Course Title: PSC 150: Introduction to Political Analysis

Instructor: Dr. David Fleming
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Class Information: Fall 2015
Tues./Thurs. 1:00 – 2:15, Johns Hall Room 109
Wed. 3:30 – 4:45, Johns Hall Room 203
Course Website: FU Moodle (courses.furman.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30 – 11:30
Thursday 2:30 – 3:30
and BY APPOINTMENT

Required Course Materials:


2 Green Books (for the midterm and final exams)

Other materials distributed by the instructor in class or on Moodle

Students are expected to read a major national newspaper on a daily basis (e.g., The New York Times, The Washington Post, or The Wall Street Journal).

Course Description:
This course provides an introduction to the systematic study of politics. Students will learn to ask questions and approach problems through the lens of a political scientist. Further, students will gain the skills necessary to investigate and analyze political phenomena. The tools acquired in this class will be useful in future courses, as well as increasing students’ understanding of political information in their role as informed citizens.

Students will learn about some of the major approaches to the study of politics. We will discuss the research process and ethics in research. We then will review the many ways in which political scientists tackle political questions. Students will get hands-on experience analyzing data and will perform their own statistical analyses.
Assessments:
Assessments in this course measure both factual and analytical learning. Students will be expected to apply what they have learned in class to current political events and their own research topic. In order to achieve a high grade, students are expected to demonstrate a clear writing and presentation style. All assignments should be completed on your own.

Research Question and Data Source
Description of your research question, interest in the topic, and a review of your data source

Literature Review
Review of appropriate research with at least 4 academic sources

Univariate & Bivariate Analysis Assignment
Present univariate and bivariate analyses

Peer Review
A review of another student’s paper

Final Paper
Paper of original research

Observation Paper
Attend a political event and write a brief report on what you observe

Midterm Exam
Statistics problems, identification, and essay

Cumulative Final Exam
Statistics problems, identification, and essay

Class Participation & Assignments
Quizzes, assignments, informed participation, etc.

Total 100 Points

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

Incompletes will only be given in extremely rare circumstances and are up to the discretion of the instructor.

Academic Dishonesty
Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. In instances of academic dishonesty, students will be given an automatic 0 on the assignment (at a minimum) and will be prosecuted under Furman’s academic guidelines. In my time at Furman, I have failed students in my courses for academic dishonesty. In this course, I reserve the right to use turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Once submitted, your papers will become part of the online database.
According to university policy, “students, faculty, and administrators are expected to promote a culture of academic integrity. Students have the ultimate responsibility for knowing Furman’s policy and expectations regarding academic integrity, and for behaving honorably in their academic work. Ignorance of what constitutes academic misconduct is not an acceptable defense for violating the community standard.” If you have any questions about academic dishonesty or proper citation techniques, please contact me. More information on academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism is available at: http://www.furman.edu/integrity.

**Attendance/Late Work Policies**

Good performance in this class requires consistent attendance and participation. Every student is allowed three unexcused absences. For each day above three that the student is absent, the student’s final grade will drop by one-third of a letter grade. Excused absences must be cleared by the Dean’s office, and I must be notified beforehand. If you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for any announcements and material covered during your absence, and you should get notes from another student in class. If you are late for class, it counts as an unexcused absence.

All work is due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late. A paper handed in after class on the due date will be penalized one-third of a letter grade.

**Students in Need of Special Accommodations**

Students in need of special accommodations should contact the Student Office for Accessibility Resources and should meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

**Community Standards**

This is a discussion-based course. Political discussions can sometimes grow contentious. All students and the instructor must be respectful of the views or opinions of others in the classroom. If you ever feel that the classroom environment is discouraging your participation, please contact me and we can work to fix it.

A respectful and participatory classroom also means that students should be focused on the class material and discussion. **All cell phones and computers must be turned off and put away before you enter the classroom.** If the use of a computer is part of your academic accommodations from the Student Office for Accessibility Resources, please see me at the beginning of the semester. You may not record any part of the class unless you have received permission from the instructor. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who do not follow these rules will receive low participation grades.
THE SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS
ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Course Schedule
All assignments and readings are due on the date listed below.
***Note: Some of our classes will be in the computer lab.

