

**WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT**  
**DEPARTMENTAL HONORS IN GOVERNMENT**

*Departmental Honors in Government may be awarded through one of two tracks: the Thesis Track or the Exam Track. This dual track system is effective beginning with the Class of 2011 and is described in more detail below and on the Department's Website.*

**I. Entry into the Government Department Honors Program**

Early in the spring semester of each year, the Department of Government's Committee on Honors will identify and nominate approximately 20 students as potential candidates for Departmental Honors. The nominations will be submitted to the entire Department faculty for amendment and approval.

Students designated as Honors-eligible will be informed by the Department and invited to apply to write an Honors thesis. All Honors'-eligible students may apply but this Track will only be open to a limited number of students who submit a compelling research statement and have the support of a faculty mentor. To apply students must submit an application and a prospectus in late March which will be forwarded by the student's thesis advisor to the Department for its review and approval.

Honors-eligible students who do not apply to write theses and students whose theses proposals are not approved by the Department remain eligible to pursue Departmental Honors via the examination track and will be thus informed.

The schedule for determining eligibility for the various Honors' Tracks will be made in a timely fashion and in advance of the spring semester pre-registration period.

A second "late" entry into the Exam Track will occur after the fall semester of the senior year. At that time, the Department Chair will identify

students, if any, who were not eligible for Honors in the second semester of the junior year. The “late” entry is designed to accommodate those students whose performance improves significantly during junior year (spring semester) and fall semester of the senior year. “Late” entrants are restricted, however, to the Exam Track.

## **II. The Thesis Track:**

Students approved for the Thesis Honors Track will be required to enroll in the *Capstone Thesis Seminar* during spring preregistration for the fall semester. The seminar will be a “Permission of Instructor” course to accommodate students other than those approved to write Department theses (see below) should space be available.

Before departing for the summer, students will expand on the March prospectus in consultation with the student’s faculty mentor/thesis advisor. As part of this process, the student and mentor/advisor will develop a summer reading list/research activity schedule.

The *Capstone Thesis Seminar* will meet on a weekly basis during the fall semester of the senior year. Successful completion of this seminar will require one or two chapters of high quality which at a minimum contain the following:

- An articulation of the central question of the thesis
- A review of the literature that addresses that question
- A research design statement
- An articulation of the theory/argument of the thesis
- A detailed outline of the thesis

Students who fail to meet this minimum requirement, or who otherwise do not perform satisfactorily in the seminar, will no longer be eligible to pursue the Thesis Honors Track. They would, however, be allowed to pursue the Exam Honors Track.

During the fall semester, the usual function of thesis advising will be divided between the instructor of the Capstone Thesis Seminar and the actual thesis advisor. During this fall semester, the instructor will work closely with the student to develop the thesis literature review, methodology, and structure. The thesis advisor will act as a “consultant” during the fall semester meeting as needed to advise the student on these matters (likely 3-4 times in the fall). In the spring semester, the instructor’s role in the thesis would end. All of the thesis advising duties would revert to the thesis advisor (who would enroll the thesis student in the 410 tutorial).

On a space available basis (defined as a class size not exceeding 15), non-Government students may, at the discretion of the instructor, be allowed to enroll in the Capstone Thesis Seminar.

Maximum thesis length will normally be 100 pages (plus the bibliography).

### **III. The Exam Track**

Students wishing to take this option may enroll in a directed reading seminar, *Capstone Seminar in Political Science*, during the spring semester of their senior year. Only those students eligible for honors will be allowed into this course.

The *Capstone Seminar in Political Science* will focus on the exam readings for the general portion of the exam, many of which will overlap with works in the various subfields in which students concentrate. A list of both general political science readings and more specialized readings in each of the concentrations will be created and posted on the Government website. The exam will consist of five questions of which the student will be required to answer two. The page limit is five double-spaced, typed pages for each part (10 pages total on the exam). The grade for the seminar would be a function of the evaluation of the exam taken at the end of the second semester. High Honors, Honors, and no Honors will be granted separately from the grade in the course (i.e., two separate determinations by the reader). The task of grading will be divided among the Department in a manner to distribute the work load equally among active faculty.

### **IV. Class Cancellation**

If a Capstone Seminar does not have enough students to meet the Academic Affairs minimum requirements for the course to count as a “class” (5 students) that course will be cancelled and:

- The thesis track would revert to the traditional process of the student enrolling in 409 in the fall and 410 in the spring, provided that an advisor is available and willing to advise the student. Failing that, the student remains eligible for the exam track. Maximum thesis length would remain approximately 100 pages.
- The exam track would revert to a student-directed preparation effort to read and interpret the material on the reading list. The exam would take place as planned above.

The decision to cancel the thesis track seminar will be made at the end of registration in the spring. The decision to cancel the exam track seminar will be made at the end of registration in the fall.

**V. Review:**

The Department will evaluate this new system in its third year, after it has been in operation for two full years.

**Adopted by the Department of Government  
April 11, 2008**