

Political Science Junior Qualifying Examination Handbook

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1 Policies

The Political Science Junior Qualifying Examination must be written in conjunction with a regular course that the student is taking in Political Science in the semester immediately preceding their senior year. In the first week of classes, the student submits a request to write the qualifying examination in one of their courses to the qual czar and instructor. No more than 5 quals can be written in a semester under any one professor. When there are more than five requests, the five qual writers are selected at the department's discretion. Junior quals may not be written in 200 level political science courses. Two of the three introductory courses must be completed before taking the junior qualifying examination; the third may be in progress at that point, and must also be passed in order to pass the junior qual.

Students going on terms abroad must make early arrangements to complete the junior qualifying examinations. This is their responsibility. Exceptions will be granted for students on terms abroad in their second semester of their junior year; these students will take the old exam format.

The department guarantees that every student majoring in Political Science may submit such a paper in lieu of some (but usually not all) of the written requirements for a course, at the discretion of the instructor, so that the course workload is not increased.

2 Junior Qual Website

To assist you with the qual, a number of frequently-updated and electronic resources have been placed online. Please consult the page:

http://academic.reed.edu/poli_sci/resources/juniorqual.html. Important resources include:

1. **This Year's Deadlines.** These are posted at the beginning of the academic year and are updated to reflect any subsequent changes in dates or locations of events. The Qual Czar will also send any updates to the Qual mailing list.
2. **Junior Qual Samples.** The Qual Czar has placed sample proposals, draft annotated bibliographies, outlines, draft research designs, and final papers on the qual Moodle.
3. **Core Source Materials for the Literature Review.** This includes specialized sources for subfields of political science, sources for locating and borrowing books and journal articles, databases and indexes for scholarly literature and current news, tools for locating legal information, government publications, and statistics.

3 Components of the Junior Qual

The Junior Qualifying Examination in Political Science primarily consists of a literature review and a research design. A student must also complete library certification. To clarify the process, we have broken the qual into five parts. All five must be completed by the end of the second semester of a major's junior year, and are listed below in chronological order.

1. **Proposal and Proposal Lunch.** The proposal is a short (2-3 page) statement of the puzzle or question on which a literature review will be conducted. The document is distributed in advance of a proposal lunch where all the proposals are discussed.
2. **Library certification.** The Social Science Librarian must certify that the candidate has completed the library social science research session. It is the student's responsibility to complete the library session as early as possible. The department encourages first-semester juniors to consider taking the library session.
3. **Draft Annotated Bibliography and Outline.** In the course of the semester, students will submit first a preliminary annotated bibliography containing approximately 20 or more sources (and then later an outline) of their literature review. These are progress reports indicating that substantial steps have been taken towards completing the research review. By the same token, it is expected that students will continue to add to their bibliography and work on their outlines as the semester proceeds.
4. **Draft Research Design and Mini-Oral Lunch.** The design puts forward a hypothesis or thesis for further research based on the literature review. The design should be about 5 pages. The design states clearly the thesis or hypothesis, significance of the question, method to be used, the steps to be followed, and the outcome expected. Near the end of the semester and shortly after turning in the draft design, each student will present their research design at the junior mini-orals lunch.
5. **Final Paper.** The final paper is expected to incorporate and be responsive to feedback from faculty during the entire process. It must have the following components:
 - o A Literature Review of about 20 pages in length
 - o Your Final Research Design
 - o Your Final Annotated Bibliography

4 Evaluation of the Junior Qualifying Examinations

A student must successfully complete all five parts of the junior qualifying examination by the end of their junior year in order to register for Pol 470, Thesis. The Department as a whole evaluates the examination regardless of the course in which it was written. The Department will determine whether the student has passed each component of the junior qualifying examinations. However, the following items may also lead to the failure to pass the junior qualifying examination, the course, or both:

1. **Proposal, Draft Annotated Bibliography, Outline, Draft Research Design, Final Paper.** All these materials must be submitted by the specified due date to Moodle. Students who fail to submit one or more of these materials on time will fail the Examination. The Junior Qual Czar shall set the deadlines in with the approval of the department; instructors of particular courses may not alter these arrangements for students in those courses. Students who miss deadlines may petition the department, though this is far from the normal expectation of things. The Department expects all deadlines to be met in a timely fashion.
2. **Library Certification.** The Social Science Librarian will certify that the student has been to the library research session in the semester the Examination is written or the semester immediately prior to that. If a student misses the session, they will not be certified and will fail the Examination. There is only one library session per semester, so students must plan carefully to ensure that they will be able to attend.
3. **Course work and the Junior Qualifying Examinations.** The Department expects that students will successfully complete all the components of the Junior Qualifying Examination and meet all other requirements for the course they have chosen as a vehicle for their Examination. Students who fail the course may the Examination if they have met all requirements for passing the Examination.