Political Questions
Tuesday, Aug. 25: Introduction
Wednesday, Aug. 26: No Class
Thursday, Aug. 27: The Science of Politics?
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 1 (skim) & 2; MS: Chap 1

Tuesday, Sept. 1: Causality: How do we know what we (think we) know?
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 6 (pg. 165-178); MS: Chap. 2 & 8

Building Blocks
Thursday, Sept. 3: Questions, Hypotheses, & Variables
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 3 (pg. 74-77) & 4
   **Due**: Correlation/Causation Newspaper Analysis

Tuesday, Sept. 8: Measurement
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 5 (pg. 127-151), Additional Readings on Moodle

Writing a Research Paper
Wednesday, Sept. 9: Writing a Literature Review
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 3

Data Collection
Thursday, Sept. 10: Sampling
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 7

Tuesday, Sept. 15: Survey Construction
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 10 (pg. 306-341); MS Chap. 7

Wednesday, Sept. 16: Finding Datasets
Thursday, Sept. 17: Document Analysis
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 9; MS Chap. 9

Tuesday, Sept. 22: Document Analysis

Wednesday, Sept. 23: SPSS work
Thursday, Sept. 24: Observation & Field Research
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 8; MS Chap. 4
   **Due**: Document Analysis Report
Data Analysis
Tuesday, Sept. 29: Univariate Analysis
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 11 (pg. 354-376)
   **Due**: Listen to podcast
   **Due**: Research Question and Data Source Assignment
Wednesday, Sept. 30: SPSS Work
Thursday, Oct. 1: Hypothesis Testing
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 12; Additional Readings on Moodle

Tuesday, Oct. 6: Hypothesis Testing
Wednesday, Oct. 7: Informal, Optional Review
Thursday, Oct. 8: **Midterm Exam**

Tuesday, Oct. 13: No Class: Fall Break
Wednesday, Oct. 14: SPSS work
Thursday, Oct. 15: Bivariate Analysis

Tuesday, Oct. 20: Bivariate Analysis
Wednesday, Oct. 21 SPSS work
Thursday, Oct. 22: Multivariate Analysis
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 13 (pg. 490-521) & 14 (pg. 527-548, 550-556)
   **Due**: Literature Review

Tuesday, Oct. 27: Multivariate Analysis
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 14 (pg. 568-578)
Wednesday, Oct. 28: SPSS work
Thursday, Oct. 29: Multivariate Analysis
   **Due**: Observation Paper (+5 points)

Research Ethics
Tuesday, Nov. 3: Research Ethics
   **Readings**: MS Chap. 12
   **Due**: IRB Training Certificate
Wednesday, Nov. 4: SPSS work

Research Design
Thursday, Nov. 5: Research Design
   **Readings**: JR Chap. 6 (pg. 165-207); Additional Readings on Moodle
   **Due**: Univariate & Bivariate Analysis Assignment

Tuesday, Nov. 10: The Experimental Method
   **Readings**: MS Chap. 10; Additional Readings on Moodle
Wednesday, Nov. 11: SPSS work
Thursday, Nov. 12: Examples of Research Designs
   **Readings**: MS Chap. 3 & 6
Tuesday, Nov. 17: More Examples of Research Design
Wednesday, Nov. 18: SPSS work
Thursday, Nov. 19: Even More Examples of Research Designs

**Readings:** Additional Readings on Moodle

**More on Data Collection & Approaches to the Study of Politics**

Tuesday, Nov. 24 Game Theory

**Due:** Research Paper Draft to Peer Reviewer

Wednesday, Nov. 25: No Class: Thanksgiving Break
Thursday, Nov. 26: No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, Dec. 1: Elite Interviews

**Readings:** JR Chap. 10 (pg. 341-347); MS Chap. 5

Wednesday, Dec. 2: SPSS work

**Due:** Peer Review Assignment

Thursday, Dec. 3 Reviewing and Critiquing Political Science Research

**Readings:** Example article on Moodle

**Due:** Final Research Paper (electronic and paper copy) on **Monday, Dec. 8** by 5:00pm

Tuesday, Dec. 9: Review for Final Exam

**Due:** Observation Paper

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 15 12:00 – 2:30PM, Johns Hall, Room 109**

(The final exam time and date are nonnegotiable, so make your travel plans accordingly.)