

POLS 2130P: Introduction to Political Analysis, Spring 2020

Department of Political Science and International Studies, Georgia Southern University

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00 - 11:30 am, Thursday
10:00 - 11:30 am, and by appointment
Class Location: 1024 Carroll Building
Course Time: 12:30 - 1:45 pm

Course Overview

This course is designed to acquaint students with research methods used by social scientists. Students will study terms, concepts and research design. Through a systematic analysis, this course will discuss how we know what we know. Political science explains why things happen, how they happen and when they will happen. The foundation in empirical knowledge is critical to make convincing claims about real world events in politics.

The first part introduces the relevance of political analysis and the empirical approach to political science. Part II discusses how to write in political science and particularly focuses on how to set up the research question and substantiate it with proper data and analysis. Part III offers a detailed discussion of qualitative methods used in political science and Part IV provides a brief introduction to quantitative studies in political science. This course is structured to give you a detailed overview of qualitative analysis, but at the same time offers you insights into the quantitative techniques as well so that you can compare and contrast between the two methods.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and evaluate the major approaches to research in political science.
- Think critically by utilizing appropriate theoretical constructs in both qualitative and quantitative research.
- Incorporate appropriate methodologies to analyze and explain political events.
- Apply knowledge by producing an original research design manuscript.
- Write about political phenomena by communicating their perspectives, empirical findings, interpretations and the conclusions of their research on political issues, policies, institutions, and behavior.

Course Format

The readings largely will be drawn from the assigned textbook, although I will regularly assign short readings from journals and other books. I hope that our sessions will be engaging, informative, and participatory. We will engage in a variety of activities including lectures, personal writing exercises, partner and group work, class discussions, video clips, demonstrations, problem-solving activities, and other critical thinking exercises. I value and will solicit your input on class activities both at the beginning of the semester as well as around midterm. I will make every reasonable effort to incorporate these ideas in the classroom.

Important dates

Course Add or Drop for Spring 2019: January 13-16. March 9 is the last day to withdraw without academic penalty; See the Policy for Limiting Individual Course Withdrawals for additional Information <http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/registrar/students/withdrawal/>

Requirements

1. Required Textbooks

A. Janet Johnson, H. T. Reynolds, and Jason Mycoff (2016) *Political Science Research Methods*, 8th Edition. Sage CQ Press.

The book is available at the campus book store and online. Alternatively, you can get the book from Henderson Library. In order to allow for shipping time, I have posted all of the first week's readings on the Folio website. After the first week, I expect you to have the book and bring it with you to class. In case you have problems let me know earlier.

2. Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are worth 50 points. I expect all students to attend class regularly. On many days, we will spend a few minutes writing about various topics from the text or lecture. Occasionally, you will hand in these writings for credit. These writing activities will facilitate critical thinking and will also guide some of our discussion. Furthermore, please finish the assigned readings *by the date* they appear in the syllabus. Read critically and be prepared to comment on the readings in class. I encourage you to ask questions and make relevant comments *at any time* during class. I will excuse 3 absences during the semester. Use it wisely. If you wish to be excused for subsequent absences based on medical conditions or other emergencies please submit proper documents or notify me earlier. Any absence above and beyond the excused absences will incur a 5 point deduction.

3. In-class Assignments

Over the course there will be 6 in-class assignments based on specific topics and is designed in a such a way that you learn some techniques of conducting research and collecting first hand data. Each of these assignment is worth 20 points, constituting a total of 120 points. The dates of some of these assignments will be announced in advance, while others might be impromptu in class assignments without prior notice. In case you miss it due to unexcused absence, you will not be able to make up for it.

4. Online Assignments

Over the course there will be two online assignments. These will be held on days that the instructor will be traveling for conferences and invited talks. These assignments are worth 30 points each for a total of 60 points.

5. Exams

There will be two exams worth 120 points (60 points each) of your final grade. The final exam is not comprehensive (although you should expect one general question about the overall theme of the course). The exams will consist of multiple choice and short answers. I will hand out study guides in advance of the midterm and final.

6. Research Design Paper and Presentation

All students will be required to complete a research design on a topic of their choice within one of the subfields of political science. Students must have their final topics approved by me; any paper submitted without prior approval will receive an automatic penalty.

