

## **POS 4734: Research Methods in Political Science**

Fall 2019

Department of Political Science, University of Florida

Place: AND 019 (MW) and WEIL 408E (F)

Time: MWF 3:00-3:50 PM (8<sup>nd</sup> Period)

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Office Hours: MW 1:30-2:50 PM or by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course aims to help students understand political science research and produce your own research. Throughout the course, we will discuss four questions: (1) what is the concept of “political science,” rather than “politics”? (2) what kind of research do political scientists do? (3) how do political scientists conduct their scientific studies and communicate the knowledge to one another? (4) which methodology is the best fit to the research? Throughout this course, we will critically examine these questions. We do not focus on a specific field such as American Politics, Comparative Politics, or International Relations. Instead, we are interested in understanding the methods that political scientists in all fields use to build knowledge. As such, this course enables you to better understand the literature you read in substantive courses and helps you to conduct your own scientific research on the topics you are interested in.

### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed for upper division political science major students. Students are expected to do all the assigned readings and critically evaluate them before class. Students should actively contribute to class discussion and complete all the assignments on time. By doing so, students should be able to

- Understand how to conduct political science research
- Evaluate different methodologies (from statistical analysis to in-depth case studies) to pursue political science research
- Analyze the theories and assumptions behind the research design in the literature
- Analyze descriptive statistical data and interpret inferential statistical results using a popular statistical software
- Find published research and data archives on topics you are interested in and get familiarized with them

- Conduct a research project by raising critical questions from current literature, developing your own arguments, and finding empirical evidences from real-world situations.

## **Course Requirements**

All the written assignment should be submitted through the UF E-Learning (Canvas). They should be saved in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF and written with double-spaced, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

### **1. Data Assignments and Short Essays**

Throughout this course, students will submit four data assignments and three short essays. Each worth 5% of the final grade so total 35% of the final grade. All data assignments are due the following Friday. The short essay assignments are due the following Wednesday (except the assignment #6). Students are encouraged to visit office hours when having any difficulty in conducting the assignments. Dataset for each assignment will be explained in detail during the Friday session when each assignment is released.

#	Assignment	Assigned on	Submitted by
1	Research Question & Literature Review	September 4, 2019	September 11, 2019
2	Hypotheses	September 11, 2019	September 18, 2019
3	1 <sup>st</sup> Data Assignment	September 13, 2019	September 20, 2019
4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Data Assignment	September 27, 2019	October 4, 2019
5	Participant Observation or Focus Group Interview	October 14, 2019	November 6, 2019
6	3 <sup>rd</sup> Data Assignment	October 25, 2019	November 1, 2019
7	4 <sup>th</sup> Data Assignment	November 15, 2019	November 22, 2019

### **2. Midterm Exam**

There will be a closed-book in-class midterm exam on October 7, 2019, during our class time for 50 minutes. It is worth 20% of the final grade. Students should review all the class materials and apply them in answering the question(s).

### **3. Final Research Paper**

The final research paper is worth 30% of the final grade. Students are required to submit a two-pages research proposal by October 2, 2019 (5%). Students are encouraged to visit office hours to discuss their final paper proposal. In the research proposal, students are expected to develop a research question which contributes to conceptual or empirical development of the literature. The research strategy should clearly

identify the methodology expected to be used in this research and justify to what extent it fits to the research question better than others. Each student will receive feedback and have an individual meeting with the instructor on October 9, 2019. Based on the feedback, students should develop their final research paper. The paper should have a clear argument, in-depth analysis, specific empirical evidences, and (if applicable) the feasibility of extending the analysis in an Honors Thesis. The final paper should be 15-20 pages double-spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins excluding any tables, figures, or references. It is due on December 9, 2019 (25%).

#### **4. Class Participation**

Overall class participation is worth 15% of the final grade. Every student should prepare comments and questions on the assigned readings and actively contribute to each class discussion. Attendance does not mean participation. This course expects you to become an active learner.

#### **Summary of Assignment Schedule and Grade Weights**

The following is a tentative calendar, and dates on assignments are subject to revision.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Grade Weights</b>
Class Participation	-	15%
Research Question & Literature Review	September 11, 2019	5%
Hypotheses	September 18, 2019	5%
Data Assignment #1	September 20, 2019	5%
Final Research Paper Proposal	October 2, 2019	5%
Data Assignment #2	October 4, 2019	5%
Midterm Exam	October 7, 2019	20%
Data Assignment #3	November 1, 2019	5%
Participant Observation or Focus Group Interview	November 6, 2019	5%
Data Assignment #4	November 22, 2019	5%
Final Research Paper	December 9, 2019	25%