The Department would like to stress a few points on evaluation. First, and most obviously, incorporate whatever relevant feedback or advice you heard during the course of the qualifying examination. Speak about it with your course professor and the Qual Czar if any input is unclear. Failure to incorporate feedback can lead to a conditional pass. Start writing up your literature review early on in the process; there is no need to wait until after the mini-orals to complete this part of the qual.

Please keep in mind that your qual is only a partial substitute for work in the course, and it is expected that you complete all other work that you owe your instructor in a timely fashion. If, for example, the qual substitutes for one of two papers, or for one of two exams, keep in mind that you need to prepare for the part that was not exempted and complete that successfully. The final evaluation for that course will reflect that component too.

Once your quals are in, the process from there proceeds as follows. The department will meet and go over the items. The instructor in the course will assign a grade value for the final paper. The department will evaluate whether you have met the requisites for the qual—that is, proper research design, literature review, and annotated bibliography. We assume that your work this semester is evolving and so the final product will represent improvements in detail, clarity and organization for all three parts of the final paper.

Our priority will be with dealing with the senior orals and grades, so we are unlikely to get back to you sooner than a week after the end of the final examination period. As is the custom,

the Department's assessment of your qual will be delivered by email as well as a hard copy to your mail box.

There are three possible outcomes for the qual: pass, conditional pass, and fail. Fail happens rarely, though it has happened. The conditional pass is more common than a fail assessment. This means that the submitted document lacks in some respect and the department places some conditions that you must perform to pass fully. This may include simply providing missing material, rewriting certain elements of the qual, and so forth. Obviously the ideal situation for us and you would be if all of you passed the qual—and we certainly hope you do.

5 A Step by Step Guide

5.1 Some General Tips

In a general way, the Qual process reproduces various kinds of assignments that you are going to have to do during thesis (e.g., proposal, oral presentation, lit review), though not necessarily in the sequence that it happens for thesis. The semester-long process allows you to redo components of the qual and the qual is assessed only upon final submission at the end of the semester.

There are a number of different strategies for proposing a topic, conducting a literature review, and writing a research design. The samples on the website reflect some possible approaches, but do not exhaust all valid options. Some options include:

- An empirical question (e.g., what explains the 1994 Republican Revolution?) with an specific, empirical literature review looking at different authors' explanations for the specific phenomenon (national disaffection with government and realignment) in question rather than election outcomes in general; the research design then proposes to investigate a "hole" in the empirical literature: e.g., rather than looking for national explanations, move to the regional level and identify individual "battlegrounds."
- An empirical question (e.g., what explains the size of China's nuclear arsenal?) with a mechanism-focused literature review investigating different general causal mechanisms (technical, economic, political, doctrinal) for the size of nuclear arsenals rather than explanations for China's specific arsenal; the research design lays out how to measure relevant variables and apply the theories to China.
- A theoretical question (e.g., what lessons do the Marxist and republican traditions of interpretation of Machiavelli have for contemporary politics?) with a literature review that is centered around interpretations of a particular theorist; the research design proposes to test the internal coherency of combining present-day leftist thought with classical Marxist readings of Machiavelli.
- A theoretical question (e.g., does the civic republican theory of negative liberty provide better guarantees of liberty?) with a literature review that looks at different writers on positive and negative liberty as well as theorists who have spawned the revival of civic republican notions of negative liberty; the research design proposes to examine the internal consistency of the latter theorists' arguments as well as its compatibility with a wider system of beliefs about liberty as non-interference.

5.2 The Proposal: Choose Your Research Question Thoughtfully

The qual has two main components, a research design and a literature review. The main purpose of the proposal is to frame the limits of the literature review. For the proposal, we would like a clearly stated question. Keep in mind that a literature review is *not* a paper. You are not

researching this topic in order to answer the question, but rather to investigate what other people have said that would be relevant to the question. Do **not** attempt to answer your question in your literature review. You are cataloging what there is that has been written on this topic in the effort to answer this question. Your review should have the capacity to identify a variety of texts (books, articles etc.) using a variety of different approaches and methodologies.