The final research design papers should be between 5-8 pages in length. You will be writing this paper in stages. At the end of the semester, you will present your research design in class. Further guidelines for the paper will be discussed in class.

This assignment is worth 150 points including the presentation (50 points)

Grade Summary

- Attendance and Participation: 50 points
- In-class assignments: 120 points (20 x 6)
- Online assignments: 60 (30 x 2)
- Reserch Design Paper + presentation: 150 points
- Exams: 120 points
- Total: 500 points

Assessment Scale

A	100-90	B	89-80	C	79-70	D	69-60	F	59 or below
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Course Policies

1. Attendance

To successfully complete this course, attendance is mandatory. Any absences, other than the three allowed absences will result in grade point deduction (5 points will be deducted for each subsequent absence). Only extreme cases of emergency and prior notice will be considered.

2. Late Papers

Papers handed in after the deadline will receive a 5 point deduction (this means any time after the deadline), and then an additional 5 points for each day (24 hours), it is late. If there is a problem completing an assignment on time, please contact me well in advance of the due date.

3. Student Conduct and Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions. These distractions include: cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you need a cell phone for emergency purposes, leave it on vibrate. Entering and leaving are also significant sources of distraction. It is your responsibility to be on time and to stay for the entire period. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the instructor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade. Most importantly, class discussions of the issues in political science can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly. All members of the community are expected to communicate in a civil manner in their professional interaction at all times, both in and out of the classroom. Academic discourse, including discussion and argumentation, is to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified manner that is respectful of and understanding toward both peers and professors.

Scholarly Comments

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

Unacceptable Comments

- are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs.
- include interrupting the instructor or other students. Raise your hand and wait to be recognized.
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).
- may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner.
- include ignoring the instructor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom environment.

4. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold the Student Conduct Code as upheld by Georgia Southern University. The following list of 32 violations of the Student Conduct Code is an example of behaviors that may result in disciplinary action by the University. It is not to be regarded as all-inclusive. In the event that there arises ambiguity, inconsistency, or a need for further clarification regarding what constitutes a violation of the Student Conduct Code, the Dean of Students shall make the final determination. Any student or student organization found to be responsible for misconduct is subject to University sanctions.

Cheating

- submitting material that is not yours as part of your course performance
- using information or devices that are not allowed by the faculty
- obtaining and/or using unauthorized materials
- fabricating information, research, and/or results
- violating procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of an assignment, test, or other evaluation (among other things, use of mobile phones, tablets, laptops during exams is strictly prohibited)
- collaborating with others on assignments without the faculty's consent
- cooperating with and/or helping another student to cheat
- demonstrating any other forms of dishonest behavior

Plagiarism

- directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or indented format to identify them
- using sources of information (published or unpublished) without identifying them
- paraphrasing materials or ideas without identifying the source
- unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic material.

All members of the community recognize the necessity of being honest with themselves and with others. The integrity of the educational experience is diminished by cheating in class, plagiarizing, lying, and employing other methods of deceit. None of these should be used as a strategy to obtain a false sense of success. The need for honest relations among all members of the community is essential.

5. Disabilities

Georgia Southern University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities as required under federal law. Disabilities may include ADD or AD/HD, autism spectrum disorder, brain injury, chronic medical conditions, communication disorders, hearing loss, learning disabilities, mobility impairment, psychological disorders, visual impairment or temporary injuries. The purpose of disability accommodation is to provide equal access to the academic material and equal access to demonstrate mastery of the material. If you have a disability and need accommodations, please contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC). You will need to meet with a SARC staff member who can help you

gather documentation of your disability or refer you to an appropriate resource for assessment. Once documentation of the disability is approved, SARC staff will provide you with an accommodation letter detailing the approved accommodations which you should present to me so we can discuss and implement your accommodations. Disability accommodations work best starting at the beginning of the semester, but can be approved and started at any point in the semester. Accommodations start at the time the accommodation letter is presented to faculty within reasonable timelines; accommodations are not given retroactively. SARC on the Statesboro campus is located on the second floor of Cone Hall and the phone number is (912) 478-1566. SARC for Savannah and Liberty campuses is located on the second floor of Memorial College Center and the phone number is (912) 344-2572.