#### **Grading Scale**

	<b>Grade Scale</b>	<b>Grade Value</b>
A	93.00 - 100.00	4.0
A-	90.00 - 92.99	3.67

B+	87.00 - 89.99	3.33
B	83.00 - 86.99	3.00
B-	80.00 - 82.99	2.67
C+	77.00 - 79.99	2.33
C	73.00 - 76.99	2.00
C-	70.00 - 72.99	1.67
D+	67.00 - 69.99	1.33
D	63.00 - 66.99	1.00
D-	60.00 - 62.99	0.67
E	59.99 and below	0.00

Grades are assigned in accordance with the grading scale above. Students who are political science majors should note that grades below a C are considered failing by the university. For information of UF grading policy see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## **Course Policies**

### **1. Late Assignments and Make-Up Policy**

There is no make-up policy for work missed due to unexcused absences. For each day that an assignment is late, 5% will be deducted from the grade. No assignments will be accepted more than 7 days late.

### **2. Attendance and Professional Conduct Policy**

Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, stay until the class is over. The course is designed to require regular attendance if you hope to succeed. Students should always be courteous and polite toward their peers and the instructor with respect in a professional manner. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **3. Technology Policy**

Students are allowed to bring laptops and/or tablets to class. However, these should be used solely for the class purposes. The class will have a strict no cell phone policy. Students should silence and refrain from using these devices during class.

Most communication outside of class will take place through the UF E-Learning (Canvas) and university email. Students should check their email daily for any important updates and information.

#### **4. Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy**

This course has a no tolerance policy for academic misconduct. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

Students should pay close attention to sections outlining plagiarism and cheating. All submitted work should properly cite references using the student's preferred citation format. Any use of another person's work should be presented with quotations or paraphrased, and include reference to the author, work, and page number. Note that copying from your own papers previously submitted in other classes counts as plagiarism.

#### **5. Disability Policy**

This class complies with the University of Florida's requirements for accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

#### **6. Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

#### **Course Materials**

There is one required textbook in this course. Students can purchase them in the UF Bookstore or online. All the other articles and book chapters can be found on the UF E-Learning (Canvas) at <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>.

- Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H. T. Reynolds. *Political Science Research Methods*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed). Thousand Oak, CA: CQ Press, 2015.

In our lab session on Friday, we learn how to use the statistical software, STATA and the geographic information system software, ArcGIS. There are three ways you can access STATA and ArcGIS:

- UF Apps (<http://info.apps.ufl.edu/>) is free and can be accessed anywhere from any operating system or device.
- Academic Technology Labs (<https://labs.at.ufl.edu/>) around campus. Weil 408 is one of these labs.
- Purchasing a license from Stata (<https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/>).
- If you are a Window-user, you can request the student license of ArcGIS from UF GeoPlan Center (<https://www.geoplan.ufl.edu/software/software.shtml>).

Before each Friday lab, students should download the weekly assigned files from the UF-E-Learning at <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>.

## Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change based on the class progress.

### Week 1. Course Introduction

Wed, Aug 21. Overview of the course

- No Reading

Fri, Aug 23. Lab: Introduction to STATA

### Week 2. Empirical Approach to Political Science

Mon, Aug 26. Basic concepts in political science research

- Chapter 1 and 2 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp.1-73).

Wed, Aug 28. No class, APSA

Fri, Aug30. No class, APSA

### Week 3. Beginning Political Science Research Process

Mon, Sep 2. No class, Labor Day

Wed, Sep 4. Research question and literature review

- Chapter 3 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp.74-103).
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS-Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 1 (2006): 127-132. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Sep 6. Lab: Working with data in STATA

### Week 4. Building Blocks of Political Science Research I

Mon, Sep 9. Hypotheses, concepts, and variables

- Chapter 4 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp.104-127).

Wed, Sep 11. Analyzing hypotheses, concepts, and variables in the literature

- Fortna, Virginia Page. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (2004): 269-292. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Sep 13. Lab: Descriptive statistics for one variable

## Week 5. Building Blocks of Political Science Research II

Mon, Sep 16. Measurement

- Chapter 5 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp.128-165).

Wed, Sep 18. Analyzing the measurement strategy in the literature

- Karp, Jeffrey A., and David Brockington. "Social Desirability and Response Validity: A Comparative Analysis of Overreporting Voter Turnout in Five Countries." *Journal of Politics* 67 (2005): 825-40. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Sep 20. Lab: Statistics for bivariate relationships

## Week 6. Causal Inference

Mon, Sep 23. Experiments

- Chapter 6 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp. 166-211).

Wed, Sep 25. Analyzing experimental approach in the literature

- Tomz, Michael. "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach." *International Organization* 61, no. 4 (2007): 821-840. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Sep 27. Lab: Replication

## Week 7. Sampling

Mon, Sep 30. Basics of samplings

- Chapter 7 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp. 212-243).

