



**Department of Politics
Te Tari Tōrangapū**

**Master of Politics (MPols)
2018 Handbook &
POL590/591 Course Guide**

Directors

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Master of Politics Programme

The MPols provides an exciting opportunity to develop valuable research and communication skills and to obtain a highly sought-after postgraduate qualification. It is designed to provide academic preparation for graduates seeking careers in professions such as diplomacy, the public service, teaching, journalism, business, politics, or policy development and research. It also serves as a foundation qualification for graduates interested in advancing to a PhD.

Students may start the MPols degree at the beginning of semester one or semester two. A full-time student must complete the requirements of the degree within twelve months, and a part-time candidate within twenty-four months, of commencing the programme.

Students are required to complete a curriculum comprising four POLS 500-level papers, including the core paper (POLS501), totaling 120 points, and a 60-point research dissertation (POLS590/591) of 20,000 words. Students are also expected to attend workshops designed to assist with the process of writing a dissertation.

500-Level POLS Papers Offered in 2018

For more details, visit the Department website:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/politics/postgraduate/otago282601.html>

Compulsory Core Paper (Semester One)

POLS501 ‘The Political’: Theory and Practice *Assoc. Prof. Jim Headley (Convenor)*

Examines the contested nature of what constitutes politics and the ways to conduct research. It explores key methodological approaches to the study of politics including positivism, rational choice theory, intersubjectivity, discourse analysis and interpretivism, and examines the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative versus qualitative research methods.

Semester One Elective Papers (full-time students choose one additional 1st semester paper)

POLS541 International Relations and the Global South

Dr Lena Tan

States in the Global South are usually depicted as minor players on a world stage dominated by great powers or as being in need of development and rescuing due to poverty, tyrannical leaders and other dire consequences of state failure in international relations (IR). Drawing on critical, theoretical approaches in IR, this paper casts a skeptical eye on these depictions and examines the material factors, ideas, identities, social relations and knowledge practices that have shaped and continue to shape the Global South, as well as North-South relations in world politics. Areas to be examined include colonialism and colonial discourses, race, gender, sovereignty, nation- and state-building, poverty and development, security and food sovereignty.

POLS550 Comparative Regional Conflicts

Prof. Bill Harris

Considers the origins, evolutions and outcomes of major regional conflicts in a comparative context. The lecturer will concentrate on Middle Eastern cases such as the Syria/Iraq crisis and the conflicts in Libya and Yemen for illustration of more general themes. For your own projects and seminars you will be free to test other cases in other regions. We shall apply comparative politics and international relations theory to these conflicts, while exploring the practical working-out of such concepts as ‘failed state,’ ‘structure and agency’ and ‘proxy war.’

Semester Two Elective Papers (full-time students choose two 2nd semester papers)

POLS510 Community, Culture and Rights

Assoc. Prof. Vicki Spencer

This paper explores the challenges the increasingly plural nature of most Western states pose for questions of justice. Do we need to accommodate and affirm cultural differences through public recognition, or is it sufficient to leave people to pursue their own ends within the limits of a common legal framework? In political theory, culture and identity have been centre-stage in recent years with various attempts to accommodate cultural differences and many critiques of such proposals. Issues we address in this paper include the validity of human rights and universal values; multiculturalism and liberal nationalism; indigenous co-sovereignty; and the conflicts that often arise between cultural and gender claims.

POLS520 New Zealand Government and Politics

Dr Chris Rudd

The paper provides an in-depth analysis and evaluation of New Zealand political institutions and their role in policy making. In addition to political parties and pressure groups, the paper looks at the executive, parliament and judiciary. As part of the course, students will be expected to write a policy brief for an incoming minister on a current political issue. It will thus provide an excellent foundation for graduates interested in working for government, political parties and various interest groups.

POLS553 The Global Politics of Poverty and Inequality

Prof. Philip Nel

Focuses on the empirics of poverty and inequality globally, as well as debates on what to do about these. Successful completion will empower you to take part in informed debates about the theory and empirical analysis of poverty and inequality.

POLS590/591 Dissertation

The research dissertation is either a piece of original research on a specified research question or a more wide-ranging discussion of a topic giving a critical account of existing literature and knowledge. The dissertation is a *maximum of 20,000 words* (excluding footnotes, bibliography, and appendices). The *minimum is 17,000 words* (excluding footnotes, bibliography, and appendices). The submitted electronic word version will be used to verify the word count provided on your title page. Please also note that footnotes and appendices must not be over-used as a means to avoid exceeding the word limit.

Students have 12 months full-time (24 months part-time) to complete the dissertation from the initial time of enrolment in the degree. This means that POLS590 students need to be prepared to work on and complete the dissertation over the summer, and POLS591 students need to complete a draft over the summer. However, we strongly advise that students begin their research as soon as possible and for POLS590 students to write a chapter draft over the mid-year break (see the workshop programme timetable on pp. 8–9).

