

Seminar in Political Science (K001220)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2024-2025

A (Year)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

seminar

independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2024-2025

Van Poeck, Katrien

PS03

staff member

Verhelst, Tom

PS03

lecturer-in-charge

Debusscher, Petra

PS03

co-lecturer

De Cordier, Bruno

PS05

co-lecturer

Haesebrouck, Tim

PS03

co-lecturer

Kern, Anna

PS03

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2024-2025

crdts

offering

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

political sciences, literature study

Position of the course

The first intention of this course is to familiarize the student with the most important literature in political science. In other words, it is an important preparation for making all sorts of papers further in the course where the student is often confronted with the question: where can I find which information? To this end, it is necessary to go into the theoretical and applied way of using literature in political-scientific research (looking up, processing and referring to literature).

Furthermore, this course deals with the essence of academic writing. Several elements are discussed:

- How do you design a good status questionis?
- How do you place your own research in the wider research field?
- In which way are good research questions built up?
- How are these research questions developed?
- How do you design your own research design?

The material acquired in lectures and other educational forms is used in practical exercises, the most important of which consists of writing a scientific qualitative paper on a theme in political science chosen by the student.

Finally, an observation day (and collective reflection) familiarizes students with the application of the skills and knowledge of political scientists on the job market.

Relationship with the training competences:

- Competences in political science: B.1.1; B.1.6 and B.1.7
- Scientific competences: B.2.1; B.2.2 and B.2.5
- Intellectual competence: B.3.1 and B.3.3
- Competent in collaboration and communication: B.4.1. and B.4.3.
- Social competence: B.5.2.

Contents

This course consists of a theoretical part and a practical part (including exercises).

In the theoretical part, attention is paid to the use of literature in political sciences and the different elements of scientific research. What is the place of literature research in the light of scientific knowledge development? Why is it necessary to use and refer to literature when conducting a political scientific research? Which factors should be taken into account when trying to arrive at a critical assessment of political-scientific literature? What defines a good research problem and research question? What is a good research design? Etc.

In this context, the main types of literature (books, magazines, newspapers, databases and catalogs, sources of government institutions, etc.) from the political sciences and their possible repositories (libraries, archives and electronic information carriers) are examined in more detail. We also offer the students an overview of the most important literature in political science, both from the perspective of general politics and from a more field-specific approach.

The application section consists of a number of practical exercises:

- formulating a research question and developing a strategy for the literature review
- conceptualising political concepts
- analysing academic research

Next to this, students write a paper that, in addition to the use of and reference to relevant literature, also assesses the way in which students compose research questions and a research design around a topic in political science. The literature used and the selected research design will be explained by each discipline within the department of Political Sciences, so that the students can make a clear choice about the research theme to be discussed. The latter paper will also be assessed and periodically be evaluated within each discipline of the department.

Finally, this course involves practical lessons: a session on literature review, a session on the faculty library, a session on reference systems, and an observation day, in which the students follow alumni of political science in order to familiarise themselves with the possible applications of the skills and knowledge of political scientists on the job market. This includes writing a brief reflection report and a collective feedback moment.

Initial competences

'Political Science' (1BA)

Final competences

- 1 To have solid practical knowledge of the main literature that is of importance to political sciences and knowing where to search for it
- 2 To be able to critically gather and process research literature about political sciences problems and to be able to report on findings
- 3 To have knowledge of the methodology of political sciences research
- 4 The goals and final competences of this course contribute to the realization of a crucial objective of the degree program: an active mastery of the main research methods employed within the political sciences
- 5 To be able to formulate clear research questions and related research designs on the basis of relevant scientific literature

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- General classes + thematic sessions
- Interactive session of electronic database search, the faculty library, and reference systems
- Observation day
- 3 assignments and 1 paper (independent work) + reflection report on the observation day
- Due to COVID19 changes in the work forms can be made if necessary

Study material

None

References**Course content-related study coaching**

- Interactive support through Ufora
- By appointment
- Department-related support

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- Due to COVID19 changes in the assessment forms can be made if necessary
- If a student does not participate in one or more of the evaluation moments (3 assignments, reflection report, and 1 paper), she/he cannot pass this course and will his/her final score, should it be above 7/20 will be reduced to 7/20.

Calculation of the examination mark

Combination of continuous (50%) and periodic (50%) assessment.