Political Geography Unit, GIUZ

Guidelines for Masters students

Political geography is the study of the co-production of space and power. Our research unit (Political Geography Group, or "PGG") studies political geography in various manifestations, and in many contexts, while combining grounded research with analyses of secondary sources. These guidelines are meant to welcome and channel you through the various steps of the MSc thesis that you have decided to take on with us.

Besides completing your thesis, we **strongly encourage** MSc students in PGG to participate in the "PGG Research Lab", where you will join staff members in discussing papers, including our works-in-progress. Even without formal registration (so once you've settled on a topic with your supervisor) you can actively start participating in the unit.

Aside from your (potential) thesis supervisor, you are welcome to approach PGG's **MSc tutor**, Asebe Debelo (asebe.debelo@geo.uzh.ch), for more information and advice. The tutor can help you with questions that you have about GIUZ's expectations for the master's thesis and the PGG Research Lab. The tutor can also provide you with information about research ethics procedures and possible funding for fieldwork.

Here are the different elements to your MSc thesis project.

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(1) Decide on a topic and get in touch with us

Please get in touch with a potential supervisor by checking our web page to **propose a MSc thesis topic** that is related to political geography. If you are unsure of which supervisor is appropriate for your project, kindly reach out to the MSc tutor.

You can have a look at our proposed topics but we also encourage you to come up with your own topic, provided it is related to our research. You do not have to have a fully planned out project at this point, and you are welcome to ask your supervisors questions about methodology, feasibility, and theory. However, we ask that you sketch out some ideas before you speak with us.

Once you have mutually agreed to work together, kindly inform the MSc tutor.

(2) Write a concept note

Once you have gotten in touch with a potential supervisor, you will work together to develop a **concept note**. Once you agree with your prospective supervisor on your concept, you should fill the Master's Thesis Agreement form over Lean Gate.

(3) Sign up for GEO511

Once this Agreement has been signed, kindly enrol in the MSc module GEO511. Please read the information sheet available on the GIUZ website carefully.

(4) Participation in the PGG Research Lab

The PGG seminar is an informal platform for academic exchange and debate. Each semester, we have a different theme for our discussions. We hope that participating in these seminars will enrich your studies and help you get to know our faculty members.

As a Masters student enrolled in the political geography unit, you should participate in a minimum of **3 seminars over the period of your thesis project**. Have a look at our PGG seminar programme at https://www.geo.uzh.ch/en/units/pgg.html or email the MSc tutor if you cannot find it.

(5) Presentation at the MSc colloquium

To bring your research close to existing research in our unit, we also organize a colloquium where Master students are expected to **present your project at an early stage**. This is a chance for you to get feedback about any concerns you have. Colloquiums are usually organized once per semester. You may present even if you have yet to official registered for GEO511.

Your presentation should be 20 minutes long, followed by 10 minutes of feedback and Q&A. It should contain the following elements:

- **Tentative Title**
- **Research Topic - why is it relevant? what problem does it address?**
- **Contribution to the Literature - how has this problem been discussed in the literature? What are gaps in that discussion? what does my thesis contribute to that literature?**
- **Research Question(s)**
- **Methodology: Analytical framework and research methods, data analysis**
- **Schedule and Milestones** (e.g. background reading, data collection and analysis, writing-up, submission)
- **Budget** (only in case of relevance)
- **Problems** (where do you need help?)

(7) Research ethics

If you are working with research participants (e.g. interviews, ethnography), you will be asked to discuss your approach to research ethics with your supervisor and one other staff member, after filling in a questionnaire. Your supervisor will provide you with more information about this process. Please make sure to start this process at least a month before you leave for your field work.

(8) Support for your Master's thesis

While your supervisor(s) will be your main point of contact throughout your thesis, you are welcome to reach out to the MSc tutor and other faculty members for support.

If you are seeking funding for your research project (e.g. to support fieldwork abroad), we ask that you apply to the **GIUZ Alumni** (Geographie Alumni UZH Mitglied) in the first instance. Students are also encouraged to look for alternative funding sources. If other applications are unsuccessful, PGG may be able to provide backup funding. Kindly keep the MSc tutor and your supervisor up-to-date on your funding applications.