The due date for POLS590 is 5pm Thursday 21 February 2019.

If you are submitting via the department, you must email your dissertation in PDF format to the Politics Administrator at least two working days before this due date, i.e. by **5pm Tuesday 19 February 2019** (see p. 16 for further details): politics@otago.ac.nz.

An electronic version of the POLS590 dissertation must also be submitted to Safe Assign via Blackboard by **5pm Thursday 21 February 2019**, along with a Word version and a PDF

version that you need to email to the 2019 MPols Director (tba). Unless the electronic copies are received, you will not be considered to have submitted.

The due date for 2018–19 POLS591 – soft-bound copies, electronic copies (one word and one PDF version) to the MPols Director and to Safe Assign via Blackboard – is **5pm Friday 5 July 2019**. The due date for submission in PDF format to the Politics Administrator for printing and binding is **5pm Wednesday 3 July 2019** (see p. 16 for further details): politics@otago.ac.nz.

Role of Supervisors

1. Direction of Research

When you fill out the supervision form for POLS590/591 you can nominate two potential areas of research/topics of interest, and up to three possible supervisors. You can seek advice concerning who to nominate based on your research interests from Jim or Vicki, or talk directly with whomever you are thinking of working. For more information regarding staff research interests please first consult the staff supervision areas in this document (pp. 19–20) and the individual staff profiles on the Politics' website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/politics/staff/>

The supervision form for POLS590 is due to Vicki by the end of Week 2 of semester one, Friday 9 March 2018. Final decisions will be based on research interests and staff workloads, and students will be allocated a supervisor no later than the beginning of Week 4 of the semester. The supervision form for POLS591 is due to Vicki by the end of Week 2 of semester two, Friday 20 July 2018, and students will be allocated a supervisor no later than Week 4 of semester two.

2. Contact with Supervisor

It is the normal expectation that POLS590/591 students make arrangements to meet with their supervisor on a fortnightly basis during the semesters. Some supervisors may also wish to see you weekly at the outset.

For POLS590 students this process should begin at the latest immediately after the mid-semester break in semester one. For POLS591 students, it should begin at the latest by the beginning of Week 5 of semester two. Over the summer months much of your work will be self-directed as staff will need to take annual leave and often research leave, so students should take advantage of their supervisors as much as possible during the semesters by working steadily on their dissertation throughout the year.

Students should submit a draft of each chapter to their supervisors for detailed comment (see below for requirements) and then a final complete draft. Students should work with their supervisors to determine a timetable with deadlines for each chapter. Please let the Directors know if this is not happening. If students have trouble contacting their supervisors after their allocation, it is also their responsibility to draw it to the attention of the MPols Directors; please do so.

3. Formal Research Proposal

Based on early discussions with your supervisor, POLS590 students are expected to submit a **formal POLS590 research proposal** by **12noon Friday 4 May**. **POLS591** students need to submit it by **12noon Friday 7 September**. It should be emailed to Vicki and your supervisor. The early dissertation workshops will help you to prepare this proposal.

This research proposal should state (on no more than two A4 pages):

- Your name and your supervisor's name.
- Your research question/problem/topic.
- A statement of why the research is interesting and important.
- If collecting primary data: what method(s) of data collection you are using.
- If doing a critical review, are you questioning or adding to the conventional wisdom? Assessing an on-going debate? Filling a gap?
- A draft chapter outline.

4. Submitting Draft Work to your Supervisor

When preparing drafts to submit to your supervisor for comment, please remember the following guidelines:

- Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
- 12 point font
- Line spacing should be 1.5 or double-spaced;
- Include page numbers
- Wide margins on left and right of the page for comments, full justified text
- Include your name and a title (e.g. Introduction)
- A bibliography of all references used in the draft (for the full draft if using Chicago referencing or for each individual chapter if you are using Harvard in-text referencing).
- Proper citation – we recommend Chicago footnoting as it eases the process of checking your references for markers and footnotes are not counted as part of your word limit. Tutorials and other helpful information on Chicago are available online via the library: <http://otago.libguides.com/c.php?g=171590&p=1130401> Harvard in-text referencing will be accepted, but your in-text citations will then be included as part of your word count.

Student Expectations

1. Workload

Students should note that the full-time MPols programme requires a commitment of a full five-day working week for study. Students are strongly advised not to undertake excessive paid work during their studies and students **cannot** take papers in addition to the MPols that will detract from the 40-hour study week. Excessive workload will not be taken into account if you have to make an application for an extension for your course work or your dissertation.

