

# **POLS-Y 387: Research Methods in Political Science (Spring 2014)**

Instructor: Andre P. Audette

Office: Wiekamp Hall 2213

Office Hours: Monday 3:30-5pm, Wednesday 2:30-4pm, or by appointment

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Meeting Times: Wednesdays 5:30-8pm, EA 1006

## **Course Description**

This course focuses on basic concepts of social science research. Students will become familiar with research techniques necessary for systematic analysis of social service systems, trends in social issues, and program effectiveness.

Prerequisite: Any 100 or 200 level political science course.

This course fulfills the statistics prerequisite for the Master of Public Affairs program.

## **Course Objectives**

This course will introduce the use of quantitative methods in the study of political science. Quantitative methodology can be applied to a number of issues relevant to the academic or professional practice of political science, from campaigns and elections and public opinion surveys to evaluating the causes of war or the effectiveness of various public policies. In this class, we will learn to collect, analyze, and present this type of data. This will be done in an applied setting, allowing you to develop the skills necessary for your own academic or professional research. You will produce an original research paper on a topic of interest to you, which may serve as a writing sample for potential employers or a graduate school application. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to help you think critically and empirically about important political issues and to analyze them accordingly.

## **Required Texts**

- Kellstedt, P.M. and G.D. Whitten (2013). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. (cited below as K&W).
- Baglione, L.A. (2012). *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (cited below as Baglione).
- Additional readings and relevant class materials will be made available throughout the semester on the course website (cited below as OnCourse).

## **Course Requirements**

To help you develop a strong introduction to quantitative methods in political science, the course will be graded through the following assessments:

Six Homework Assignments: 19%

Four Writing Assignments: 19%

Final Paper: 19%

Final Paper Presentation: 5%

Midterm Exam: 19%

Final Exam: 19%

### *Homework Assignments:*

Each homework assignment is due at the start of class on the day indicated on the syllabus. Please bring a paper copy of your homework to class. You are encouraged to work with others on sections of the assignments involving statistical analysis, but you are required to turn in your own assignment using your own sources to analyze and interpret the results.

### *Writing Assignments:*

The four short writing assignments (1-2 pages) are meant to provide you with the tools necessary to complete your final paper. They are due at the start of class on the day indicated on the syllabus. Please bring a paper copy of your assignment to class, unless otherwise indicated.

### *Final Paper:*

As part of your course evaluation, you will be required to complete a research paper on the political science topic of your choice. You are encouraged to complete the paper on a topic relevant to your interests in political science and long-term career goals. Papers should be long enough to appropriately address the issue at hand, though a good rule of thumb is 15 to 20 pages. Final papers are due at the start of class on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Please bring a paper copy of your final paper to class.

\*Note: as the deadline approaches for your final paper, you will be asked to provide brief (ungraded) progress reports in class. This will provide an opportunity for you to receive feedback from your instructor and your classmates as you complete your work and for the class to work out common problems together. You will receive at least one week of notice before these reports.

*Final Paper Presentation:*

The ability to present your research is highly important for both academic and professional careers. Therefore, each student will be required to deliver a professional (PowerPoint) presentation of your research to the class on April 30<sup>th</sup>. These will be brief presentations (5-7 minutes) with a short time for the rest of the class to ask questions or propose suggestions for your research.

*Midterm Exam:*

The midterm exam will be given on March 5<sup>th</sup> and will cover all material from the assigned readings and lectures for the first half of the semester. The exam will be in class and closed book, though you are allowed to bring a calculator. If you use a programmable calculator you must show me that you have cleared the memory before the exam.

The midterm will be a “no-fault exam” – that is, if you do better on the final than on the midterm, I will replace your midterm exam grade with your final exam grade when I calculate your overall grade for the semester. If your score is lower on the final, your midterm grade will stand. In order to take advantage of this policy, you must complete both the midterm and the final exams.

*Final Exam:*

The final exam for this course will be an in-class exam given during our regularly scheduled class time during finals week. The final exam is not cumulative, and will cover only the material from the second half of class. The exam will be closed book, though you are allowed to bring a calculator. If you use a programmable calculator you must show me that you have cleared the memory before the exam.

**\*Further information on these course requirements will be distributed in class\***

Grades will be calculated using the following scale:

<u>Letter Grade:</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade:</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
	<u>Grade:</u>		<u>Grade:</u>
A	93-100%	C	73-76.99%
A-	90-92.99%	C-	70-72.99%
B+	87-89.99%	D+	67-69.99%
B	83-86.99%	D	63-66.99%
B-	80-82.99%	D-	60-62.99%
C+	77-79.99%	F	0-59.99%

## **Course Policies**

### *Academic Honor Code:*

All students are expected to be familiar with and uphold the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct published by the Indiana University system (<http://www.iu.edu/~code/>). It is your responsibility to know of and avoid prohibited actions, such as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and academic or personal misconduct. Violations of these policies may result in serious academic penalty.

This course is meant to prepare you to produce original academic and professional research. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that can discredit your research abilities. Therefore, any student found to have violated these policies of academic integrity will receive a failing grade on the assignment and may be subject to further penalties by the university.

