

Dear junior POEC majors:

I hope your spring semester is off to a good start! I am writing because some of you may be thinking about writing a senior thesis in Political Economy next year. Writing a thesis is a unique opportunity to engage in a serious research project of your own design, under the guidance of two advisers (one from PSCI and one from ECON), and is also the only path to graduating with honors in the major.

Most of the information you need to put together a proposal is listed on the program's web site:

<https://political-economy.williams.edu/the-major/the-degree-with-honors/>

Please do consult this site, as it has more details than I provide here.

A successful proposal would include the following:

1. A description of the topic: what question do you propose to investigate? Why is the question interesting?
2. How will you investigate your topic? What methodology (or methodologies) do you propose to use? If the project involves analysis of data, what data will you use?
3. A short discussion of existing scholarly literature on the question you intend to investigate, what we've learned from that literature, and how your research will contribute new knowledge relative to this prior literature, including a short bibliography.
4. What preparation have you had for researching this topic? What are your relevant courses and experiences?
5. The names of your proposed advisers. Note that you should check with your potential advisers first, to make sure they are willing and able to serve. It is a very good idea to send potential advisers a draft of your thesis proposal at least a week or more before the deadline, so they know what you are proposing and can give you feedback.

The deadline for proposals is April 11, **the second Wednesday after spring break**. You should aim to get a preliminary draft of your proposal to your advisers at least one week before the deadline, to give your advisers a chance to offer some comments and suggestions and so your proposal, and to give you a chance to make some revisions to it. Please email your proposal to the Chair of the Political Economy Program and to your advisers as an attachment by that date.

If you have any questions, please contact me. My drop-in office hours are 1:10pm-2:25pm Tuesdays and 10am-noon Wednesdays, or I can be available by appointment or to discuss over email.