2. Supervision and Feedback

Supervisors have many other teaching and research demands. You should expect it to take at least a week for your supervisor to give you feedback on work you have submitted. It is your responsibility to let the MPols Director(s) know if you have any concerns about your supervision and if you are not receiving feedback. Emailing your supervisor a second time as a reminder or in case the email was lost is, however, useful to do first. If you still don't hear anything, let us know.

3. Dissertation Workshops and Study Groups

Dissertation workshops run in the early part of semester one and two when the demands of your course work are less, and near the end of semester two to prepare you for your dissertation work over the summer. Attendance at these workshops is compulsory and your supervisors will expect you to go as they are designed to provide you with valuable information for the research, writing and presentation of your dissertation. In addition, the workshops create a supportive and collegial research environment that is invaluable when conducting sole research.

Students will also present their research-in-progress to fellow students and selected staff in the second semester of their programme (dates in the workshop programme, pp. 8-9). This will provide you with important feedback from a wider audience than your supervisor and will allow an exchange of ideas designed to help you in the formulation and refinement of your dissertation.

4. Extensions

The due date for POLS590/591 is a **strict** deadline. Extensions will only be provided in cases of unforeseen circumstances that significantly restrict a student's ability to complete the dissertation on time, as we need to obtain permission from the Humanities Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. This does not include work commitments or any other activities entered into voluntarily (such as standing for elected offices at OUSA or family holidays). Medical and other compassionate reasons are, however, entirely acceptable. In cases where there are serious unforeseen circumstances, the student should discuss it with one of the MPols Directors at the earliest possible opportunity, as it will enable us to help you more effectively if you do so. Please do not wait until things completely fall apart to alert us of an issue if you can possibly avoid it. We are here to help wherever possible.

5. Absences

Missing class, whether it is the POLS590/591 workshops or your paper seminars, is unacceptable at this level with the exception of illness or for compassionate reasons and even then an apology should be sent to the course convenor. Failure to do so is highly disrespectful and will result in poor references when you are applying for jobs. It is not acceptable to choose not to attend because of other work pressures or because you cannot see the relevance of the class, for example.

If a legitimate reason necessitates an extended absence from class, alternative arrangements for additional work to show you have kept up with the course will most likely need to be made with the paper convenor. Please discuss options with the paper and MPols Directors as early as possible so we can work out a viable arrangement for you.

6. Employability

This degree is designed to increase your opportunities in applying for work. The first cohort of MPols students who submitted in February 2017 have done exceptionally well in this regard. This means, however, that you need to treat your studies like work: for example, by coming to class on time, showing a respectful attitude toward your colleagues and staff, ensuring you prepare properly, and by participating, etc. It is highly likely that you will be seeking references from your supervisor and/or other teaching staff and we are routinely asked to comment on these kinds of things by employers. We also like to be able to say nice things to support you!

7. Student Representative

The POLS590/91 students will elect a student representative to attend meetings to provide feedback to the Department from the group. Any student is also able to approach the MPols Directors or the Head of Department, Prof. Janine Hayward, with any questions or concerns. We hope you will feel free to do so.

POLS590/591 Workshop Programme

All sessions are in BURNS 4 unless otherwise stated.

Semester One

Fri 9 March	10.30- 11.50am	Welcome (with MIntSt students). This is a joint session to get to meet other Masters students and the staff, and to find out about some of the support that exists. (Divisional Board Meeting Room 5C13, 5th Floor, Burns/Arts Building, followed by morning tea in the Humanities tearoom, 1 st Floor, Arts/Burns Building)
Fri 9 March	5pm	Submit Supervision Forms to Vicki.
Fri 16 March	1–2.50pm	General discussion of what is expected with a dissertation and if you need to think about ethics approval etc. Emphasis on Q&A.
Fri 23 March	1–2.50 pm	Academic writing (with Pauline Brook, Student Learning Centre).
Fri 13 April	1–2.50pm	Session talking about the topics you are interested in and tips on how to go about developing them.
Fri 20 April	1–2.50pm	Structuring an argument.
Fri 27 April	1–1.50pm	Research resources (with Chris Seay, Central Library Seminar Room 3) – joint session with MIntSt Students.
	2–2.50pm	This time is allocated for POLS590 students who need to know how to fill out the ethics approval form/Māori consultation. (Vicki’s Office 4S3)
Fri 4 May	12noon	Submit POLS590 Research Proposal to Vicki.
Fri 4 May	1–2.50pm	POLS591 & INST591 Presentations (POLS590 students to attend too).
Fri 11 May	1–2.50pm	Using case studies (Prof. Janine Hayward) – joint session with MIntSt students.
Fri 18 May	1–2.50pm	Data collection (Prof. Philip Nel) – joint session with MIntSt students.
Fri 25 May	1–2.50pm	Conducting interviews (Prof. Bill Harris) – joint session with MIntSt students.
MID-YEAR BREAK		POLS590: Aim to complete a draft chapter.
Fri 20 July	1–1.50pm	Meeting the new POLS591 students and preparing POLS590 presentations.
Friday 20 July	5pm	Submit POLS591 Supervision Forms to Vicki.

