assessment material to benefit from feedback (but don't need to do so).

Course content

"So tell me, what's your thesis about and what does your data look like?" This is a question students often find difficult to answer. The Thesis Lab provides them with the opportunity to discuss these and other questions crucial for the successful implementation of their MA thesis in a safe and constructive environment. The idea of the Thesis Lab acknowledges that writing a thesis is more than simply carrying out research and writing down the findings: Writing is a creative process. And it's not all statistics, by any means.

Course aims and organization

The course aims to further students' ability to evaluate critically competing ideas, arguments and data in political science. Learning how to analyze and evaluate arguments helps them to develop a sound framework to test their own arguments and advance their own points of view in and beyond academia.

Students will work closely with the team at the Chair of International Politics to generate ideas, create research proposals, conduct research, prepare a research paper, and present their findings.

Course objectives

By the end of the course, students will...



- be able to summarize the state of the art in their respective areas of research;
- have practiced the basic methods necessary to become both critical consumers and producers of academic research;
- have received and be prepared to provide feedback on work-in-progress.

Course structure

The course will be structured so to best meet the participants' needs. That is, we can meet on a weekly basis or in block sessions, or combine the two formats in a fruitful manner.

Course literature

The course, including the readings and other material, will be tailored to the students' needs; the course literature will made available on StudyNet.

Additional course information

Tina Freyburg is Professor of Comparative Politics in the School of Economics and Political Sciences at the University of St Gallen, Switzerland. In her research she explores the chances and risks that emerge for democracy in a globalized and digitalized world. Please visit her personal website for more information:

www.tina-freyburg.eu

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (40%)

Remark

review of academic journal article (max. 2'000)



Examination-aid rule

Term papers

- Term papers must be written without anyone else's help and in accordance with the known quotation standards, and they must contain a declaration of authorship.
- The documentation of sources (quotations, bibliography) has to be done throughout and consistently in accordance with the APA or MLA standards. The indications of the sources of information taken over verbatim or in paraphrase (quotations) must be integrated into the text in accordance with the precepts of the applicable quotation standard, while informative and bibliographical notes must be added as footnotes (recommendations and standards can be found, for example, in METZGER, C. (2015), Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (11th ed., 4th printing). Aarau: Sauerländer).
- For any work written at the HSG, the indication of the page numbers both according to the MLA and the APA standard is never optional.
- Where there are no page numbers in sources, precise references must be provided in a different way: titles of chapters or sections, section numbers, acts, scenes, verses, etc.
- For papers in law, the legal standard is recommended (by way of example, cf. FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R. et SCHINDLER B. (2014, Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (5. Auflage), Zürich: Schulthess, or the recommendations of the Law School).

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

2. Examination sub part (2/2)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (60%)

Remark

outline of own research project (max. 2'000 words)

Examination-aid rule

Term papers

- Term papers must be written without anyone else's help and in accordance with the known quotation standards, and they must contain a declaration of authorship.
- The documentation of sources (quotations, bibliography) has to be done throughout and consistently in accordance with the APA or MLA standards. The indications of the sources of information taken over verbatim or in paraphrase (quotations) must be integrated into the text in accordance with the precepts of the applicable quotation standard, while informative and bibliographical notes must be added as footnotes (recommendations and standards can be found, for example, in METZGER, C. (2015), Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (11th ed., 4th printing). Aarau: Sauerländer).
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Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English



Examination content

Students have a two-fold role as participant in class: (1) They study and discuss existing research, and (2) they design their own research project. Overall, participants will be asked to demonstrate critical thinking skills, which go beyond presenting information and reproducing knowledge.

Students as learners. Each student is required to

- a. write one *review paper* critically assessing one academic article published with a top political science journal (max. 2'000 words). The review should be critical, constructive, and realistic. The paper needs to be sent to the lecturer by email as pdf.-attachment by Monday evening.
- b. present the main points of their *critique in class* (max. 10 min.) to kick-off the discussion. Power point slides can but must not be used. A one- page hand-out outlining the main points and suggesting three questions for discussion is to be sent to the lecturer by email as pdf.-attachment by Monday evening.

Students as researchers. Each student is expected to

- c. work on a *research design* that can (but need not to) be developed further into a MA thesis (max. 2'000 words). Halfway the course (week 6), a brief *sketch of the main idea*, including puzzle, research question, and argument (500 words) should be submitted on which the lecturer will provide written feedback. Both the sketch and the research outline shall be submitted in pdf.-format via StudyNet.
- d. present the draft research design at the mini-symposium. *Poster presentation* shall include motivation, research question, theoretical argument, working hypotheses, methodology, and anticipated challenges.

Please pay attention to the guidelines for academic research and writing that can be downloaded from the lecturer's website [www.tina-freyburg.eu] under 'teaching' and that will be made available on StudyNet.

The final grade is composed of (1) the review of the journal article (40%), and (2) research design written individually, including presentation at symposium and submission of draft proposal (60%).

Examination relevant literature

The seminar has no fixed list of topics or readings. However, it is recommended to consult any established textbook introducing the scientific study of politics, such as:

- Thoskhov, Dimiter (2016) *Research Design in Political Science*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten. *The fundamentals of political science research*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Gschwend, Thomas, and Frank Schimmelfennig, eds. *Research design in political science: how to practice what they preach*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.



Please note

We would like to point out to you that this fact sheet has absolute priority over other information such as StudyNet, faculty members' personal databases, information provided in lectures, etc.

When will the fact sheets become binding?

- Information about courses and examination time (central/decentral and grading form): from the start of the bidding process on 24 August 2017
- Information about decentral examinations (examination-aid rule, examination content, examination relevant literature): after the 4th semester week on 16 October 2017
- Information about central examinations (examination-aid rule, examination content, examination relevant literature): from the start of the enrolment period for the examinations on 06 November 2017

Please look at the fact sheet once more after these deadlines have expired.