This seminar is designed for students intending to write an honors thesis in Political Science. It represents the first quarter of the three quarter Political Science Honors Program. During these three quarters, students investigate a topic of their choice under the supervision of a faculty advisor who has expertise in their research area. They write an honors thesis of roughly 100 pages, to be turned in near the end of the third quarter of the Honors Program (in this case, winter quarter 2007).

PS 191H, which is taken in the first quarter of the Honors Program is designed to help students transform their research topics into researchable questions and to develop a research strategy to investigate these questions. The reading assignments are generally quite short. Students are expected to spend most of their time on their own preliminary research. To structure their efforts, a series of short assignments will be required. Students are expected to complete these assignments and to do the readings before seminars so that they are prepared to discuss them.

After completing the PS 191H seminar in the spring, students will spend the following fall and winter quarters (in this case, fall 2006 and winter 2007) working independently with their faculty advisor on their honors thesis.

REQUIREMENTS:

To enroll in PS 191H, students must be eligible for Department Honors and must apply to (and be accepted into) the Honors Program in Political Science. Only students who have found faculty advisors by the middle of the spring quarter will be permitted to continue in the Honors Program.

Course grades for PS 191H will be assigned by Professor Posner during spring quarter 2006. Grades will be calculated as follows:

- assignments 60 percent
- participation 40 percent

Grades during fall 2006 will be designated “in progress” (IP) until after winter 2007, at which time a grade will be assigned for the thesis and applied retroactively to both fall 2006 and winter 2007. Grades for fall and winter quarters will be based solely on the thesis, which will be jointly graded by Professor Posner and the student’s thesis advisor. In addition to the usual letter grade, students may earn High Honors, Honors, or no honors for their thesis.
There is one required textbook for the course: Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. It has been ordered and should be available at ASUCLA. Additional readings to supplement the King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV) text will also be distributed from time to time.

The Honors Program is a great deal of work, especially during winter quarter. Students should think carefully about whether it is something they want to do.

**TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

April 4: *Introduction: Mechanisms and Causation*


**First Assignment Due: April 7**

April 11: *Moving from “Research Topic” to “Research Question”*


April 18: *Causality and Causal Inference*

KKV, “Causality and Causal Inference,” ch. 3.


**Second Assignment Due: April 21**
April 25:  *Case Selection*

KKV, “Determining What to Observe,” ch. 4.


May 2:  *Case Studies and Explaining Unique, Complex Events*

KKV, “Increasing the Number of Observations,” ch. 6.


Third Assignment Due: May 5

May 9:  *Common Research Design Problems*

KKV, “Understanding What to Avoid,” ch. 5.

May 16:  *Finding and Comparing Rival Hypotheses*

Readings TBA

Fourth Assignment Due: May 19

May 23: Class Presentations

May 30: Class Presentations

June 6: Class Presentations

Final Assignment Due: Last Day of Finals Week