Fri 3 August	1–1.50pm	Session for POLS591 students only to talk about the topics they are interested in and tips on how to go about developing them. Ethics Approval and Māori consultation (Vicki’s Office A4S3).
Fri 3 August	5pm	Submit POLS590 Ethics Approval Form.
Fri 10 August	1–3.50pm	POLS590 Presentations (POLS591s to attend too).
Fri 17 August	1–1.50pm	POLS591 Students: Research resources (Central Library Seminar Room 3) – joint session with INST591 students.
Fri 24 August	1–1.50pm	POLS591 Students: developing your topics, working toward the research proposal, ethics etc. (Vicki’s Office 4S3).
Fri 7 Sept	1-1.50pm	POLS590 Students: catch-up to see how you are going and to answer any concerns you have.
Fri 7 Sept	12noon	Submit POLS591 Research Proposal.
Fri 19 October	1–2.50pm	Session for POLS590 & POLS591s: a chat about how to structure time over the summer.
Fri 2 Nov	5pm	Submit POLS591 Ethics Approval Form.

2019

Thurs 21 Feb	5pm	Final deadline for submission of POLS590.
Fri 5 July	5pm	Final deadline for submission of POLS591.

Departmental Support

Please check your emails regularly for news of events and opportunities for Politics postgraduates. It is also worth signing up to the Politics Facebook page for more extensive info/news: <https://www.facebook.com/PoliticsOtago>.

Workspace

Students can access desks in the Department’s Postgraduate House. Further information will be provided by the Politics Administrator, Shelley Morgan.

Social events

You are warmly invited to our postgraduate events – for example, the welcome bbq at the Postgraduate House and our regular postgraduate morning teas.

It is also a good idea to join the Politics Student Association (POLSA Otago) for a \$10 membership fee. All the information about events for POLS students is available on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/polsaotago/> It is a great way to get involved and to meet other students interested in politics.

Department Seminars

Students are encouraged to attend the regular Department of Politics research seminars. These are held on most Wednesdays during teaching semesters at 12noon in room 5C13, 5th floor,

Arts/Burns building with the exception of the first Wednesday of each month. You will be emailed notification of the topics.

NZPSA

You are eligible for free membership of the New Zealand Political Studies Association (NZPSA) <http://www.nzpsa.com/>. Check out the postgraduate page <http://www.nzpsa.com/postgraduates> and join the NZPSA Postgraduate Network Group <facebook.com/groups/NZPSAPostgrads>, a private group for academic discussion, event planning and connecting postgraduates. Please see the Politics Administrator to sign you up and pay for your membership.

You are also eligible for costs up to \$400 for the annual NZPSA conference if you are presenting a paper.

Otago Foreign Policy School

If you wish to attend, the department will pay \$50 toward your registration.

Photocopying & Printing

You will receive up to \$30 per semester on your ID card for photocopying and printing if you email the Politics Administrator to request the funds: politics@otago.ac.nz

There is also free printing available in the postgraduate house. If the paper runs out or is clearly about to do so, contact the Politics Administrator by phone or email and she will arrange to have more delivered.

See the section on **Printing & Binding the Dissertation** on p.16 for the precise assistance available, but basically the department covers the cost if it is done through Uniprint.

Library Support

Chris Seay is the specialist Politics librarian. He can be contacted at christopher.seay@otago.ac.nz and you will meet him at the library workshop. Students have always found these sessions extremely helpful – don't assume because you are at 500-level you've learnt all that the library can offer you.

You are also entitled to interlibrary loans that the department will pay for, but these are rarely used these days. It is often preferable for you to send the reference to your supervisor who can then forward it to the library to order the required book. But if you need to borrow a rare book from another library, contact the Department Administrator for the departmental code and you can do it online.

Student Support Services

Māori and Pacific Students

Department Contact: Māori and Pacific Students

Prof Philip Nel is the Politics Department's kaiāwhina (support person) for Māori and Pacific Island students in semester one.

Tel (03) 479 6549

Email: philip.nel@otago.ac.nz

Room 4N6, 4th Floor, Arts/Burns Building, 95 Albany Street

Dr Iati Iati is the Politics Department's kaiāwhina (support person) for Māori and Pacific Island students in semester two.

