

**POL 205-01: Doing Research in Politics, Spring 2018**  
Mon/Wed/Fri 10-10:50am, Education Center Room 109  
Professor: Karyn Amira  
Office: Political Science Dept. Room 301  
Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2-4 or by appointment  
Contact: [amiraka@cofc.edu](mailto:amiraka@cofc.edu)

This course is designed to introduce you to the world of social science and political science in particular. As a student in this course you will gain an understanding of what it means to be “science literate”, learn how to formulate a research question and figure out how to answer it using the proper research methodology. You will also be required to understand how to look at quantitative data and understand what it means. This can sound scary to political science majors—trust me....I know.... I used to be one. My job is to convince you that research is awesome (it really is) and teach you how to go about the research process in the most efficient way possible.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- a. Identify and explain current academic research projects in politics
- b. Enhance critical and social scientific thinking skills in order to distinguish between scholarly and non-scholarly approaches
- c. Develop research questions that are answerable with a variety of methods
- d. Demonstrate some of the methods used by scholars of politics – this includes how data is/can be collected & analyzed and the strengths and weaknesses of different methods.
- e. Develop skills in designing a research project

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance and participation counts towards 10% of your grade. Attendance will be taken during the first month or so of class to make sure that students are showing up, per the school’s attendance verification policy. It is critical that you attend class. Much of this course builds on itself so accumulated absences will take a toll on your understanding of the material.

If you are **dealing with personal issues outside of class that are going to affect your work, you need to tell me in the beginning of the semester or right when the issue arises** so we can discuss a path forward to make sure you are successful in the course. I am more than happy to do this and have done it for many students in the past. **If you wait until the last week of class or when grades to come out to tell me a dramatic story about something at home, I cannot help you.** I will NOT give extensions, alter grades or have academic mercy on students who wait until the last minute to tell me that there is an ongoing, personal issue and beg for an extension, an incomplete or make-up work. Knowing this now is for your own benefit.

**Readings:** Some days have readings and some do not. Please pay close attention to when readings are due. You should always come to class having done the readings. Instead of forcing you to purchase an expensive research textbook, I tried hard to organize this course “a-la carte” and find readings from many sources (including a couple textbooks for the more technical units) that compliment the lectures. Some of them are even....dare I say.....really interesting!

**Quizzes:** There will be 10 pop quizzes and they are worth 10% of your final grade (combined).

They will be very general questions about the homework reading due that day to make sure that students come to class prepared. Quizzes will be administered at the start of class so you must show up on time to take them. To be clear: 10% is equivalent to an entire letter (Going from an A to a B). The reason this is such a large portion of the grade is because you simply cannot get through the course without doing the readings. They are that important.

**Research Paper Assignment** Your big project for the course is a research design paper. This paper will be done in two parts. The first draft (a literature review) is worth significantly less than the second draft (a lit review with a research design proposal) so that you can improve the literature review section and use my feedback for the final iteration. Extensive instructions will be given during the semester for the first and final draft of this assignment.

**Grading Breakdown by Percentage:**

5% - Controlling Homework assignment	10% - Quizzes
15% - Regression Homework assignment	15% - Paper Part I: Lit Review (first draft)
10% - Participation	45% - Paper Part II: Revised Lit Review and Design

**Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades**

100-94 A	79-77 C+	63-60 D-
93-90 A-	76-74 C	59-0 F
89-87 B+	73-70 C-	
86-84 B	69-67 D+	
83-80 B-	67-64 D	

**Late Assignments, Incompletes, Extensions and Make-Up Exams:** Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late including weekends. The first 5 % kicks in immediately when class ends on the day it is due. There will be no make-up quizzes/exams and I will not grant incompletes in the course, except in cases of emergency or where university policy applies. Doctor's notes are expected for medical excuses. If you miss a quiz/exam without a valid excuse, you will receive a zero.

**Office Hours:** Having trouble? Have questions? Come on by. I promise it will be helpful. Email me to schedule a time to meet.

