

**TF Adviser Contract – Government Senior Honors Thesis  
2024-2025**

This form is intended to inform the Undergraduate Program Office of a faculty member's commitment to advise a senior thesis. A signed contract **must** be submitted in order to enroll in *Government 99: Senior Thesis Writers' Workshop*, which is a mandatory course for all senior thesis writers. (Please note: faculty members, including lecturers and College Fellows, should sign a "Faculty Adviser Contract" instead.) This form is due to Karen Kaletka [kbkaletka@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:kbkaletka@gov.harvard.edu) no later than 5 p.m. on **Friday, May 10, 2024**.

Student's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Intended Topic/Tentative Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement of Harvard's Human Subjects Rules:**

If your student is planning to conduct research using human subjects, she needs to familiarize herself with the relevant IRB/Committee on the Use of Human Subjects (CUHS) ethics training and submission requirements and procedures (these are explained in the [Senior Thesis Writers' Guide](#) available from the Government Department). Only CUHS can determine which projects do not need review, which are deemed exempt, which qualify for expedited review, and which require full review.

**If the project is determined to require review, an application should be submitted to CUHS at least 4 weeks before the research is to start.** Note that only voting members of the FAS faculty and non-ladder faculty with prior approval are allowed to sponsor CUHS applications. (Questions should be directed to CUHS at 617-496-2847 or [cuhs@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:cuhs@fas.harvard.edu).) Please work with your student to complete the application and then have her or him email it to the Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies (Dr. Nara Dillon, [ndillon@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:ndillon@gov.harvard.edu)), who will review it and serve as the project sponsor ("Principal Investigator [PI]") when it goes to CUHS for consideration. Your student cannot under any circumstances begin research prior to receiving approval from CUHS.

Once your student is in the field, she or he may not make substantial changes to the project (starting a new line of questioning, or studying a different population), without contacting the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects again to find out if a revision to the application is needed (if in doubt, consult CUHS). **Your student may not proceed with new research before receiving revised approval from CUHS.**

**By signing this contract, you are acknowledging that you understand and will comply with these rules, should your advisee plan to conduct research involving human subjects.**

The signatures below indicate that the TF and the student have agreed that the TF will serve as the student's senior thesis adviser. In addition to providing substantive guidance on the project, the adviser will assist the student in complying with the requirements of the senior thesis program as described in the latest edition of the *Guide to Writing a Senior Thesis in Government*, available from the Undergraduate Program Office and online at the Government Department web site. **Please note that the adviser should be able to commit to advising the student throughout the entire thesis writing process (beginning from when this contract is signed until the completion and submission of the thesis in March of the following year) and should plan to meet regularly with the student to assess progress and offer guidance during term time.** Any questions about advising expectations should be directed to the Undergraduate Program Office (address them to Dr. Nara Dillon [[ndillon@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:ndillon@gov.harvard.edu)]).

**The signatures also indicate that the adviser and student agree and understand that the adviser will neither sign nor initial the study card. That is the sole responsibility of the Undergraduate Program Office.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
TF Adviser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Student Advisee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
TF Adviser  
(Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Advisee  
(Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
TF E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student E-mail

Any change in this commitment must be reported **in writing** to the Undergraduate Program Office.

## Undergraduate Thesis Advising Checklist

### Department of Government

The Undergraduate Office suggests that students raise the following questions with potential thesis advisers in order to set clear expectations at the beginning of the process. Note that all advisers should be able to commit to advising the student throughout the entire thesis writing process, until the completion and submission of the thesis in March 2025.