Tel (03) 479 8665

Email: iati.iati@otago.ac.nz

Room 4N10, 4th Floor, Arts/Burns Building, 95 Albany Street

Humanities Division contacts: Māori and Pacific Students

Ana Rangi is the Kaiāwhina Māori - Māori Student Support Officer for the Division of Humanities. She is of Ngāti Porou/Ngāti Kahungunu/Whakatōhea/Ngāti Kuia/Ngāti Koata descent and originally from Christchurch.

Tel (03) 479 8681

Email: ana.rangi@otago.ac.nz

Room 5C9, 5th Floor, Te Whare Kete Aronui (Arts/Burns Building), 95 Albany Street

Inano Walter is the Pacific Islands Students' Support Officer for the Division of Humanities. She is a graduate of the Humanities Division at Otago. She is available Tuesday to Thursday 9.30am to 2.30pm. Her contact details are: Room 5C9a, 5th Floor, Arts Building. Email: pacificsupport.humanities@otago.ac.nz Tel: 479 9616.

Disability Support

If you have an impairment that affects your study in this programme, please inform the MPols Directors and your paper convenors so they can make any adaptations in teaching and learning strategies and resources that may be necessary. If you are experiencing difficulty with your studies due to a disability, temporary or permanent impairment, injury, chronic illness or deafness, you may contact, in confidence, the University support staff to discuss adaptations in teaching and learning strategies and resources that may be helpful:

Disability Information and Support

Tel: (03) 479 8235

Email: disabilities@otago.ac.nz

Website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities>

Support for International Students

The Department of Politics encourages international students to seek support if they are having difficulties with their studies or meeting other challenges while they are a student at Otago. The Department of Politics contact is Lena Tan, politics@otago.ac.nz

Students can also contact International Student Support:

Telephone: 479 8344

Email: international.support@otago.ac.nz

Website: www.otago.ac.nz/international

Location: Archway West Building

Ethics Approval

MPols students, in consultation with their supervisors, need to consider carefully the potential ethical implications of their research in accordance with the University guidelines: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/academiccommittees/otago015522.html>. If the intended research involves human participants then ethical approval must be sought. This does not apply to simple consultation with academics and other experts. However, ethical approval must be sought for all surveys, interviews and focus groups involving politicians, public officials, the media and members of the community where the information will be employed as part of a student's research data. It is recommended to record interviews using audio or visual equipment, as hand-written notes are too unreliable.

University policy makes provision for two types of ethical approval. Category B can be approved at the departmental level and requires the anonymity of the participants. Exceptions can be made for the naming of 'elites' including politicians, public officials and the media when they are being interviewed in their official capacity and are fully aware of that fact. If private persons are to be named, or children are involved, you must seek Category A approval. This is also the case if you intend to conduct any research involving human participants overseas, including Australia. If you are not sure whether you require Category A or B approval, please consult the MPols Directors.

For Category B applications, Vicki can provide you with a user-friendly template and guidance on how to proceed. You should also prepare your application in consultation with your supervisor. Students should be assured, however, that it is a relatively simple process and it can serve as useful impetus to refine your research agenda. **Please note that you must seek approval prior to conducting any research.** Under no circumstances will the Ethics Committee consider retrospective applications. All **POLS590 Category B** applications must be emailed to the Department's Ethics Committee Coordinator, Prof. William Harris, no later than **5pm Friday 3 August**: will.harris@otago.ac.nz. All **POLS591 Category B** applications must be emailed to Bill Harris no later than 5pm Friday 2 November.

Category A application forms, which go directly to the University Ethics Committee, are available from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/acadcomm/categorya.html>. The University Ethics Committee meets monthly to consider applications that are submitted approximately a fortnight beforehand. All due dates are available at the above address. Category A applications are quite complicated in comparison to Category B applications and you can often be asked to make revisions so you should leave plenty of time to complete this process. Seventeen copies plus the original signed copy need to be submitted to Mr Gary Witte, Manager, Academic Committees (Tel 479 8256, Email: gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Please consult your supervisor in the first instance for advice on completing the application form. Jim and Vicki also have experience with these applications if your supervisor does not. However, once you have a draft it is most helpful to seek advice from Gary Witte who has the most up-to-date information about the Committee's procedures.

Māori Consultation

If your POLS590/591 research covers areas of potential interest to or concern for Māori, you will need to consult with Māori in line with the University Policy:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago003272.html>

Please discuss it first with your supervisor. Details of the Māori consultation process are at:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/research/maoriconsultation/>

Dishonest Practice

Dishonest practice in relation to work submitted for assessment (including all course work, tests and examinations) is taken very seriously at the University of Otago. All students have an obligation to understand the requirements applying to particular assessments and also to understand and follow acceptable academic practice. Any breach of established requirements or of acceptable practice – whether intentional or arising through a failure to take reasonable care – will result in action being taken against those involved.