6. Syllabus Change

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Tentative Course and Reading Schedule

Johnson, Reynolds and Mycoff's book will be referred to as the *Methods Reader*. Readings marked with an * asterisk are outside readings. Copies are/will be available online at the Folio website.

Introduction to the Course

Tuesday, January 14

- Overview: Discuss syllabus, class policies and semester plans

Part I. Study of Political Science

1. Introduction to Political Analysis

Thursday, January 16

- Chapter 1 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 1-45.

2. Empirical Approaches in Political Science

Tuesday, January 21

- Chapter 2 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 46-60.

3. Critical Approaches in Political Science

Thursday, January 23

- Chapter 2 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 60-72.

Part II. Writing in Political Science

1. Puzzles and Setting up Research

Tuesday, January 28

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT AND DISCUSSION

- Chapter 3 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 74-81.
- * Baglione, Lisa A. (2015) *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Sage: CQ Press, Chapter 1. pp. 1-7.

Puzzles and Setting up Research (contd.)

Thursday, January 30

- *Baglione, Lisa A. (2015) *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Sage: CQ Press, Chapter 2. pp. 15-39

2. Literature Review

Tuesday, February 4

- Chapter 3 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 82-101.
- *Baglione, Lisa A. (2015) *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Sage: CQ Press, Chapter 4. pp. 75-91.

Thursday, February 6

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT AND DISCUSSION

- Analyzing, discussing and writing: Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. "Who fights? The determinants of participation in civil war." *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 436-455.

3. Theory and Hypothesis

Tuesday, February 11

- Chapters 4 and 5 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 104 - 165 .

4. Research Design: Making Causal Inferences

Thursday, February 13

- Chapter 6 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 166 - 211.

5. Population or Sample?

Tuesday, February 18

- Chapter 7 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 212 - 242.

6. Introduction to Methods of Political Analysis

Thursday, February 20

- Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. "A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research." *Political analysis* 14, no. 3 (2006): 227-249.

Tuesday, February 25

- Review and Discussion of Part I and II

Thursday, February 27

- EXAM I

Part III. Qualitative Methods in Political Science

1. Using Qualitative Methods in Political Science: Types Observation, Archival Research and Document Analysis

Tuesday, March 3

- Eckstein, Harry. "Case study and theory in political science." *Case study method* (2000): 119-164.
- Chapter 8 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 244-267.

Observation, Archival Research and Document Analysis (contd.)

Thursday, March 5

- Chapter 9 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 268-293.

3. Interview and Survey

Tuesday, March 10

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT AND DISCUSSION

- Chapter 10 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 294-336.
- Schafer, Fredric Charles. "Ordinary Language Interviewing," in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea edtd. *Interpretation and Methods*. pp. 150-160.

Interview and Survey (contd.)

Thursday, March 12

- Chapter 10 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 336-345.

March 17-20, 2020

SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 24 and Thursday, March 26

NO CLASS

- International Studies Association Annual Conference, Hawaii
- **Online Assignment due**

Tuesday, March 31

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT AND DISCUSSION

- Posner, Daniel N. "The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 04 (2004): 529-545.

4. Field Research

Thursday, April 2nd

- Kapiszewski, D., MacLean, L.M. and Read, B.L. (2015) *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles* Cambridge University Press. pp. 1- 34.

Tuesday, April 7th

Invited talk at Oklahoma State University

- Online Assignment due

Field Research (contd.)

Thursday, April 9th

- Conducting Field research: Challenges
- Case discussion: Conducting Research in India.

Tuesday, April 14th

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Part IV. Brief introduction to Quantitative Methods in Political Science

1. Making Sense of Quantitative Data

Thursday, April 16

- Chapter 11 *Methods Reader*. pp. 348-386

2. Introduction to Statistical Inference

Tuesday, April 21

- Chapter 12 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 388-410.

Writing Final Research Report

Thursday, April 23

- Chapter 15 in *Methods Reader*. pp. 584-604.
- *Baglione, Lisa A. (2015) *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Sage: CQ Press, Chapter 6 and 9.

Tuesday, April 28

- Student presentations on research design paper.

Thursday, April 30

- Student presentations on research design paper.

Tuesday, May 5

- FINAL EXAM
- 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm