POS 4734: Research Methods in Political Science

(Class Number 19085)
Spring Semester, 2019
Class: Tues. 1:55PM-2:45PM & Thurs. 1:55PM-3:50PM
Location: MAT 0051

Instructor:	Dr. Chase B. Meyer
Email:	chase.meyer@ufl.edu
Office:	Anderson Hall 317
Office Hours:	Wed. 12-4pm & Thurs. 11-1pm
Course Website:	www.chasebmeyer.com
Department:	Department of Political Science
Department Contact:	https://polisci.ufl.edu (352) 392-0262

Course Description: The goal of this course is for you understand how we study politics and to show you how political scientists conduct original research. Essentially, the purpose of this course is to explain the "science" in political science. The course will provide you with a general understanding of what science is and a foundation in the logic and practice of research methods. We will cover fundamental issues such as arriving at a research question, theory building, hypothesis development, variable measurement, identifying and dealing with confounding factors, and causality. The topics covered in this course are crucial to any research project, but this is only the first step towards you being able to conduct your own research.

Required Texts:

Philip H. Pollock III, *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. CQ Press.

Philip H. Pollock III, *A STATA Companion to Political Analysis*. CQ Press.

Readings: At the end of every class period I will assign the readings for the next class. These readings should be completed before the beginning of the next class period. The readings will include chapters from the required books as well as other reading materials that I will put on the course website. For the additional readings they will be posted on the day they are assigned, giving students a full week to read them.

Class Format: This course is for 3 credit hours split over two days: Tuesday 1:55PM-2:45PM and Thursday 1:55PM-3:50PM. During class time students should not be on their cell-phones and while laptops are allowed for note taking purposes, students will not be permitted to use their laptops for any other purpose during the class instruction time.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Class Attendance: Attendance is mandatory, and I will take attendance every day of the semester. I will give each student one unexcused absence. After the first unexcused absence I will begin taking off points for any unexcused absence afterwards. If you have an excused absence (illness, death in the family, etc.) please talk to me and give me proof of the excused absence (a doctor's note for example).

Participation: Participation is also mandatory. I expect students to participate in class discussions, to answer questions when asked, and to contribute whenever asked in class.

Research Paper: The most important part of this class will be the research paper. The goal of this class is for you to write your own original research paper (approximately 10-15 pages). This paper will be due at the end of the course in place of a final exam. This paper will require you to answer your own research question empirically with real data and to correctly interpret the results. The topic of this paper is entirely your choice. This paper is due, emailed to me, by May 1, 2019 at 10:00AM.

Required Meetings: While I encourage all my students to attend office hours I will require that students attend office hours for this course TWICE this semester. These meetings are required to ensure that your research project is on the right track and you are considering a research question that can be answered. The first meeting is required to take place before the midterm and the second meeting is required to take place before the last week of class.

Exams: There will be one exam given this semester; a midterm in the middle of the semester. The exam will cover the topics and readings for the first half of class. There will be no make-up exam unless the student as a legitimate excuse or talks to me before the exam is given.

Homework: Due to the mathematical component of this class I will require you to complete several homeworks this semester to ensure that you have mastered the math needed for you to complete the research paper. These homeworks will be assigned at the end of one class period and will be due at the beginning of class that next week.

Miscellaneous: Extra credit opportunities will be assigned throughout the semester, if you want extra points or to do extra work, these will be your opportunities to do so. Do not come to me at the end of the semester and ask for more extra credit chances, by that time you will have missed your chance.

Participation/Attendance	20%
Homeworks	10%
Office Meeting #1	5%
Office Meeting #2	5%
Midterm Exam	25%
Research Paper	35%
Total:	**100%**

Grade Breakdown:	**B+:** 87-89	**C+:** 77-79	**D+:** 67-69
A: 93-100	**B:** 83-86	**C:** 73-76	**D:** 63-66
A-: 90-92	**B-:** 80-82	**C-:** 70-72	**D-:** 60-62
			F: 0-59

Instructor Availability: I will hold office hours every week on Wed. 12-4pm & Thurs. 11-1pm in my office located in Anderson Hall, room 317. These office hours are subject to change and if any changes are made to my scheduled office hours I will inform the class. If you would like to meet with me outside of my normal office hours please email me at chase.meyer@ufl.edu.