Please keep in mind, though we will undoubtedly repeat it at the oral, that a literature review proposal is *not* a research proposal. Imagine that you are given a square mile of forest. A literature review would be your catalog of how many trees of various kinds you find in what quantities and at what ages, and possibly also clearings and rivers in the space. You would describe the catalog—that's the literature review. Your research proposal (which you will do later) would be your hypotheses or explanation of the ecosystem there. The literature review is *not* that. We are asking you to do the preliminary assay of a territory, not an explanation of its features.

If you think you can suggest one, propose the broad outlines of what you're thinking of framing for your research design. We know, of course, that as you do a literature review, your design may change. But try out what the possibilities might be for you and get feedback from us. Please keep in mind that your first requirement as a senior will be to submit a thesis proposal by the end of the first month to the division (not the department), so you might as well learn how to do it now. You do not have to have any faculty member sign off on your qual proposal before turning it in.

5.2.1 *The Proposal Question*

The way you define your question in the long run affects the number and range of sources and the quality of the arguments you can pull together for a literature review. The choice of question can therefore be strategic. This is the first place in the assignment where your creative judgment and skill come into play.

Some questions are simply enormous (What is the literature on revolution, terrorism or Congress or John Rawls?) and there are many well-traveled paths. In these areas, the goal is to narrow the topic in a way that there is a puzzle, question, proposition or hypothesis to explore. For example, "Is a presidential system more liable to gridlock than a parliamentary system?" may yield a variety of different positions in comparative politics. Or "Has Hobbes really solved the "Problem of the Fool" in the *Leviathan*?" Each of these questions directs your attention towards a range of different answers to this question.

A question may also be a non-starter because there is very little information on it or all the information you can find on it is of one sort (say, journalistic coverage or by just one author). Here you may need to think about ways to revise your question so you can grasp a variety of research sources. Here your instructor may be able to give you good advice.

You must state in your proposal the significance of the question in political science. What is the existing literature you have found so far on this question? While understanding "what views of Osama bin Laden might exist in the United States?" might be a question of interest to you, you need to explain why a political scientist might be interested in this question.

The scope of the literature review may depend upon how much literature already exists on the particular topic. To put it another way, given a research question such as "Why have sanctions lasted so long against Cuba?" the appropriate literature review may study general theories of sanctions duration; in the case of a subject that has been extensively studied, a review may study the particular topic of Cuban sanctions if the theoretical positions are well staked out in order to identify remaining puzzles unexplained by the existing approaches.

5.2.2 *The Proposal Lunch*

After you have turned in your proposal, all of the qualling juniors and the entire Political Science faculty will meet for the proposal lunch. Each junior will in turn present their proposal; when called, you will get up and speak for between 2 and 3 minutes. Then the faculty will give you feedback, encouraging you to narrow, refine, restate, or broaden what you're doing. We want you to feel comfortable in conditions where unknown faculty ask you questions in a group. This will matter later with thesis orals.

What should you talk about? Keep it simple. We will have read your proposal, so don't read it back to us. Focus on two things: What is the organizing question of my literature review? And what is it I expect to find in terms of the literature? If you have time, you can explain something of the significance of the question or what you anticipate you may use for your research design. But really we want to know how you are approaching your literature review.

Please be advised, in this case, as in all others, the department may require that you resubmit your qual proposal in light of the feedback you receive before proceeding to the next stage.

You will be expected to be there for the duration of *all* of the proposals. You can't leave after you have done yours unless you have a class that conflicts directly with some part of the proposal lunch; in this case, inform the Qual Czar in advance so that you can be scheduled appropriately. Part of the qual is learning from each other as well as getting a sense of your senior cohort.

5.3 Library Certification: Consult the Library effectively.

One aim of the Junior Qualifying Examination is to empower students to use the library effectively so that these skills are at hand when senior thesis research begins. There are a great variety of databases available in the library. You should explore as many as possible in gathering possible sources for inclusion in your review.

However, as a general rule, you should remember that while databases are quick and efficient, their holdings become shallower the further back you go. A typical problem with research that depends solely on databases is that it is as superficial as they are. More than that, think creatively with the sources you have. Follow up footnotes in texts you consult. Consult the bibliography for encyclopedia entries. Browse adjacent shelves. Follow through on the Social Science Citation Index or Google Scholar. To further assist you, we have provided you with a list of core sources on the library website, which any student in political science should know how to use. In addition, we have provided more specialized sources, depending on the topic you choose. These lists are not exhaustive.

The Social Science Librarian will offer one library session each semester. There is no makeup session. If you miss the library session, you will fail the qualifying examination. You may obtain your library certification in advance by attending the semester before you intend to take the examination.

