

Leiden University | Political Science

# Research Master Thesis Lab

Research Master 2012-2013, Semester 2, Block 3  
5 ECTS, Level 600

## Formal Schedule

Wednesday, February 6 - April 27, 10:00-13:00, SA35

Instructor: Michael F. Meffert

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## Course Description

The Research Master Thesis Lab provides students with an opportunity to develop their master thesis proposal before they start collecting and analyzing data and writing their master thesis, or, if already at a more advanced state, to discuss preliminary results. Students are expected to develop their own research questions and to select their thesis advisor(s) at the beginning of the third block (pending approval by the education director or Examination Committee). During the thesis lab, students meet regularly to present and discuss their research (proposals) and to receive feedback from their fellow students and the thesis lab instructor. The ultimate responsibility for guidance and approval of the thesis proposals, however, rests with the individual thesis supervisors. At the end of the third block, students defend their research proposals in a public meeting with their supervisors.

## Method of Instruction and Assignments

Seminar-style group meetings with presentations and discussions.

Note: No separate grade is given for participation in the Research Master Thesis Lab. A single grade is awarded to the combination of research proposal and thesis.

## Schedule

<b>06.02.13</b>	<b>Coordination Meeting</b>	
<b>13.02.13</b>	<b>No meeting</b>	
<b>20.02.13</b>	<b>Workshop with Presentations: First Draft (1/2)</b>	
	Written draft proposals posted on Blackboard on <b>Monday, 18.02.2013, at noon.</b>	
<b>27.02.13</b>	<b>Workshop with Presentations: First Draft (2/2)</b>	
	Written draft proposals posted on Blackboard on <b>Monday, 25.02.2013, at noon.</b>	
<b>06.03.13</b>	<b>Workshop with Presentations: Second Draft (1/2)</b>	
	Written draft proposals posted on Blackboard on <b>Monday, 04.03.2013, at noon.</b>	
<b>13.03.13</b>	<b>Workshop with Presentations: Second Draft (2/2)</b>	
	Written draft proposals posted on Blackboard on <b>Monday, 11.03.2013, at noon.</b>	
<b>20.03.13</b>	<b>Workshop with Presentations: Final Draft</b>	
	Written draft proposals posted on Blackboard on <b>Monday, 18.03.2013, at noon.</b>	
<b>27.03.13</b>	<b>Public Thesis Proposal Defense (09:00-17:00)</b>	<b>Room: 1A47</b>

## **Instructions for First & Second Presentation**

### **Draft proposals**

Depending on the stage of proposal writing process, the first presentation might already present a complete first draft of the proposal. However, if still at a very early stage, the focus or emphasis might shift as follows:

- First presentation: focus on theory (general research question, topical literature review, hypotheses/specific research questions)
- Second presentation: focus on methods (case selection, sampling, operationalization, data collection, data analysis)

The written draft proposals should be posted two days before the presentation (that is, Monday at noon) in the Discussion Board on Blackboard.

Please note that the length of a complete proposal ranges between 10 and 15 pages, and that the length of partial draft proposals should be adjusted accordingly.

### **Format for presentations of draft thesis proposals:**

- 30 minutes per student, approximately distributed like this:
  - 10 minute presentation
  - 10 minute response by two discussants
  - 10 minute open discussion

### **Content of presentations**

Essentially a summary of the written proposal; the use of PowerPoint is optional.

### **Task of discussants**

Critical evaluation of written draft proposals (and presentation) using the appropriate standards/criteria for good scientific research.