

**POL 205-01: Doing Research in Politics, Fall 2017**  
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.

**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 is worth significantly less than the second draft so that you can improve it 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:**

10% - Participation

10% - Quizzes

10% - Paper Part I: Lit Review (first draft)

55% - Paper Part II: Revised Lit Review and Design

15% - Data Comprehension Test

**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. 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 and “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.

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

### Wednesday Aug 23: Introduction/What Do Political Scientists Study

- *No reading*

### Friday Aug 25: 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 28: Understanding Political Science: Rational Thinking vs. Motivated Reasoning

- *Why Do Many Reasonable People Doubt Science?*
- *How Politics Makes Us Stupid*

### Wednesday Aug 30: Identifying a Question: Where to Start

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

### Friday Sept 1: Identifying a Question/Formulating Hypotheses

- *Blais: What Affects Voter Turnout? (This is a review article)*

### Monday Sept 4: Formulating Hypotheses cont.

- *No reading*

### Wednesday Sept 6: Writing a Literature Review I

- *Knopf: Doing a Literature Review*

### Friday Sept 8: Writing a Literature Review II

- *Hayes, Lawless and Baitinger: Who Cares What They Wear? Media, Gender and the Influence of Candidate Appearance (read until it says **Experimental Design**)*

### Monday Sept 11: Writing a Literature Review III

- *Si Se Puede (read up until where it says Data and Methodology)*

## Part II: Research Design

### Wednesday Sept 13: Measurement I: Explanation Day

- *No reading*

### Friday Sept 15: **NO CLASS**

### Monday Sept 18 Measurement II

- *JRM Chapter 5 (until page 143)*

### **Wednesday Sept 20 Measurement III: Controversial Examples**

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

### **Friday Sept 22 Observational Studies I**

- *No reading*

### **Monday Sept 25 Observational Studies II**

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

### **Wednesday Sept 27 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*

### **Friday Sept 29 Experimental Studies I**

- *No reading*

### **Monday Oct 2 Experimental Studies II**

- *Iyengar Chapter 6 on Experiments in Political Science*

### **Wednesday Oct 4 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 Oct 6 Experimental Studies IV: Field Experiments**

- *The Victory Lab Chapter 3 and Chapter 7*

### **Monday Oct 9: NO CLASS.**

- *Literature Review Hard Copy First Draft Due by Today*

### **Wednesday Oct 11 Experimental Studies V: Games**

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

### **Friday Oct 13 Content Analysis I**

- *Klaus Krippendof: Content Analysis*

### **Monday Oct 16: NO CLASS- FALL BREAK**

### **Wednesday Oct 18 Content Analysis II**

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

### **Friday Oct 20 Content Analysis III**

- *Marginalization Devices in US Press Coverage of Iraq War Protest: A Content Analysis*

### **Monday Oct 23 Sampling I Explanation Day**

- *No reading*

### **Wednesday Oct 25 Sampling II**

- *JRM Chapter 9*

### **Friday Oct 27 Sampling III: Bad Science Examples!**

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

### **Monday Oct 30 CATCH UP DAY**

- *We will go over any lingering questions and concerns students have about research design*

## **Part III: Analyzing Data**

### **Wednesday Nov 1 Making Sense of Data**

- *No Reading*

### **Friday Nov 3 Making Sense of Data**

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

### **Monday Nov 6 Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing**

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

### **Wednesday Nov 8 Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing**

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

### **Friday Nov 10 Difference in Means Tests**

- *No reading*

### **Monday Nov 13 Difference in Means Tests**

- *Effects of Political Advertising on Young Voters*

### **Wednesday Nov 15 Difference in Means Tests**

- *Reading TBD*

### **Friday Nov 17 Correlations**

- *Reading TBD*

**Monday Nov 20 Bivariate Regression**

- *Bivariate Regression Chapter*

**Wednesday Nov 22: THANKSGIVING BREAK. NO CLASS**

**Friday Nov 24: THANKSGIVING BREAK. NO CLASS**

**Monday Nov 27 Bivariate Linear Regression**

- *Reading TBD*

**Wednesday Nov 29 Multivariate Linear Regression**

- *Reading TBD*

**Friday Dec 1 Multivariate Linear Regression**

- *Amira: Microfinance Paper*

**Monday Dec 4: Final Class Wrap Up**

- *FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS.*