5.4 Draft Annotated Bibliography and Outline: Screen and Organize Your Material.

Once you have established why it is an important puzzle or question, you then assemble the range of literature you think is responsive to this concern. Your hunt may yield many articles and books but it is unlikely you will want to review all of them. Aside from the time constraints, they may not all be relevant in the same degree. You need to screen this material to see if it is eligible to be included. This is your first screen. A variety of different approaches (methods, questions, orientations, perspectives) is critical to make the most of this exercise. You need to identify

potentially **usable** studies and so you may find yourself going back to the library again and again. This is normal. The Bibliography you submit mid-semester is a snapshot of where you are. You should expect to be expanding this as the semester proceeds.

5.4.1 *The Annotated Bibliography*

All literature reviews must include an annotated bibliography. We cannot tell if you have mastered the necessary research skills merely by a list of books and articles in your bibliography. The purpose of the annotation is to assure us that you thought creatively about the resources you used, that you did not simply depend on one or two basic resources and you know how to use a full range of library resources as well as scholarly techniques.

The one constant across all bibliographies should be that you indicate *how you found the sources you did*. This is what we mean by an annotated bibliography. We do not mean that you have to have read everything you have and summarized it in a note on each one. The goal of the qual is to enhance your research skills, so we want to know what skills you used to compile the bibliography. We want to know you used a variety of skills to find the materials. If you want to add notes about the texts, that's fine with us, but tell us how you found the books and articles.

So, as you do your research, make sure you keep a record of *how* you have been gathering the information. This is what you will need for your bibliography. This includes things as simple as following footnote trails and browsing as well as using various databases and hard copy texts (the annotated bibliography of Machiavelli, the encyclopedia of the social sciences) in the reference section. With databases, we would like to know what search terms you used in conducting your searches. Source material in languages other than English should have the titles translated, and in this case it might be appropriate to add a sentence on what it is, if it is not sufficiently clear, as well as how you found it.

Label and annotate all your bibliographic entries. Specify not only where you found it but how you found it. The following sample entries on nationalism are meant to illustrate what the final bibliography ought to look like. You may find programs such as Endnote or Zotero useful for keeping track of where and how you found each item (we used Zotero to generate the sample below, using the "Extra" field). While we do not require that you include a summary of each piece in the notes, we highly recommend that you do, as this is a good scholarly habit to get into (in Zotero, you should add "Notes" for this purpose).

Sample Partial Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991. CLASS MATERIAL. We were using this in a related class, Comparative Revolutions, and this book was on the syllabus. Prof. X also suggested I look at this book.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*. New York: Knopf, 1991. CATALOG: SEARCH WORDS: "Nationalism and Europe." I found this under a keyword search. Most of what I found here was too specific to use, but I had read Berlin before and thought this would be a useful source to consult.

Hirschman, Albert O. *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981. FOOTNOTE IN TEXT. I came upon this in a footnote (or bibliography) in Migdal's *Strong Societies and Weak States*.

———. "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding." *World Politics* 22, no. 3 (April 1970): 329–43. SOCIAL SCIENCE CIT INDEX. Since Hirschman's work was important for me, I ran his name through the Social Science Index.

Stalin, Joseph. *The National Question and Leninism: Reply to Comrades Meshkov, Kovalchuk, and Others*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, 1950. BROWSING; ORBIS I was looking for a Marxist perspective on nationalism, and Stalin's name kept coming up. I searched the Catalog, but could not find it. Used ORBIS instead. This did not turn out to be as useful as I thought; Anderson's book is much more useful.

Tilly, Charles, ed. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975. BIBLIOGRAPHY IN ENCYCLOPEDIA. I came across this first in Finifter's Political Science: The State of the Discipline. I didn't pay much attention to it until I found that it under the "Nationalism" section in Blackwell's Encyclopedia of Political Institutions, as well as in other books I was reading.

Next you need to go over this literature again for *quality*. A good literature review produces the best available assembly of materials on the topic at that time. You may wish to consider the study's design, how data was collected, how it was analyzed, interpreted and reported. The mechanical element of this is getting to know your literature, which includes knowing the author's purpose, identifying the thesis, the background assumptions, the place the text occupies in the controversy or puzzle, the methodological techniques employed, and the findings. If you do not have enough material of quality, then you need to go back to the library.

From a formal point of view, if your bibliography lacks sufficient clarity we will ask you to redo it. It may also be that, from a substantive perspective, the department finds that you have not found an appropriate range of materials given what is out there; again, in that case, we will ask you redo it. So you need to think about this matter both formally and substantively.

