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 of your grade- almost a half letter 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 make special exceptions 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!
Homework Assignments:

Small Assignments: You will have a number of homework assignments that focus on a specific piece of the research puzzle. Instructions for these assignments will be given later in the course.

Big Assignments: 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 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 (100 points total):

1 point - Topic email
4 points - Participation & Attendance
10 points - IV/DV/Unit homework
10 points - Controlling assignment
10 points - Measurement assignment
15 points - Regression assignment
20 points - Paper Part I: Lit Review Draft
30 points - Paper Part II: Revised Lit Review and Design

Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades

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

Late Assignments, Incompletes, Extensions: ALL ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE POSTED TO OAKS. I WILL SOMETIMES ALSO REQUEST A HARD COPY. Late assignments will be docked 5 % per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late including weekends. The first 5 % kicks in immediately after class begins on the day it is due. 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 an assignment is due.

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.
Part I: Understanding Political Science

Wednesday Aug 21 Introduction and Review of Syllabus

Friday Aug 23 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

Monday Aug 26 Understanding Political Science: Motivated Reasoning
  - How Politics Makes Us Stupid (article from Vox.com)

Wednesday Aug 28 Identifying a Question and Formulating Hypotheses
  - Reading and Understanding Political Science (ignore the content in the boxes that talks about activities)

Friday Aug 30 Variables and Units of Analysis
  - Blais: What Affects Voter Turnout? (This is a review article)
    - Take notes on this article and bring them to class

Monday Sept 2 Writing a Literature Review I
  - Knopf: Doing a Literature Review
  - GENERAL TOPIC FOR PAPER IS DUE TODAY BY EMAIL BY 5PM

Wednesday Sept 4 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

Friday Sept 6 Writing a Literature Review III
  - Public Opinion Toward Immigration Reform: The Role of Economic Motivation (Read until it says Data, Measures and Plan of Analysis on page 862)
    - THIS IS A TYPE 2 LITERATURE REVIEW
  - Agenda Setting Public Opinion and the Issue of Immigration Reform…Read until it says Research Design and Data Analysis in the middle of page 365
    - THIS IS A TYPE 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Part II: Research Design

Monday Sept 9 Measurement I: Explanation Day
  - DV/IV/UNIT HOMEWORK DUE ON OAKS BY CLASS TIME

Wednesday Sept 11 Measurement II
  - JRM Chapter 5 (until page 143)
Friday Sept 13 **Measurement III: Controversial Examples**
- JRM Chapter 5 (page 143-151)
- Go online and take the RACE IAT test (link on OAKS)

Monday Sept 16 **Measurement IV: Examples and Practice**

Wednesday Sept 18 **Small N Designs**
- No reading due

Friday Sept 20 **Observational Studies I**
- No reading

Monday Sept 23 **Observational Studies II**
- Bartels and Achen: Blind Retrospection Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu and Shark Attacks  (Read to page 19 where it says DROUGHTS AND FLOODS)

Wednesday Sept 25 **Observational Studies III**
- MEASUREMENT HOMEWORK DUE IN DROP BOX BY START OF CLASS

Friday Sept 27 **NO CLASS. PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN**

Monday Sept 30 **Observational Studies IV**
- Trust in Government in the Aftermath of 9/11

Wednesday Oct 2 **Experimental Studies I**
- No reading due

Friday Oct 4 **Experimental Studies II**
- Southern Accent as Heuristic in Campaigns and Elections

Monday Oct 7 **Experimental Studies III**
- Irrelevant Events Affect Voters Evaluations of Government Performance: [http://www.pnas.org/content/107/29/12804.full](http://www.pnas.org/content/107/29/12804.full)

Wednesday Oct 9 **Experimental Studies IV: Field Experiments**
- LIT REVIEW OPTION 1 OR 2 DUE IN DROPBOX BY START OF CLASS

Friday Oct 11 **Experimental Studies V: Games**
- Watch the TED Talk Video called Does Money Make You Mean?
Monday Oct 14- **FALL BREAK NO CLASS.**

Wednesday Oct 16 **Content Analysis I**
- No reading

Friday Oct 18 **Content Analysis II**
- **CONTROLLING HOMEWORK DUE IN DROPBOX BY START OF CLASS**

Monday Oct 21 **Content Analysis III**
- Virginias Invisible Candidate: News Coverage of the Virginia 2013 Gubernatorial Campaign

Wednesday Oct 22 **Content Analysis IV**
- Hate Online: A Content Analysis

Friday Oct 25 **Sampling I**
- No reading

Monday Oct 28 **Sampling II**
- JRM Chapter 9

Wednesday 30 **Sampling III: Bad Science Examples!**
- Pollsters for Sun’s Jihadi Story Called List of Muslim Names
- Is a Poll Scientific if it Excludes Half the Population?
- Why You Can Be Largely Confidence in Public Polling
  [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/01/18/faq-why-you-can-be-largely-confident-public-political-polling/?utm_term=.1e3237918753]

Friday Nov 1 **WORKSHOP DAY**
- We will get into groups and help each other with our projects

**Part III: Data Analysis**

Monday Nov 4 **Making Sense of Data**
- JRM Chapter 11 (pages 361-384)

Wednesday Nov 6 **Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing**
- Introduction to Hypothesis Testing (read until section 8.6)

Friday Nov 8 **Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing**
- Introduction to Hypothesis Testing (read sections 8.6 until 8.9)

Monday Nov 11 **Bivariate Linear Regression**
- Bivariate Regression Chapter
Wednesday Nov 13 **Bivariate Linear Regression II**
   • No reading

Friday Nov 15 **Multiple Linear Regression I**
   • No reading

Monday Nov 18 **Multiple Linear Regression II**
   • Check OAKS

Wednesday Nov 20 **Multiple Linear Regression III**
   • Check OAKS

Friday Nov 22 **Multiple Linear Regression IV**
   • The Effect of Commercialization on Microfinance Loans to Women

Monday Nov 25 **Logistic and Other Types of Regressions**
   • REGRESSION HOMEWORK DUE IN DROP BOX BY START OF CLASS

Wednesday Nov 27- Friday Nov 29 **THANKSGIVING BREAK. NO CLASS.**

Monday Dec. 2- Why We Do What We Do: Class Wrap Up.
   • FINAL PAPERS DUE IN DROPBOX BY START OF CLASS