Plagiarism is one form of dishonest practice. Plagiarism is defined as copying or paraphrasing another person's work and presenting it as one's own – whether intentionally or through failure to take proper care. Being party to someone else's plagiarism (by allowing them to copy your work or by otherwise helping them plagiarise work for an assessment) is also dishonest practice.

All students have a responsibility to be aware of acceptable academic practice in relation to the use of material prepared by others, and for taking all steps reasonably necessary to ensure that no breach of acceptable practice occurs. Part of your study at university is about developing your own thoughts and ideas. Where you use other people's words or ideas in your work it is vital that you reference these correctly. The Student Learning Centre (which is located in the Information Services Building) offers a course to assist you with this if you want one.

Any student involved in dishonest practice is liable to face disciplinary action under the University's regulations. A range of penalties is established by those regulations, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases exclusion from the University. MPols students will be expected to understand fully the rules on plagiarism at the University of Otago and detected cases will be pursued fully. Further details on plagiarism are available at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/plagiarism/> and the University's Dishonest Practice Guidelines are available at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago003145.html>.

Your dissertation will be checked for plagiarism using the University's Safe Assign software as explained below:

Safe Assign is a plagiarism detection tool which can report matches between sections of students' work submitted to it and material on a comprehensive database to which Safe Assign has access. This includes material on the internet and other students' assignments which have previously been submitted to Safe Assign.

Your dissertation will need to be submitted to the Final Version assignment folder under 'Assignments' on Blackboard. You may submit your dissertation to this folder only once.

You also have the option of submitting a draft assignment to the 'Draft' folder. If you choose to utilise this option, you will receive the report generated which contains a percentage mark of the paper that matches other sources. [N.B. the percentage figure under 'Matching' can be misleading; it is best to check the 'SA report' to see if there are any issues]. Assignments submitted to the 'Draft' folder will not be assessed; however, the report will be available for the paper co-ordinator to view.

You can find further information on Safe Assign at:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/blackboard/assessing-your-students/anti-plagiarism-safeassign/anti-plagiarism/>

Dissertation Format

You will need to hand in two soft-bound copies for examination and two electronic copies, one in word format and one in PDF. You will also need to submit one via Blackboard to Safe Assign.

Line spacing should be 1.5 or double spaced. A 12 pt font should be used. Times New Roman is recommended. The binding margin must be no less than 30 mm. Use full-justified paragraph alignment. Pages may be double-sided.

Pages (together with any interpolated sheets, tables, maps, etc.) should be numbered consecutively within the binding margins.

The following order is usually observed:

The preliminaries (on separate pages):

1. Title page giving the title of the dissertation in full, the name of the student, the name of the department and University, the date when submitted for the degree, the computer word count (excluding footnotes, bibliography and appendices) and the following statement: Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Politics. (See the following page for an example of the layout).

2. The signed Dissertation Declaration on a separate page. (A word copy is available on Blackboard):

I, [Printed Name], certify that this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

Date:

3. Abstract (no more than 300 words) summarising the dissertation: the problem, methodology, and conclusions. Do not give a chapter outline, as this is covered in the introduction.

4. Table of contents

5. Acknowledgements

6. List of tables (if applicable)

7. List of illustrations or figures (if applicable)

8. List of abbreviations (if applicable)

The text:

1. Introductory chapter

2. Main body of the work divided into chapters (each starting on a new page)

3. Final chapter which usually includes a summary, conclusions and any recommendations.

The references:

1. Bibliography

2. Appendix or appendices (if applicable)

Title

Your Name

The Department of Politics

University of Otago

Date of Submission, e.g. February 2019

Word Count (excluding footnotes, bibliography, appendices)

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Politics.

Printing and Binding the Dissertation

Doing it Yourself

You can certainly arrange for the printing and binding of your dissertation yourself. If you do so, contact the Politics Administrator at: politics@otago.ac.nz for an authorisation that you can use at Uniprint. A copy of your signed dissertation declaration form must be bound into each copy (see preliminaries on p.14).

You can then submit the two soft-bound copies of your **POLS590** dissertation in person to the Politics Administrator by **5pm Thursday 21 February 2019**, or the **2018-19 POLS591** dissertation by **5pm Friday 5 July 2019**.

If you choose to get your dissertation printed and bound elsewhere, it will then be at your own expense.