Lab Sessions: Throughout the semester we will occasionally meet in a computer lab on campus instead of at our normal and regularly scheduled class location. These lab sessions will be announced ahead of time and will result in some shuffling of the schedule (the schedule below is all subject to change). The purpose of these lab sessions is to introduce you to the statistical software STATA which will be necessary for you to complete your final paper.

Special Needs and Academic Honesty: The University of Florida is committed to providing academic 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/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, a student should present his/her accommodation letter to me supporting a request for accommodations. The University encourages students with disabilities to follow these procedures as early as possible within the semester.

Academic honesty is of the upmost important in an academic setting like UF. You are welcome to study together but make sure the work you hand in is your own. I will not tolerate plagiarism or deception in any form. All work in this class is to be your own. Students who fail to abide by this policy, or who plagiarize, will receive a failing grade on the assignment.

Course Schedule (*subject to change*):

Week 1: Topic – The Science of Political Science

Tues. Jan. 8: Class Introduction
Readings Due: None
Thurs. Jan. 10: The Science of Political Science
Readings Due: None

Week 2: Topic – Basics of Research

Tues. Jan. 15: The Basics of Social Science Research
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. Intro
Thurs. Jan. 17: DISTRICT WORK PERIOD, NO CLASS
Readings Due: None

Week 3: Topic – Theories and Hypotheses

Tues. Jan. 22: The Basics of Social Science Research Cont.
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 3
Thurs. Jan. 24: Theories and Hypotheses
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 3 cont.

Week 4: Topic - Variables

Tues. Jan. 29: Concepts and Variables
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 1
Thurs. Jan. 31: Operationalization and Measurement of Variables
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 2

Week 5: Topic - Correlation

Tues. Feb. 5: Operationalization and Measurement of Variables Cont.
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 7
Thurs. Feb. 7: Causality and Correlations
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 7 cont.

Week 6: Topic – Statistical Inference

Tues. Feb. 12: Statistical Inference
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 6
Thurs. Feb. 14: Experiments
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 6 cont.

Week 7: Topic – Experiments

Tues. Feb. 19: Experiments Cont.
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 4
Thurs. Feb. 21: Sampling
Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 4 cont.

Week 8: Topic – Conducting Surveys

Tues. Feb. 26: Surveys

Readings Due: None

Thurs. Feb. 28: Exam #1

Readings Due: None

Week 9: Topic – SPRING BREAK

Tues. Mar. 5: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Readings Due: None

Thurs. Mar. 7: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Readings Due: None

Week 10: Topic – OLS Regression

Tues. Mar. 12: Spurious Relationships

Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 8

Thurs. Mar. 15: Ordinary Least Squares Regression

Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 8 cont.

Week 11: Topic – Dummy Variables

Tues. Mar. 19: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Cont.

Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 5

Thurs. Mar. 21: Dummy Variables and Multiple Regression

Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 5 cont.

Week 12: Topic – Multiple Regression

Tues. Mar. 26: Multiple Regression

Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 10

Thurs. Mar. 28: Multiple Regression Cont.

Readings Due: Pollock Chap. 10 cont.

Week 13: Topic – Faulty Research

Tues. Apr. 2: Bias and Faulty Research

Readings Due: None

Thurs. Apr. 4: The Curious Case of Michael LaCour

Readings Due: When Contact Changes Hearts and Minds

Week 14: Topic – Presenting Your Research

Tues. Apr. 9: Conferences, and Journal Submissions

Readings Due: None

Thurs. Apr. 11: Qualitative Research

Readings Due: None

Week 15: Topic - Presentations

Tues. Apr. 16: Other forms of Research

Readings Due: None

Thurs. Apr. 18: Presentations Day 1

Readings Due: None

Week 16: Topic – Presentations cont.

Tues. Apr. 23: Presentations Day 2

Readings Due: None

Thurs. Apr. 25: READING DAY, NO CLASS

Readings Due: None

PAPER DUE: Wed. May 1, 10:00AM