

POL 205-02: Doing Research in Politics, Spring 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 3-5 or by appointment

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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 (3 Parts) Your big project for the course is a research design paper. I’ve broken this up into 3 sections. Ultimately, you will be turning in a paper that demonstrates you have done reading in a political science research area of your choice, have summarized previous research findings in a comprehensive way and have developed a study

proposal that contributes something new to this literature. This paper does NOT require data analysis. It is strictly a literature review and research design. For details about each of the 3 parts, see the assignment paper (separate). This research paper makes up the bulk of your final grade.

Grading Breakdown by Percentage:

10% - Participation	10% - Paper Part II: Lit Review (first draft)
10% - Quizzes	45% - Paper Part III: Revised Lit Review and Design
5% - Paper Part 1: Annotated bibliography	20% - Methods and 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 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.

Part I: Understanding Political Science (and Social Science)

Wednesday January 11: Introduction and Syllabus Overview

- *No reading*

Friday January 13: Understanding Political Science: What Do Political Scientists Study?

Monday January 16: *MLK DAY. NO CLASS.*

Wednesday January 18: 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 January 20: Understanding Political Science: Rational Thinking vs. Motivated Reasoning

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

Monday January 23: Identifying a Question: Where to Start

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

Wednesday January 25: Identifying a Question/Formulating Hypotheses

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

Friday January 27: Formulating Hypotheses cont.

- *No Reading*

Monday January 30: Writing a Literature Review

- *Knopf: Doing a Literature Review*

Wednesday February 1 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**)*

Friday February 3 Writing a Literature Review III

- *Reading TBD*

Part II: Research Design

Monday February 6 Measurement I (Explanation Day)

- *No reading*

Wednesday February 8 Measurement II

- *JRM Chapter 5 (until page 143)*

Friday February 10 Measurement III: Controversial Examples!

- *JRM Chapter 5 (page 143-151)*
- *How Do You Measure Democracy?* <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/06/23/how-do-you-measure-democracy/>
- *Go online and take the RACE IAT test*

Monday February 13 Observational Studies I

- ***ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES ARE DUE TODAY***

Wednesday February 15 Observational Studies II

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

Friday February 17 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*

Monday February 20 Experimental Studies I

- *No reading*

Wednesday February 22 Experimental Studies II

- *Iyengar Chapter 6 on Experiments in Political Science*

Friday February 24 Experimental Studies III

- *Irrelevant Events Effect 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*

Monday February 27 Experimental Studies IV: Field Experiments

- *The Victory Lab Chapter 3 and Chapter 7*

Wednesday March 1 Experimental Studies X: Games

- *Watch the following Ted Talk Video:*
https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_piff_does_money_make_you_mean

Friday March 3: Catch Up Day

- *Reading TBD*

!!!!MONDAY MARCH 6-10 SPRING BREAK!!!!

Monday March 13 Content Analysis

- *No Reading*

Wednesday March 15 Content Analysis

- *Klaus Krippendof: Content Analysis*

Friday March 17 Content Analysis

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

Monday March 20 Sampling I Explanation Day

- **2NDSECTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT DUE TODAY: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Wednesday March 22 Sampling II

- *JRM Chapter 9*

Friday March 24 Sampling III: Bad Science Examples!

- *Pollsters for Sun's Jihadi Story Called List of Muslim Names:*
<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/nov/23/sun-poll-respondents-found-using-list-of-muslim-surnames?>
- *Bernie Sanders Truthers, Step Down:*
http://www.salon.com/2015/10/15/bernie_sanders_truthers_step_down_theres_no_conspiracy_to_hide_that_he_won_the_debate/

Part III: Analyzing Data

Monday March 27 Making Sense of Data

- *No Reading*

Wednesday March 29 Making Sense of Data

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

Friday March 31 Making Sense of Data

- *The Most Misleading Charts of 2015, Fixed:* <http://qz.com/580859/the-most-misleading-charts-of-2015-fixed/>
- *Spurious Correlations:* <http://www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations>

Monday April 3 Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing

- *No Reading*

Wednesday April 5 Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing

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

Friday April 7 *NO CLASS. PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE*

Monday April 10 Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing

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

Wednesday April 12 Bivariate Regression

- *Reading TBD*

Friday April 14 Bivariate Regression

- *Empirical Political Analysis Chapter 15: Relationships Between 2 Variables*

Monday April 17 Multiple Regression

- *No reading*

Wednesday April 19 Multiple Regression

- *Short paper (see OAKS) on Microfinance that uses a simple regression model*

Friday April 21 Multiple Regression

- *Reading TBD- Check OAKS*

Monday April 24 Logistic Regression Analysis

- *Gervais and Morris: Reading the Tea Leaves*

Wednesday April 26 Class Wrap Up and Review

- *FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE TODAY: INTRO, LIT REVIEW AND RESEARCH DESIGN*

*****The Methods and Data Comprehension Test will be given during the school-scheduled final exam time***