Printing via the Department

We are happy to print out the 2 copies of the dissertation we require for examination and arrange the binding with Uniprint on your behalf. If you prefer this option, in addition to the PDF and Word copies that you need to email to the 2019 MPols Director, for printing purposes you also need to email a PDF to the Politics Administrator at: politics@otago.ac.nz

If you take this option, **POLS590** students will need to email a PDF copy to the Politics Administrator, two working days before the deadline, i.e., by **5pm Tuesday 19 February 2019**. You must include the signed declaration form, although it can be in a separate file. 2018-19 POLS591 students will need to email a PDF copy to the Politics Administrator by **5pm Wednesday 3 July 2019**.

If any of the pages are in colour (e.g. maps) make sure to state the page numbers in your email. Please use your surname somewhere in the title of the documents you email to the Administrator.

Dissertation Binding Requirements

Soft-bound (fast bound binding is preferred); clear plastic front cover; and black or blue back cover.

If you want a copy for yourself, you need to make your own arrangements to have it bound. The copies that you submit to the Department for examination will not be returned.

You do not need to have your dissertation hard-bound. If you want a hard-bound copy as a keepsake, this will be at your own expense. Contact the University Bindery: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/quicklinks/binding/index.html>

Returning Markers' Reports

It is your responsibility to ensure that the MPols Directors have your up-to-date email address so you can receive the markers' reports once the examination process is complete. When you submit your word and PDF copies to the Politics Administrator and 2019 MPols Director, please provide an email address that you will continue to use.

POLS590/591 Assessment Criteria

A+ (90%+)	Outstanding and original – clearly written with a well integrated and carefully demonstrated argument that shows knowledge of a range of alternative views and interpretations. An extremely well documented and presented piece with astute theoretical analysis.
A (85-89%)	Excellent – successful reinterpretation of a body of material or interpretation of new material. Does not show the same originality as an A+ but is a well written, documented and argued dissertation with excellent use of source material and demonstrating good theoretical analysis.
A- (80-84%)	Very competent – critical, balanced, well researched, informed and clearly presented with good documentation and an attempt to incorporate theoretical analysis but not with the same level of sophistication expected of an A.
B+ (75-79%)	Competent – clearly written but the level of research is not as extensive and/or the argument is not as successfully demonstrated throughout as for an A dissertation. It might, for example, be a well researched but less than successfully argued piece or the theoretical analysis might be limited.
B (70-74%)	Research fails to show sufficient understanding of a range of alternative views and interpretations; or the thesis lacks balance in the argument; or there is an ineffective connection between the argument and evidence; or there is little use of theoretical analysis. Satisfactory presentation and documentation.
B- (65-69%)	Inadequate research that does not show a sufficient grasp of the literature; little or no theoretical analysis; ineffective use of evidence to support the argument; poor presentation or careless documentation.
C+, C, C- (50-64%)	Limited achievement – basic flaw in the development of an argument; poor research and documentation; little understanding of alternative views and interpretations or theoretical analysis; poorly structured and written.
Fail (0-49%)	Inadequate or incomplete.

Marking Procedure

1. There are two markers for each dissertation who will each assign a mark and prepare a report. A supervisor will not be involved in the marking process of a dissertation s/he supervised. The markers are asked to comment on the following qualities:
 - a. Clarity of aims (and hypotheses)
 - b. Clarity of research strategy and/or methodology to meet research aims
 - c. Theoretical analysis
 - d. Focus of the dissertation (appropriate; too broad; too narrow; overambitious)
 - e. Coherent account of recent work in the field; adequacy of literature review; acquaintance with relevant literature
 - f. Clear explanation of concepts
 - g. Capacity to critique the relevant literature (and concepts)
 - h. Arguments well formulated and sustained (supported with relevant data/evidence)
 - i. Quality of writing and communication skills
 - j. Structuring/ordering of the material
 - k. Originality, creative ability.
2. The overall mark is calculated as an aggregate of the primary and secondary marks.
3. All dissertations are sent to another University for external assessment.
4. If there is a major discrepancy between the primary and secondary marks, i.e. over 5 marks, then the external moderator will be asked to consider which mark is the fairer one.
5. If a mark cannot be resolved as a result of the external assessor's comments or in discussion, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities) shall reach a decision after consulting a referee.
6. It is not possible for students to enter into any discussion with the markers who will remain anonymous.
7. The markers' reports will be emailed to the student.

The student whose dissertation receives the highest mark will be awarded the William Kennedy Prize of \$500 for the best MPols Dissertation. It will be awarded following the marking process for the POLS590 dissertations; marks for the POLS591 dissertations will be carried over to the following year.

Your overall degree result for MPols is calculated by taking an average of the percentage marks for your 500-level papers (120 points) and your POLS590/591, which is the equivalent of two papers (60 points). The award is then made using the following scale:

Distinction: 80% and above
Credit: 70 to 79%
Pass: 50 to 69%
Fail: 0 to 49%

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You can find more detailed information by looking at staff members' individual profiles on the Department website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/politics/staff/>

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, it is subject to change. Changes will be notified in class and via email or Blackboard. Students are encouraged to check their student email regularly. It is the student's responsibility to be informed.