1. How frequently will you meet, and for how long? Students typically meet with their advisers every week or every other week, for between 30 minutes and an hour. Meetings may be more frequent when the student is developing the project and conducting research. Generally when the student is engaged in the intensive writing phase, meetings revolve around review of draft chapters.
2. What will the adviser and student do in advance of each meeting? Some advisers ask their students to turn in something (ranging from an emailed progress report to a draft chapter) by an agreed-upon time in advance of each meeting. In turn, a student can expect that the adviser will have read his or her work and be prepared to discuss it.
3. What happens over the summer? Given the range of student summer experiences, advisers and students should talk about what the student is expected to accomplish over the summer. Some advisers work extensively with their students over the summer, meeting every week or every other week. Others stay in contact with off-site advisees by phone or email as the student develops the topic and conducts secondary and possibly primary research.
4. What expectations will you set about chapter and draft deadlines? Some advisers ask their students to turn in written work by a specific time (24-72 hours before a meeting) and specify whether drafts should be submitted as hard-copy or emailed. Some set dates near to the thesis deadline after which they will not read new material.
5. How many drafts will you read? Many advisers read a draft of each chapter, then a draft of the entire thesis, and then selected chapters as needed just before the thesis is due. Some read more or less than this. Advisers and students should also discuss whether an adviser is willing to receive rough and unpolished drafts, or whether a student is expected to turn in a draft that has already been proof-read.
6. How accessible will the advisers be to the student? Some advisers are comfortable exchanging emails and phone calls between meetings; others are not. A student and adviser should discuss how frequently they expect to be in contact, and how to reach one another in an emergency.
7. What kind of support will the adviser provide to the student? Advisers can provide three kinds of help to thesis students, although it is uncommon for a single adviser to be able to provide all three kinds of support equally well.
  - substantive support - an understanding of the substantive topic of the thesis and advice about books to read, other experts to talk to, contacts in the field, etc.
  - methodological and organizational support - knowledge of the method(s) being used, assistance with interpreting interviews, coding surveys, etc.; knowledge about what a thesis looks like and advice about organizing research, pacing, editing, and writing.
  - personal support - encouragement, advice and support with issues like juggling competing commitments, procrastination, and writer's block.

7. How will a student get support that cannot be provided by the adviser?

Advisers and students should discuss who else at Harvard can provide a student with knowledge of a topic, methodological support, and personal support. Sources may include other faculty members, teaching fellows, house tutors, the Writing Center, and a student's friends and classmates.

All thesis writers in Government have the benefit of the mandatory **Government 99: Thesis Writers' Workshop**. Students meet regularly in small groups with a supportive teaching fellow over the fall and spring semesters. They discuss the research and writing process and exchange written work. Gov 99 aims to keep thesis writers on track toward timely completion of their projects, but it is meant to *support* and not *supplant* the primary advising relationship, which is between the thesis writer and his or her adviser. All students and thesis advisers will receive a copy of the Government 99 syllabus at the beginning of fall semester, but, in general, take note of the following important deadlines for written work.

- **Adviser Contract** – Students should print out a faculty or teaching fellow adviser contract, available electronically on the undergraduate section of the department website and in hard copy in the Undergraduate Offices in CGIS. Contracts signed by the adviser and student are due in the Undergraduate Office by May 10, 2024. All senior thesis writers must submit an adviser contract in order to enroll in Government 99.
- **Thesis prospectus** (1,000 words, maximum). Students must submit a prospectus to the thesis adviser and to their Gov 99 TF early in the fall term. This prospectus should outline the thesis question(s), hypotheses, methodology, and goals of the work. All students writing a thesis, including joint concentrators, are expected to submit a prospectus. Approximately five weeks into the fall term students must submit a copy of this prospectus to the Undergraduate Office, approved and signed by the thesis adviser (exact dates will be provided on the Gov 99 syllabus). Students who fail to submit a prospectus will not be allowed to continue in Government 99.
- **Thirty pages of written work** (minimum) must be submitted to the thesis adviser by the last day of classes in the fall semester. It is then the thesis adviser (not the Gov 99 TF!) who submits a grade of “SAT” or “UNSAT” to the Undergraduate Office, which becomes the grade for the fall segment of Gov 99. If a student enrolls for a second semester of Gov 99 in the spring term, the “SAT” grade is automatically given upon submission of the thesis to the Department by the March due date (note that this is entirely separate from the grade assigned the thesis itself). If a student decides to not complete the thesis, they should not register for a second term of Gov 99 (it is divisible for this exact purpose). If a student does register for a second term of Gov 99 but realizes later on that they will not be able to submit a thesis to the Department, they must withdraw from the course by the FAS deadline.