**Syllabus Policy:** I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary.

**Course Evaluation Statement:** You will have the opportunity to evaluate the course towards the end of the semester through an online evaluation system. I will remind you to bring laptops that day so they can be done during the final class.

**Extra Credit:** You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by attending events put on by the Political Science department. Details to come.

## **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism, or presenting another's works or ideas as one's own, is a form of stealing. The instructor reserves the right to examine any source used by the student before giving a grade on an assignment, and to give an "incomplete" in the course if necessary, to allow time to obtain sources. Students should be prepared to show source material to the instructor for the purpose of verifying information. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and students will receive an F on any assignment or exam the instructor determines is in violation of the academic honesty policy.

Academic dishonesty includes the following offenses:

- 1) Claiming as your own work a paper written by another student.
- 2) Turning in a paper that contains paraphrases of someone else's ideas but does not give proper credit to that person for those ideas.
- 3) Turning in a paper that is largely a restatement in your own words of a paper written by someone else, even if you give credit to that person for those ideas. The thesis and organizing principles of a paper must be your own.
- 4) Turning in a paper that uses the exact words of another author without using quotation marks, even if proper credit is given in a citation, or that changes the words only slightly and claims them to be paraphrases.
- 5) Turning in the same paper, even in a different version, for two different courses without the permission of both professors involved.
- 6) Using any external source (notes, books, other students, etc.) for assistance during an in-class exam, unless given permission to do so by the professor.

Students can find the complete **Honor Code** and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>.

### **Disability Statement:**

If there is a student in this class who has a documented disability and has been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP Services, please feel free to come and discuss this with me during my office hours. If you are in need of accommodations for this course due to a disability, please contact the Center for Disability Services at SNAP@cofc.edu or (843) 953-1431.

# **ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE: READINGS ARE ALL ON OAKS**

## **Part I: Understanding Political Science (and Social Science)**

Monday Jan 8- **Introduction/What Do Political Scientists Study**

- *No reading*

Wednesday Jan 10- **Understanding Political Science: An Empirical Approach**

- *JRM pages 46-54*
- *The Weekly Standard Makes a Fact-Free Argument about Political Science: Here are Some of Those Facts*

Friday Jan 12- **Understanding Political Science: Rational Thinking vs. Motivated Reasoning**

- *How Politics Makes Us Stupid*

Monday Jan 15- **MLK DAY- NO CLASS**

Wednesday Jan 17 **Identifying a Question: Where to Start**

- *Reading and Understanding Political Science (you can ignore the content in the boxes that talks about activities)*

Friday Jan 19- **Identifying a Question/Formulating Hypotheses**

- *Blais: What Affects Voter Turnout? (This is a review article)*
  - *Take notes on this article and bring them to class*

Monday Jan 22- **Formulating Hypotheses cont.**

- *No reading, GENERAL TOPIC FOR PAPER IS DUE TODAY BY EMAIL*

Wednesday Jan 24- **Writing a Literature Review I**

- *Knopf: Doing a Literature Review*

Friday Jan 26- **Writing a Literature Review II**

- *Public Attitudes Towards Immigration THIS IS A TYPE 1 LITERATURE REVIEW*
  - *Take general notes on these findings so we can discuss in class*

Monday Jan 29- **Writing a Literature Review III**

- *Public Opinion Toward Immigration Reform: The Role of Economic Motivations*
  - *THIS IS A TYPE 2 LITERATURE REVIEW*
  - *Read until it says Data, Measures and Plan of Analysis on page 862*
- *Agenda Setting Public Opinion and the Issue of Immigration Reform*
  - *THIS IS A TYPE 2 LITERATURE REVIEW*
  - *Read until it says Research Design and Data Analysis in the middle of page 365*

## Part II: Research Design

### Wednesday- Jan 31 **Measurement I: Explanation Day**

- *No reading*

### Friday- Feb 2 **Measurement II**

- *JRM Chapter 5 (until page 143)*

### Monday- Feb 5 **Measurement III: Controversial Examples**

- *JRM Chapter 5 (page 143-151)*
- *Go online and take the RACE IAT test (link on OAKS)*