Wed, Oct 2. Analyzing the sampling strategy in the literature

- Dolan, Kathleen and Lynn E. Ford. "Change and Continuity among Women State Legislators: Evidence from Three Decades." *Political Research Quarterly* 50 (1997): 137-51. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Oct 4. No class, Homecoming

Week 8. Midterm Exam

Mon, Oct 7. Midterm Exam

Wed, Oct 9. Review of research proposal for final assignment

Fri, Oct 11. Lab: Sampling errors

Week 9. Making Empirical Observations

Mon, Oct 14. Data collection and observation

- Chapter 8 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp. 244-267).

Wed, Oct. 16. Participant observation

- Williamson, Vanessa, Theda Skocpol, and John Coggin. "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism." *Perspectives on Politics* 9, no. 1 (2011): 25-43. (E-Learning Resource)

Fri, Oct. 18. Lab: Correlation

Week 10. Document Analysis

Mon, Oct 21. Content analysis

- Chapter 9 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp. 268-293).

Wed, Oct 23. Analyzing the usage of content analysis in the literature

- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107 no. 2 (2013): 326-343. (E-Learning Resource)

Fri, Oct 25. Lab: Regression

Week 11. Survey Analysis

Mon, Oct 28. Survey research and interview

- Chapter 10 in *Political Science Research Methods* (pp. 294-347).

Wed, Oct 30. Analyzing survey research in the literature

- Javeline, Debra. "Response Effects in Polite Cultures: A Test of Acquiescence in Kazakhstan." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63 (1999): 1-28. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Nov 1. Lab: Multiple regression

Week 12. Comparative Analysis I



Mon, Nov 4. Comparative method

- Lijphart, Arendt. "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65 (1971): 682-693 (E-Learning Resources).

Wed, Nov 6. No class, PSSI

Fri, Nov 8. No class, PSSI

#### Week 13. Comparative Analysis II

Mon, Nov 11. No class, Veterans' Day

Wed, Nov 13. Case studies

- Gerring, John. "Chapter 2: What Is a Case Study? The Problem of Definition." In *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 17-36, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Nov 15. Lab: Logistic regression

#### Week 14. Interdisciplinary Approach I

Mon, Nov 18. ArcGIS: Coordinate systems, map projections, and Geodatabases

- Bolstad, Paul. "Chapter 3: Geodesy and Map Projections." in *GIS Fundamentals: A First Text on Geographic Information Systems*, Ann Arbor, MI: XanEdu Publishing Inc, 2016. (E-Learning Resources)

Wed, Nov 20. ArcGIS: Geocoding and georeferencing

- ArcGIS. "Data in ArcGIS Pro." (<http://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/help/data/main/data-in-arcgis-pro.htm>)
- Ball, Matt. "Mapping the Whole US-Mexico Border." ESRI Blog (September 28, 2017). (<https://www.esri.com/about/newsroom/blog/usa-today-network-maps-whole-us-mexico-border/>). (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Nov 22. Lab: Introduction to ArcGIS

#### Week 15. Interdisciplinary Approach II

Mon, Nov 25. Spatial analysis with ArcGIS

- ArcGIS. "Spatial Analyst Basics." (<http://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/help/analysis/spatial-analyst/basics/what-is-the-spatial-analyst-extension.htm>)
- Wright, Dawn. "Spatial Analysis Ties Valley Fever Increase to Sea Temperature Rise." ESRI Blog (September 26, 2017).

(<https://www.esri.com/about/newsroom/blog/spatial-analysis-ties-valley-fever-increase-to-sea-temperature-rise/>). (E-Learning Resources)

Wed, Nov 27. No class, Thanksgiving

Fri, Nov 29. No class, Thanksgiving

#### Week 16. Conclusion

Mon, Dec 2. Qualitative versus quantitative debates

- Rosato, Sebastian. "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory." *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (2003): 585-602. (E-Learning Resources)
- Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14 (2006): 227-249. (E-Learning Resources)

Wed, Dec 4. Ethics in experiment on human subjects

- Humphreys, Macartan. "How to Make Field Experiments More Ethical." The Washington Post Monkey Cage (2 November 2014).  
([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/11/02/how-to-make-field-experiments-more-ethical/?utm\\_term=.0b859486366e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/11/02/how-to-make-field-experiments-more-ethical/?utm_term=.0b859486366e)) (E-Learning Resources)
- King, Gary, and Melissa Sands. Working Paper. "How Human Subjects Research Rules Mislead You and Your University, and What to Do About It".  
([https://gking.harvard.edu/files/gking/files/irb\\_politics\\_paper\\_1.pdf](https://gking.harvard.edu/files/gking/files/irb_politics_paper_1.pdf)) (E-Learning Resources)

Fri, Dec 6. No class, Reading day