The kinds of issues we will consider in evaluating your bibliography pertain to your skill in assembling all the materials on a topic. *So*, we will ask if you just used computer databases as opposed to letting your mind follow the footnotes. Whether you just used Google Scholar as opposed to the Social Science Citation Index. Whether you used just one or two critical key words as opposed to thinking imaginatively about how to search databases or what kinds of categories would be relevant.

Submitting the bibliography at this point *does not mean* that you are done looking for sources for your literature review. You should *always* be looking for sources for your literature review. This bibliographic exercise is a provisional effort, but we fully expect you will continue to do research and there may be materials en route to you through ILL which you cannot enter at the moment. You may find sources that will change the way you think of your literature review or your outline. That is to be expected, and that sort of thing happens regularly in the course of thesis. It may be in the end that the materials you submit in the draft annotated bibliography will not resemble the final annotated bibliography you submit with your final qual. You may conclude that some of the areas you are researching currently were unnecessary or unimportant digressions to the way you framed the topic. Again, this is part of the terrain. Your bibliography is an evolving work, and again, we will consider this when we evaluate the final submission.

We strongly advise you to learn how to write a formal bibliographic entry; make sure that whatever method you have learned heretofore on writing bibliographies is an *established* method of bibliographic entry. You may want to consult the samples on the webpage. Or if you are uncertain speak with the Qual Czar or your instructor. The department's preference is the Chicago Manual of Style, but there are other established methods of bibliographic citation. Again, if the citation style is all over the place, we will ask you to correct your submission and

hand it in again. You may want to use a program such as EndNote or Zotero in order to maintain a consistent style and to organize your bibliography.

You may find that it is appropriate for you to attach what is called a bibliographic note. This note briefly itemizes some difficulties with the search for the source materials or describes materials that are highly specialized (for example, "Amnesty International world reports 1973 to 2004"—you would not want to list each of these annuals). This method is advisable when you are dealing with large collections of information such as government documents and may be placed in a footnote rather than the bibliography itself. Similarly, sources such as newspaper articles may be cited in footnotes rather than put into a bibliography.

Keep in mind that the way you organize and sort your bibliography entries (by topic, chronologically, by author etc.) may be important in how you write your final literature review. The bibliography can also be a draft outline in this respect as you tick off the sources in the order you have entered them.

5.4.2 The Outline

Now you need to write this down in a format that allows the reader to take in the entire state of research on this question at a glance. Outline broadly and imaginatively regarding the (re)sources at your disposal. What are the important contrasting positions? What are the overall strengths of research in this field? What are the weaknesses? What questions have gone ignored or unanswered? All this takes skill, and if it is well done, it amounts to an argument about the nature of the field or about a particular thesis worth investigating.

The outlines should be in standard Roman numeral format and be about a page and generally not more than two pages. They should demonstrate analytical thought as well as familiarity with the texts you are using. To be specific, now that you have compiled started compiling a bibliography and are reasonably familiar with the contents of them, we look to see you organizing this material in some fashion, either chronologically or by topic or by author, as is appropriate for your literature review. Some of you have already done this with your draft bibliographies, but we would like to see further refinement. Further, we hope that you'll keep an eye out for interesting trends in the texts, or notable absences in the material—what you expected to find and didn't or alternatively, great imbalances (a lot on something and little on something else).

In constructing your outlines, keep these elements in mind. Well executed, an outline of the available literature should suggest an argument about the way the literature has developed, the gaps in the literature, and what the literature is especially rich in.

5.5 Draft Research Design: Crafting a Program for Research

Why draft a research design now? In Thesis, your first responsibilities will be to propose a research design and conduct a literature review, and your design must be something you can complete within a year. So the qual tests your ability to frame that project. One common error in the qual research design is to propose surveys or studies that would take either a portion of a lifetime or a multimillion dollar grant to complete. If you sense that this is the case with the strategy or question you have come up with, then you need to either rethink your strategy or refine your question. All seniors in the Division of HSS must submit a research proposal in the first month of thesis, so it is good to be familiar with this format. The Junior Qualifying Examination thus includes your mastering the first skill you need to draw on for Pol 470, thesis.

5.5.1 The Design

Your next task is consequently to design a draft research proposal based on your literature review. We expect the initial research designs submitted to be *drafts*, just as the schedule says. That is, we expect substantial improvement on them when they are resubmitted at the end of the semester, incorporating faculty comments as well as other improvements along the way. Even so, if the draft is incomplete or inadequate, we may, in some cases, ask for resubmissions.

Even though the designs are drafts at this stage, the department expects to see the following elements incorporated into the designs.

