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 15% 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 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):
- 15 points - Participation & Attendance
- 10 points - Controlling assignment
- 10 points - Measurement assignment
- 15 points - Regression assignment
- 20 points - Paper Part I: Lit Review (first draft)
- 30 points - Paper Part II: Revised Lit Review and Design

Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades
- 100-94 A
- 93-90 A-
- 89-87 B+
- 86-84 B
- 83-80 B-
- 79-77 C+
- 76-74 C
- 73-70 C-
- 69-67 D+
- 67-64 D

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.
ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE: READINGS ARE ALL ON OAKS

Part I: Understanding Political Science


Friday January 11: 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 January 14: Understanding Political Science: Motivated Reasoning
  • How Politics Makes Us Stupid (article from Vox.com)

Wed. January 16: Identifying a Question: Where to Start
  • Reading and Understanding Political Science (ignore the content in the boxes that talks about activities)

Friday January 18: 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 January 21: MLK DAY. NO CLASS
  • GENERAL TOPIC FOR PAPER IS DUE TODAY BY EMAIL BY 5PM

Wed. January 23: Writing a Literature Review I
  • Knopf: Doing a Literature Review

Friday January 25: 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 January 28: Writing a Lit 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

  • No reading

Friday Feb 1: Measurement II
  • JRM Chapter 5 (until page 143)
Monday Feb 4: Measurement III: Controversial Examples
- JRM Chapter 5 (page 143-151)
- Go online and take the RACE IAT test (link on OAKS)
- Psychology’s RACE IAT Isn’t Up For the Job: https://www.thecut.com/2017/01/psychologys-racism-measuring-tool-isnt-up-to-the-job.html

Wednesday Feb 6: Measurement IV: Examples and Practice

Friday Feb 8: Observational Studies I
- No reading due

Monday Feb 11: Observational Studies II
- Implicit Racial Attitudes Predicted Vote in 2008 Election

Wednesday Feb 13: Observational Studies III
- Bartels and Achen: Blind Retrospection Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu and Shark Attacks (Read to page 19 where it says DROUGHTS AND FLOODS)

Friday Feb 15: Observational Studies IV
- MEASUREMENT HOMEWORK DUE

Monday Feb 18: Observational Studies V
- Trust in Government in the Aftermath of 9/11

Wednesday Feb 20: Experimental Studies I
- No reading due

Friday Feb 22: Experimental Studies II
- Southern Accent as Heuristic in Campaigns and Elections

Monday Feb 25: Experimental Studies III

Wednesday Feb 27: Experimental Studies IV: Field Experiments
- LIT REVIEW OPTION 1 OR 2 DUE

Friday March 1: Experimental Studies V: Games
- Watch the TED Talk Video called Does Money Make You Mean?
Monday March 4: Content Analysis I
- CONTROLLING HOMEWORK DUE

Wed March 6: Content Analysis II
- No reading- in class exercise day

Friday March 8: Content Analysis III
- Virginia’s Invisible Candidate: News Coverage of the Virginia 2013 Gubernatorial Campaign

Monday March 11: Content Analysis IV
- Hate Online: A Content Analysis

Wed. March 13: Sampling I
- No reading

Friday March 15: Sampling II
- JRM Chapter 9

😊!!!Monday March 18- Friday March 22: Spring Break!!! 😊

Monday March 25: 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?

Wed March 27: Catch Up Day/Make Up Day in Case of Weather Cancellations
- No reading

Friday March 29: Catch Up Day/Make Up Day in Case of Weather Cancellations
- No reading

Part III: Data Analysis

Monday April 1: Making Sense of Data
- No Reading

Wed April 3: Making Sense of Data
- JRM Chapter 11 (pages 361-384)

Friday April 5: Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing
- Introduction to Hypothesis Testing (read until section 8.6)

Monday April 8: Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing
- Introduction to Hypothesis Testing (read sections 8.6 until 8.9)
Wed April 10: Bivariate Linear Regression
   • *Bivariate Regression Chapter*

Friday April 12: Multivariate Linear Regression
   • *No reading*

Monday April 15: Multivariate Linear Regression
   • *No reading*

Wed. April 17: Multivariate Linear Regression
   • *The Effect of Commercialization on Microfinance Loans to Women*

Friday April 19: Finishing Multivariate Regression and Beginning Logistic Regression
   • *REGRESSION HOMEWORK DUE*

Monday April 22: Logistic Regression
   • *History Made: The Rise of Republican Tim Scott*

***Tuesday April 23: LAST DAY OF CLASS. PAPERS ARE DUE. 
NOTE THE SCHOOL’S NEW SCHEDULE. CLASS THAT MEET ON MONDAY 
HAVE TO MEET THIS TUESDAY AS WELL. 
   • *FINAL PAPERS DUE BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TIME ON OAKS!*