Department of Politics Senior Thesis Poster

Spring 2020

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Poster Session Description

At the end of spring semester, the third annual Department of Politics Senior Thesis Poster Session provides an opportunity for graduating seniors to present the results of your senior thesis. While your complete senior thesis provides a comprehensive account of your topic, your poster allows you to clearly and concisely present your theoretical arguments and empirical. Preparing a poster is a **requirement** for all Politics seniors.

This document includes key information for the Princeton Politics Senior Thesis Poster, including important dates and general guidelines meant to be useful references as you go about preparing your poster.

Key dates

- Wednesday, April 22 at 4:00 pm - Senior Thesis Due
- Wednesday, May 6 at 4:00 pm - Deadline to Submit Thesis Poster

Note: Failure to meet these deadlines may result in steep penalties. 2/3 of a letter grade for the first 24- hour period, and 1/3 for each additional 24-hour period.

General guidelines

Your poster should include the most important elements of your senior thesis. Assume your grader is not familiar with your project.

Learning objectives

This poster session will help you hone the following skills:

1. **Distillation** - How to do you make detailed, rich, and complex ideas easily digestible to both expert and non-expert audiences? This exercise will teach you how to strip down your argument and findings to the essentials, both simplifying the logic and specialized concepts you use to craft your argument and judiciously choosing which aspects of your larger project to emphasize.

2. **Visualization** - How can you transform concepts, theories, and findings into visually appealing and intuitive figures, maps, and diagrams? Making a poster helps you to visualize your argument and determine which kinds of empirical and conceptual visual tools will best communicate your theory and findings.

Basic elements

Your poster should include the following information:
- *Title/author/affiliation*: featured prominently at the top of your poster.
- *Abstract*: In 150 words, briefly introduce what you studied in your thesis and explain your main findings.
- *Body:* This is largely at your discretion. What questions did your research ask? What is most important to communicate to your audience?
- *Data/empirics:* These might include figures, tables, or other visual aids to communicate your results.
- *Conclusion:* Be precise. What should a visitor to your poster take away?
- *Basic references.*

Poster tips

Follow these tips[1] when making your poster:
- **Organization**. Your poster should be organized similarly to your thesis (intro, arguments, findings, limitations, etc.).
- **Style**. Limit text as much as possible. No full sentences, as you will explain key concepts to poster visitors. Where necessary use bullet points or other short-form style writing. Text should be clear, concise, legible, and spell-checked. Present results in a compelling way. Graphics, pictures, tables, and figures are helpful.
- **Creating your poster**: There are many ways to go about creating a poster. Microsoft Powerpoint and LaTeX are both recommended (if you have prior experience with Latex). Templates and LaTeX packages such as beamerposter[2] can facilitate this process. Look at examples of successful posters for inspiration.[3]

A compelling poster

Your final poster should be clear and legible, lay out the question/theory/results/etc. in a straightforward manner, and have graphs/tables (if any) that are presented clearly. More specifically it will be evaluated according to the following criteria: [4]
- Information is accurate and includes an explanation of key concepts and theories, as well as a clear description of the results and the importance of the results.
- The content is clearly and concisely written with a logical progression of ideas and supporting information.
- The abstract describes the basic components of the thesis - motivation for the topic, methodology employed, findings of study, and broader implications.
- Graphics are easily viewed and related to the topic, making the material easy to understand.

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[1] These tips are inspired by "How to Make a Poster for Social Science Research," Kosuke Imai, Fall 2015 and Barnard's Political Science Website. Originally compiled by Elsa Voytas.

[2] Package and instructions are available at https://github.com/deselaers/latex-beamerposter

[3] One source is APSA's online gallery, available here: https://apsa2016.ipostersessions.com/Default.aspx?s=apsa_gallery

[4] Adapted from Texas Tech University Center for Active Learning and Undergraduate Engagement.

- Fonts are easily read and vary appropriately for headings and text. Use of italics, bold and indentations enhances readability.
- **Poster will be assigned a P/D/F grade based on a letter grade. All grades at or above a C-minus will be given a P, but you will be able to see your exact letter grade along with grader comments.**

Poster specifications

Your final poster must be:
- submitted by 4:00 pm on May 6th via the online submission system accessed at https://polthesisposters.princeton.edu/student_login.php.
- submitted in PDF format.
- All posters must be **landscape** in orientation, with the exact dimensions of 24 x 36 inches. Prior to submission, please open the PDF file and confirm its dimensions.[5]

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[5] This dimension can be set in PowerPoint using the Page Setup menu.