Certificate in Media and Politics (CMAP)

What are the Media and Politics Faculty Looking for in a Certificate in Media and Politics Thesis?

**Is the topic relevant to Media and Politics?**

- The topic should be situated at the intersection of media AND politics, examining the role of mass communication in political, diplomatic, or policy-making processes, and/or the role of politics in the shaping of mass media products, messages, and policies.

- *Mass media* here is defined as communication channels through which information is conveyed to a large audience. Channels generally include, but are not limited to, newspapers, radio, television, telephone, print advertisements, and the Internet.

- *Politics* here means exploring an aspect of national, or international, government or governance.

**Can I build on a paper I previously submitted?**

- Yes, but the Certificate thesis must be substantially different – not a cosmetic reworking of a previous paper. For example, perhaps you apply a different theory and/or method to examine the topic of a previous paper, collect new data, or use a previous data set for a different topic. Discuss possibilities with your mentor.

**Is there a clear thesis/argument?**

- The thesis and structure of your paper should be clearly and succinctly stated in the introductory section of the paper.

**Is there a theoretical framework?**

- Not all Media and Politics theses need to rely heavily on theory, but you need to state what you’re looking for, why you’re looking, and how you’re looking -- using relevant secondary literature to make your case.

**What contribution does your paper make?**

- Demonstrate that you’ve read relevant scholarly literature, and say how this project contributes to that scholarly discussion. It could be that you’re analyzing a topic others have researched in a new way, with a new method, or adding a comparative dimension to it.
Research Methods, Data and Argument

- Explain which method you are using and why. There is no fixed method appropriate for Media and Politics work, so make the case for why you are using the method you are using to examine your particular topic.
- Arguments should be supported by evidence.
- Define major terms early in paper, and be consistent in using them.
- Consider using subtitles to thematically structure your argument.
- Your paper should be motivated by the research question(s) and thesis statement.

Do you prove your case?

- You may not be able to arrive at a clear conclusion, but you should demonstrate the ability to raise core questions regarding your topic.

Is the paper well-written?

- Syntax, spelling and grammar are important. However, do not rely on your computer to check these things for you; you are your own best grammar and spell-checker! Thorough proofreading will ensure that your paper is “clean” at the time of final submission.

Is the paper well documented?

- At least 8-10 substantial sources (books, journal articles) should be used for a good thesis of this length.
- Use primary and/or secondary sources as relevant for your topic.

Are the sources well-cited?

- You do not have to use a specific citation format; however you must be consistent in using the format that you choose. Your certificate thesis advisor can guide you on citation formats that are most appropriate, or most frequently used, in the discipline in which you are working.

Does the paper reach the minimum length requirement?

- Media and Politics Certificate theses must be 25-30 pages in length including footnotes and bibliography. This should be achieved through the use of clear and lucid prose, not the manipulation of font and margin size.

What is expected of students?

- Students are responsible for proactively and frequently communicating with their mentors; don’t wait for mentors to come to you! These are student-driven capstone projects.
- Students must adhere to all Certificate deadlines.