### Wednesday- Feb 7 **Observational Studies I**

- *No reading*

### Friday- Feb 9 **Observational Studies II**

- *Implicit Racial Attitudes Predicted Vote in 2008 Election*
  - *Come to class with notes about their variables and how they measured them*

### Monday- Feb 12 **Observational Studies III**

- *Bartels and Achen: Blind Retrospection Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu and Shark Attacks*
  - *Come to class with notes about their variables, where they came from and how they measured them*

### Wednesday- Feb 14 **Observational Studies IV**

- ***CONTROLLING HOMEWORK DUE***

### Friday- Feb 16 **Experimental Studies I**

- *No reading*

### Monday- Feb 19 **Experimental Studies II**

- *Playing the Race Card in the Post Willie Horton Era*  
<http://www.polisci.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/pubs/HurwitzPeffley.2005.PlayingRaceCard.pdf>

### Wednesday- Feb 21 **Experimental Studies III**

- *Irrelevant Events Affect Voters Evaluations of Government Performance:*  
<http://www.pnas.org/content/107/29/12804.full>
  - *Come to class with notes about what data they used and where it came from*

### Friday- Feb 23 **Experimental Studies IV: Field Experiments**

- *The Victory Lab Chapter 3 and Chapter 7*
- ***LITERATURE REVIEW FIRST DRAFT DUE TODAY***

Monday- Feb 26 **Experimental Studies V: Games**

- *Watch the TED Talk called: Does Money Make You Mean?*

Wednesday- Feb 28 **Content Analysis I**

- *No reading*

Friday- March 2 **Content Analysis II**

- *Virginia's Invisible Candidate: News Coverage of the Virginia 2013 Gubernatorial Campaign*

Monday- March 5 **Content Analysis III**

- *Hate Online: A Content Analysis*

Wednesday- March 7 **Sampling I Explanation Day**

- *No reading*

Friday- March 9 **Sampling II**

- *JRM Chapter 9*

Monday- March 12 **Sampling III: Bad Science Examples!**

- *Pollsters for Sun's Jihadi Story Called List of Muslim Names*
- *Before Citing a Poll, Read the Fine Print*

### **Part III: Analyzing Data**

Wednesday- March 14 **Making Sense of Data**

- *No Reading*

Friday- March 16 **Making Sense of Data**

- *JRM Chapter 11 (pages 361-384)*

Monday – March 19- SPRING BREAK

Wednesday- March 21- SPRING BREAK

Friday- March 23- SPRING BREAK

Monday- March 26 **Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing**

- *Introduction to Hypothesis Testing (read until section 8.6)*

Wednesday- March 28 **Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing**

- *Introduction to Hypothesis Testing (read sections 8.6 until 8.9)*

Friday- March 30 **Difference in Means Tests**

- *No reading*

Monday- April 2 **Difference in Means Tests**

- *Effects of Political Advertising on Young Voters*

Wednesday- April 4 **Correlations**

- *Reading TBD*

Friday- April 6 **Bivariate Linear Regression**

- *Bivariate Regression Chapter*

Monday- April 9 **Multivariate Linear Regression**

- No reading

Wednesday- April 11 **Multivariate Linear Regression**

- *Amira: Microfinance Paper*  
*This paper, which I wrote for graduate school, uses a multivariate regression. Take notes on the variables used in the regression.*

Friday- April 13 **Multivariate Linear Regression**

- *No reading*

Monday- April 16 **Multivariate Linear Regression**

- ***MULTIVARIATE REGRESSION HOMEWORK DUE***

Wednesday- April 18 **Multivariate Linear Regression**

- *History Made: The Rise of Republican Tim Scott*  
*This paper, (by our Department Chair!) uses a multivariate regression. Take notes on the variables used in the regression.*

Friday- April 20 **Logistic Regression**

- *No reading*

Monday- April 23 **Final Class Wrap Up**

- ***FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS AND ON OAKS***

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR 205 THIS SEMESTER**