**MPhil/PhD Degree Outline Research Proposal Template**

Prospective PhD students are required to complete a research proposal and submit it with the application form and other relevant documents. The proposal should be max 3,000 words in length excluding bibliography/references. The numbers in parentheses indicate the maximum page length that should be devoted to each section. This does not suggest that all sections should be this length, but it should provide guidance as to the relative priorities of the proposal. The proposal should contain the following elements.

**1. Working Title**

**2. Introduction (1.5)**

The introduction should speak to the question(s) you are addressing. Why is the question important? How will answering it advance knowledge in political science/political theory? What is the broader social/political/geopolitical context that frames your question? What’s the puzzle you’re trying to explain? Your research question(s) must be clearly stated.

**3. Literature review (3.5)**

The literature review should demonstrate that your research question is anchored in and contributes to a body of literature(s). You should demonstrate awareness of key research and provide an analytical summary of current knowledge. This section should also set out the general theoretical approach/framework to be applied.

**4. Data/methodology (3)**

This section should indicate the data sources needed to answer the research question and the general methodological approach taken. Items to address include: key propositions or hypotheses; concepts; independent and dependent variable(s); indicators; cross-section or longitudinal approach; unit of analysis; sampling; validity and reliability; etc. (Please note: not all of these topics apply for all projects so please address what is relevant to your work.) For students doing theory based projects please indicate what data sources you will utilise and your general method. Note that this is a key section of any proposal, and supervisors pay particular attention to the degree of development of this section when assessing the application.

**5. Proposed analyses (2)**

This section should set out how you intend to analyse the data brought to bear on your research question(s). Is the project qualitative, quantitative or a mixed methods approach? Please identify the techniques you will use to analyse the data.

**6.** **Proposed timeframe for the study (1)**

Outline a timetable for completion of the project (3-4 years for full-time study).

**7. Bibliography/references**