If you have any questions on avoiding plagiarism or any of the above policies, please do not hesitate to ask your instructor.

### *Late Work/Extra Credit:*

Another important part of academic and professional careers is the ability to meet deadlines and fulfill the requirements for your work. Therefore, late assignments will be subject to a half-letter grade reduction for every 24 hour period that the assignment is late. Additionally, there will be no opportunities for extra credit, as there are many opportunities in this class to bring your grade up with the scheduled assignments.

### *Attendance:*

Class attendance is expected, but not required, in this course. You are responsible for all of the material covered in lectures, and it is thus in your best interest to attend every class. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student or to contact the instructor before the next class to discuss the material you missed.

### *Laptops and Electronic Devices:*

You are permitted to use laptops in class for note-taking purposes only. To do otherwise detracts not only from your learning, but from other students' as well. In-class exercises may be completed on your personal laptop or in the university computer lab.

*Exceptions, Extensions, and Exemptions:*

Exceptions to the policies and schedule on this syllabus are granted only in the cases of a true emergency. Please make arrangements with your instructor if an emergency arises.

*Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:*

If you have a disability and need assistance, contact the director of the Office of Disability Support Services (Administration Building, Room 113 or call 574-520-4832). Once the director has provided a letter indicating the need for and type of accommodation, bring the letter to your instructor as soon as possible. For more information about services available to ISUB students with disabilities, visit <http://www.iusb.edu/~sbdss/>.

*Accommodations for Religious Observances:*

If any student will require academic accommodations for a religious observance, please provide me with a written request to consider a reasonable modification for that observance by the end of the second week of the course. Contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment to discuss the issue. If after discussion we reach no consensus, either party or both should seek the advice of the Department Chair or the Dean, and if no consensus is reached, then the advice of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs ("VCAA"). Either the instructor or the student may appeal the VCAA's decision to the Office of Affirmative Action within ten business days of the determination.

*Syllabus Changes:*

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus or the following schedule. Advance notice will be provided for any changes.

**Other Resources**

As your instructor, I am happy to assist you in meeting your goals for this semester. IUSB also has a number of other resources to assist you with this process. I will highlight a few here, and am willing to discuss any additional concerns you may have in my office hours or via email.

Library Research Consultations ([www.iusb.edu/library/forms/refapptform.php](http://www.iusb.edu/library/forms/refapptform.php))

Academic Centers for Excellence/Writer's Room (Administration Building, Room 122)

Career Services (Administration Building, Room 116)

Health and Wellness Center ([www.iusb.edu/wellness](http://www.iusb.edu/wellness) or call 574-520-5557)

Student Counseling Center (Administration Building, Room 130 or call 574-520-4125)

## **Course Outline and Schedule**

**\*Reading assignments are to be completed by the date under which they are listed.**

### *January 15: Introductions and Course Overview*

- Chapter 1 (K&W)
- Chapter 1 (Baglione)

### *January 22: Theories and Hypotheses*

- **Due: Homework #1**
- Chapter 2 (K&W)
- Chapter 2 (Baglione)

### *January 29: Causality*

- **Due: Writing Assignment #1**
- Chapter 3 (K&W)
- Chapter 3 (Baglione)

### *February 5: Research Design*

- **Due: Homework #2**
- Chapter 4 (K&W)
- Chapter 4 (Baglione)

### *February 12: Measurement*

- **Due: Homework #3**
- Chapter 5 (K&W)
- OnCourse Reading #1

### *February 19: Descriptive Statistics*

- Chapter 6 (K&W)
- OnCourse Reading #2

### *February 26: Probability Theory and Hypothesis Testing*

- **Due: Writing Assignment #2 via email by 11:59pm on March 1<sup>st</sup>**
- Review Chapter 6 (K&W)
- Chapter 5 (Baglione)
- OnCourse Reading #3

### *March 5: Midterm Exam*

- **Due: In-Class Midterm**

*March 12: Bivariate Hypothesis Testing*

- Chapter 7 (K&W)
- Chapter 6 (Baglione)
- OnCourse Reading #4

*March 19: Spring Break – NO CLASS*

*March 26: Bivariate Regression Model*

- **Due: Writing Assignment #3**
- Chapter 8 (K&W)
- Chapter 7 (Baglione)
- OnCourse Reading #5

*April 2: Multiple Regression Model*

- **Due: Homework #4**
- Chapter 9 (K&W)
- Chapter 8 (Baglione)
- OnCourse Reading #6

*April 9: More Multiple Regression*

- **Due: Writing Assignment #4**
- Chapter 10 (K&W)
- Chapter 9 (Baglione)
- OnCourse Reading #7

*April 16: Extensions of Multivariate Regression*

- **Due: Homework #5**
- Chapter 11 (K&W)
- OnCourse Reading #8

*April 23: Multivariate Regression Applications*

- **Due: Homework #6**
- Chapter 12 (K&W)
- OnCourse Reading # 9

*April 30: Paper Presentations*

- **Due: Final Paper**

*May 7: Final Exam*

- **Due: In-Class Final**