1. You should offer a clear thesis or puzzle based on the review and state its significance to political science (not just to politics). Why is this research question important (the inevitable “who cares?” question)? This question should be plausible in light of the literature review you have just conducted. Think about the literature you have read and place your design within the framework of the literature.

2. Propose a way and methodology to test, prove, or disprove your thesis, outline the stages through which the research would proceed, and tell us what you expect to find based on the literature you have reviewed thus far. What would it take to convince you that you are wrong (identifying the truth conditions for your claim)? Whether the material is empirical or theoretical, each student must answer this question in plausible and feasible ways. Keep in mind that if you cannot answer this question, then there is no difference between what you are doing and mythology or rhetoric.

This document should be no longer than 5 pages and must have an acceptable system of citation. Your literature review should be of great assistance to you, but remember that a literature review opens the way for *many* research papers, not just one. If you are uncertain on how to proceed with the literature you have read, you should speak as soon as possible with your class instructor.

Though there is no expectation that the student will have the time to answer it, the strategy you propose *must be feasible*. This means that a student could pursue and complete the strategy you propose over the course of a year given the resources normally available to one.

This is of course not (yet at any rate) a research paper. If you *did* write a research paper based on the literature review, you would need to go over your review again and delete a lot of material as many of the sources you cover may not be directly related to your research design.

5.5.2 The Design Orals Lunch

Here is some advice for the research design orals. First, the procedure will be almost identical to the procedures for the proposal lunch. Thus, while we have reserved the room for an ample period, we expect to keep everyone on a tight timeline: 3–5 minutes per presentation and no more than 5–7 minutes for faculty questions and comments. At most, we can spend an average of about 10 minutes per presentation. We assume if more detailed comments are needed you'll know whom to contact.

As with the qual proposal, you are expected to be there for the whole session, not just your presentation (unless you have a really really good reason which you should have discussed with the Qual Czar in advance). There are a number of reasons we insist on full attendance, not the least being that you can learn by observing others.

Again, we will have read your proposal so keep your presentation short. You will be surprised how fast time goes by. Try to practice it a few times. As to what to hit in such a short time, try to address three simple questions: What is the question of your design? How do you propose to answer it? What do you expect to find?

Please keep in mind that your research designs are drafts, and we expect you to incorporate feedback and any other improvements that occur to you in the course of the remainder of the semester. Again, should there be a significant problem with the design, we may indicate a concern to you in writing or request a rewrite.

5.6 The Final Paper: Writing the Literature Review

A literature review allows a reader to understand the strengths and weaknesses of research done on a topic. In many cases, the first chapter of a thesis is a literature review (and frequently a research design); therefore, mastery of this skill is critical to the success of a thesis. A literature review is different from an essay, think piece, or take-home exam. It is a review of numerous books and journal articles that seek to address a common topic. The nature and range of the material obviously varies with the field and topic. However, the final effect of a literature review on the reader is the same. In every case, the reader of a literature review should be able to see sources of confusion and obstacles; identify hidden disputes or unknown ambiguities; and understand the strengths and limits of what has been done on the topic. Your final paper should include the literature review, final research design, and final annotated bibliography, all of which take into account the feedback that you received during your oral examinations.

In all cases, the following guidelines apply:

1. The purpose of a literature review is to evaluate critically literature on a particular question of importance in the field of political science. The literature review should include scholarly materials far beyond those treated directly in the course.
2. While no firm rule regarding number of sources can be stipulated, a typical literature review will cover between 20 and 40 sources.
3. While no firm rule of length can be stipulated, it is likely that most literature reviews will be about 20 pages long.
4. Any literature review should provide a theoretical as well as methodological discussion, in which the significance of the selected topic is discussed in terms of the field of Political Science.
5. All evidence must be properly documented and referenced, using an acceptable professional system of citation. Consult your instructor regarding the appropriate citation system for that course. See the Appendix for some starting points for citation.
6. Any literature review ought to be reproducible. It should have an annotated bibliography as well as an account of how each source was located. Be especially careful to cite URLs properly.

Remember that along with your literature review, we expect you to turn in your final, revised research design and your final annotated bibliography in your final paper. The bibliography should include all of the sources cited in your literature review, but need not include all of the sources from your draft bibliography. It should, however, contain new sources not in your original draft bibliography, as we expect that you will continue to do research throughout the semester; every source should be annotated.

6 Junior Qual FAQ

Is the junior qual a research paper? No, it is not. You are not researching a topic. You are cataloging what there is that has been written about a topic. Your review should have the capacity to identify various materials (books, articles, etc.) using various approaches, theses, or methodologies.

How do I know if there is enough on a topic? One simple test is to go to the Library of Congress Catalog (<http://catalog.loc.gov/>) and type in the two or three keywords on your topic. If you type in “revolution,” for example, or “Marx and Weber,” you’ll get over 10,000 hits. Obviously you can’t read 10,000 books in a semester. Rethink your proposed idea until it is both scholarly and manageable.

Why does the qual have oral presentations? The qual’s purpose is to reinforce your skills in preparation for thesis. Many assignments we give you (proposals, oral presentations, research designs, literature reviews) all have equivalents in the course of thesis. Make sure you incorporate all oral and written feedback that you get at these sessions. After an oral presentation, don’t resubmit the same draft material as the final product, or you will have to redo that part of the qual; you are not done until you have integrated comments.

Do I have to wait till my second semester to do the library certification meeting? No, you may take the library session with the Social Science Librarian in the first semester of your junior year. In fact, we recommend it since knowing your way around the library is always enormously helpful.

If I’ve done a library session as part of some other class, do I need to do it again? Generally yes. The Social Science Librarian will be familiar with the topics juniors have chosen and will tailor the session to meet those needs.

Does annotated bibliography mean I have to summarize the information in the items I found? No. The important requirement here is that you specify clearly how you found the items you did. The point of this is to make sure we know that you are finding materials using a diversity of research methods (and not just databases, for example). If this information is not in the bibliography, you will be asked to redo it. You may, if you wish, summarize the text in a line or two if you like, but that is not a requirement.

When I submit the draft annotated bibliography and outline, does that mean I am done researching? No, it does not. You should always be looking for new sources for your literature review and rethinking it. The outline and bibliography are provisional efforts and we expect that you will continue to do research. We also assume that materials take time to arrive through interlibrary loan or that you change your mind on how to frame your work. These things are to be expected and are part of the experience of research.

What kind of format should I use for bibliographies and outlines? Outlines should be in standard Roman numeral format. We have no required format for bibliographies, but whatever format you use, make sure it is an established method of bibliographic entry, such as that in the Chicago Manual of Style. If you have doubts about this, ask. Don’t depend on what you have done before. This may not be acceptable at the level of thesis.

How realistic should my research design be? Your research design should be something you can complete within a year. Your qual tests your ability to frame a project of the sort your thesis will be like. One common error is to propose surveys and studies that would take a portion of a lifetime or a multi-million dollar grant to complete. If you sense that this is the case with the strategy or question you are using, then you need to either rethink your strategy or refine your question.

What happens at the end of the process? There are three possible outcomes: pass, conditional pass, and fail. Fail means that the student must take the qual again (not necessarily another qual paper; it may be an exam instead). Conditional means that the student's submissions were lacking in some respect and that the student is unprepared to start thesis until certain skills are mastered. In this case, the department assigns some conditions that must be satisfied before the student can register for thesis. This may include rewriting a portion of a submission or some additional exercise. All conditions must be satisfied by the start of the next semester, and failure to submit the condition is automatically a fail. Pass is the best result, of course, and you will receive written notification when you can register for thesis.

When does notification happen? We notify students after the end of the semester. Keep in mind that faculty are focused primarily on senior grades, and they may not get to reviewing the junior quals until January or late May, depending on the semester.

7 Appendix: Core Source Materials for the Research Design

A fundamental part of the senior thesis at Reed is learning to engage with, and conduct, independent scholarly research. This is why we require a research design as part of our junior qual. Without understanding the basics of social science research, you will struggle when working on your thesis.

However, it is also true that the Political Science department does not frequently offer an explicit course dedicated to research design; instead, these lessons are most often taught in conjunction with substantive material. Research design and methodology questions also appear in our introductory courses, and in some statistics courses, but often students do not recognize the importance of these lessons at the time they are exposed to them.

As a consequence, while most of our seniors are very competent in summarizing literature and identifying key arguments, the research design component of the junior qualifying examination is the component that is most often misunderstood, and is the greatest cause of conditional passes and failures.

If you feel that your understanding of what constitutes a good social science research design is shaky, we provide to you the list of sources below. Working in partnership with your qual supervisor, you should read one or more of these sources to help guide your thinking as you prepare your research design.

These readings and resources are suggested by faculty. Most of the books are available in the Reed Library. They are divided into six categories, although many of them apply to more than one category. The texts listed under **Qualitative Methods** deal specifically with designing research and selecting cases qualitatively, while the texts under **Surveys** will be helpful for quantitative research designs involving fieldwork and surveys. **Research** texts are general guides to writing research papers, while **Review** texts deal with how to conduct a literature review. **Style** guides help with citation and good writing practice, while **Writing** guides deal with writing projects more generally. This annotated bibliography was done using Endnote; the Endnote file and styles are available on the web page.

7.1 Qualitative Methods

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier, eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry : Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004. An important and very useful guide to conducting case studies and comparative research.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry : Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press, 1994. A book on comparative social inquiry written from the perspective of quantitative research; for a good companion piece, see the Brady and Collier book.

Ragin, Charles C., and Howard Saul Becker. *What Is a Case?: Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge University Press, 1992

Skocpol, Theda, and Margaret Somers. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 2 (April 1980): 174–97.

Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997. Case study methods and comparative politics.

7.2 Surveys

Fenno, Richard F. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. Little, Brown, 1978. See especially the appendix that deals with elite interviewing.

- Huff, Darrell, and Irving Geis. *How to Lie with Statistics*. New York: Norton, 1954.
<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/225473> It is a delightful little book. His examples are dated, but charmingly so (it was published in 1952). But his points are still as well-taken as ever. Huff was one of the premier statisticians of the mid twentieth century.
- Kingdon, John W. *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*. University of Michigan Press, 1989. A good guide to case selection and elite interviewing.
- Miller, Delbert C., and Neil J. Salkind. *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*. Sage Publications Inc, 2002. Especially good for finding established measurement scales which can be used for original survey research purposes.

7.3 Research

- Booth, Wayne C., Joseph M. Williams, and Gregory G. Colomb. *The Craft of Research, 2nd Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)*. University Of Chicago Press, 2003. This is a concise, practical guide to mastering the art of research which helps one plan, carry out, and report on research in any field, at any level.
- Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Richard A. Joslyn, and H. T. Reynolds. *Political Science Research Methods*. 4th ed. CQ Press, 2001. On reserve of PS 210 and also a copy in the PPW; see the first few chapters that deal with question formulation, hypothesis generation, and concept formulation.
- Rodrigues, Dawn. *The Research Paper and the World Wide Web*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997. A comprehensive guide to writing research papers for students in all fields; it helps researchers navigate through print and online sources by providing explanatory chapters on the research process, search strategies, source evaluation and documentation.

7.4 Review

- Fink, Arlene. *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper*. Sage Publications, 2004. This reference guide focuses on the “scientific” style but the sections on the internet as well as the first part on literature reviews and why they are important and useful; also, she covers a special kind of lit review called a “meta analysis,” which is essentially using the data from several studies as a new database.
- Hayes, John R., ed. *Reading Empirical Research Studies: The Rhetoric of Research*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc Inc, 1992.
- Light, Richard J., and David B. Pillemer. *Summing Up: The Science of Reviewing Research*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984. This book discusses “meta analysis” which is a form of literature review, but one based on re-analyzing massive amounts of combined empirical data from a number of independent studies, hence “summing up;” the Research Bureau of the National Association of Science does a lot of this, check their website for examples; the kind of literature reviews done for theses are what they call “traditional literature reviews.”

7.5 Style

- Staff, University of Chicago Press. *Chicago Manual of Style*. University Of Chicago Press, 2003
- Strunk, William, Jr., and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999
- Turabian, Kate L, John Grossman, and Alice Bennett. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996

7.6 Writing

- Baglione, Lisa A. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education, 2006.
<http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/70691921>. This is a “how-to” cookbook that addresses everything from finding a question to some easy stats.
- Ballenger, Bruce. *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*. Longman, 2006. Features plenty of material on the conventions of research writing—citation methods, organizational approaches, evaluating sources, and how to avoid plagiarism; emphasizes introducing students to the spirit of inquiry.
- Becker, Howard Saul, and Pamela Richards. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, Or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. All the nuts and bolts, just as the title implies.
- Dunn, William N. “The Policy Issue Paper.” In *Public Policy Analysis: An Introduction*, 423–31. Prentice-Hall, 1981. Outlines a policy paper and even has a checklist to be sure one has done everything.
- Lipson, Charles. *How to Write a BA Thesis : A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip053/2004026816.html> Intended as a guide to the whole thesis process, the first seven chapters (120 pages) do a nice job laying out the basic process of identifying an area of research and asking the “thesis” of a thesis.
- Weidenborner, Stephen, and Domenick Caruso. *Writing Research Papers: A Guide to the Process*. 4th ed. St. Martin’s, 1994. A step-by-step student guide to every aspect of the research process, from finding a topic to formatting the final manuscript.