Appendix I: Getting from a Research Interest to a Research Proposal

Summary prepared by Philip Nel

Good research is *focused* research. Skilful researchers formulate a clear *research aim* as a means to focus their research. Formulating an overarching research question is a useful way to get to an aim. Your choice of a research aim/question is determined by theoretical assumptions about the world and the meanings that we attach to the words that we use to speak about this world. Thinking carefully about how you want to focus your research thus also helps you to work through and question your own theoretical and conceptual assumptions.

Example:

I am interested in doing research on ‘the politics of global health.’ This interest stems from my hearing about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), of which three are related to health matters. However, I realise that ‘the politics of global health’ is a large topic, and that I have to focus my research to make it manageable. How do I go about it? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Decide what exactly it is that interests you about this topic

To do so, you have to consider:

** What you mean when you use the concepts ‘politics,’ ‘global’ and ‘health.’ These concepts are controversial, so it is no use just to rely on a dictionary definition. Consider the different connotations that a term such as ‘politics’ has, for instance.*

** Whether you want to focus on one specific issue, say action taken to address malaria, or on a number of issues (for example, communicable diseases in general).*

** What you think you will have to forego if you do not undertake this study (why is this study important to you personally).*

Example:

After I took the steps suggested above, I decided that what really interests me is how transnational actors can influence the policy choices of local decision makers to deal effectively with a communicable disease such as HIV-AIDS. In the background reading that I have done, I noticed that in some African countries HIV-AIDS seems to be affecting more women than men. As I am committed to gender issues and I want to make a contribution towards the achieving of the MDGs, this focus will satisfy me intellectually and emotionally.

Tip: Make sure that your research interest really excites you, and write down the reasons why it does. If you cannot come up with good reasons why you should be excited about a research interest, it is probably better to move on to something else.

2. Formulate a research aim/question

The next step is to re-formulate your research interest into a focused research aim.

One excellent way to do this is to think in terms of a *question* that you want to answer through your research.

A research question is a short statement of a significant intellectual puzzle that is implied by your research interest.

A well-formulated research question suggests why others (your readers/audience) should also be interested in its answer.

Example:

I am interested in the gender-specific nature of HIV-AIDS in South and East Africa, and how transnational actors can influence policy choices. Through my initial reading I found that

most policies aimed at addressing the AIDS epidemic in these parts of the world are impervious to the fact that AIDS seems to be affecting disproportionately more women than men. My research aim is to determine why this is so, and what transnational actors can do to help.

My research questions: **Why do existing policies dealing with HIV-AIDS in some African states not distinguish between gender? What can transnational actors do to lower the resulting efficiency costs?**

Tip: See how authors of journal articles use the first few paragraphs of their 'Introductions' to make their research aim/question also the reader's problem – thus, getting and keeping the reader's attention. If you do not know of any good articles to study as guides to good academic writing, ask your supervisor to suggest one or two.

3. The final step is to deduce a number of specific secondary questions that you have to answer in order to answer the primary question.

- For example:
- a) Which policies are relevant and can they be classified in a typology?
 - b) Why am I justified (or not) in assuming that gender is a significant variable in the HIV-AIDS epidemic?
 - c) Are there indeed efficiency costs attached to current policies?
 - d) What are potential relevant explanatory factors that I should look at (cultural; political; economic; others)?
 - e) How many and which states are we talking about?
 - f) Can I deal with all the states or should I select case studies? Which state(s)?

4. Once you have done that, it will become clear(-er) what you have to do to answer the question (= your research design).

Tip: Try to formulate your primary and secondary research questions as clearly and unambiguously as possible. While you are writing down these questions, think about the possible meaning(s) of core concepts (such as 'gender,' 'gender-specific' and 'policy' in the above example). If you are unsure about the meaning of core concepts, consult encyclopedias or glossaries of the social sciences. Do not rely solely on general dictionaries, though. They provide information only on the denotation of a term, not on its (often controversial) connotations in the social sciences.

5. You are now ready to draft a research proposal. A research proposal should contain the following:

a) A statement of the primary research aim/question, its related secondary questions and a brief analysis of the main concepts used in this statement (conceptual analysis includes a discussion of the possible connotations of a contested concept and the reasons why you prefer one connotation over others).

b) A discussion of the reasons why this research aim is important to the wider academic (and/or policy) community.

c) A summary of the approach and methodology that you intend to use in trying to answer the question, and any limitations that you face (length; possibility/practicality of field research).

d) A brief discussion of how you are delimiting the study (= drawing a clear boundary between what you are focusing on and what will be excluded).