Course Description:
Ever wondered why we call it Political Science rather than just Politics? This course will help you answer that question. It 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. If we’re successful, you’ll become political scientists, at least for the semester.

Required Course Materials:


--Two Green Books (for the midterm and final exams)

--FLASH DRIVE (to save data and analysis from SPSS when using Citrix—and yes, you’ll know what that means before the end of the semester.)

--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 Evaluation: Grades will be based on the following assignments. They are described in greater detail later on the syllabus. All assignments must be completed to pass the course. 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. Students are expected to demonstrate a clear writing and presentation style. All assignments should be completed on your own.

--Research Question and Data Source (5 Points): Description of your research question, interest in the topic, and a review of your data source. Due Sept. 29

--Literature Review (Theory Paper) (5 Points): Review of appropriate research with at least 4 academic sources. Due Oct. 20

--Univariate & Bivariate Analysis Assignment (5 Points): Present univariate and bivariate analyses. Due Nov. 15
--Peer Review (5 Points): A review of another student’s paper. Due Nov 30

--Final Paper (20 Points): Paper of original research. Due Dec 5

--Observation Paper (10 Points): Attend a political event and write a brief report on what you observe. Due Nov 1


--Class Participation & Assignments (10 Points): Quizzes, assignments, informed participation, etc. Learning is collaborative, and you’ll learn more and better if you come prepared to ask and answer questions.

Grading scale: Plus grades end in 8 or 9 (88-89= B+). Minus grades end in zero or 1 (90-91= A-).

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. If it occurs, it will result in a penalty ranging from a reduction of one-letter grade to a zero on the assignment or failure in the course, depending on the severity. If students are unsure what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, they should talk to the professor.

Electronic devices in class: Cell phones or other electronic devices including laptops and ipads should be turned off as soon as students walk in the classroom. Use the time before class to get to know your classmates. If the professor hears a phone in class or sees a student using it for any reason after class begins, she will deduct 5 points from the student’s participation grade. If it happens a second time, the student will receive an F for participation. During exams, students should put their cell phones in their book bag or purse or leave them at the front of the room with the professor. If the professor sees a cell phone in the student’s hand once the exam begins (regardless of the reason), the student will fail the exam. 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.

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.

All work is due at the beginning of class unless otherwise stated. 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.


Course Schedule
All assignments and readings are due on the date listed below.
***Note: Wed. classes will be in the computer lab (JH 203), 7:00-8:15 p.m.

Political Questions
Tues., Aug. 23: Introduction
Wed., Aug. 24: No Class
Thurs., Aug. 25: The Science of Politics?
   Readings: JRM Chap. 1 (skim) & 2; MS: Chap 1

Tues., Aug. 30: Causality: How do we know what we (think we) know?
   Readings: JRM Chap. 6 (pg. 166-179); MS: Chap 2 & 8
Wed., Aug. 31: No Class
Thurs. Sept. 1: Setting up Citrix. Bring laptop and flash drive to class.

Building Blocks
Tues., Sept. 6: Questions, Hypotheses, & Variables
   Readings: JRM Chap. 3 (pg. 74-78) & 4
   Due: Correlation/Causation Newspaper Analysis
Wed., Sept. 7: Writing a Literature Review
   Readings: JRM Chap. 3
Thurs., Sept. 8: Measurement
   Readings: JRM Chap. 5 (pg. 128-155), Additional Readings on Moodle

Research Ethics & Writing a Research Paper
Tues., Sept. 13: Research Ethics
   Readings: MS Chap. 12; Additional Readings on Moodle
   Due: IRB Training Certificate

Data Collection
Thurs., Sept. 15: Survey Construction
   Readings: JRM Chap. 10 (pg. 294-337); MS Chap. 7

Tues., Sept. 20: Sampling
   Readings: JRM Chap. 7
Wed., Sept. 21: Exit Poll Preparation
   Readings: Reading on Moodle
Thurs., Sept. 22: Document Analysis
   Readings: JRM Chap. 9; MS Chap. 9
   Due: Survey Question Assignment (upload to Box by 5:00pm)

Tues., Sept. 27: Observation & Field Research (Dr. Kaup guest lecture)
   Readings: JRM Chap. 8; MS Chap. 4
Wed., Sept. 28: SPSS work

Data Analysis
Thurs., Sept. 29: Univariate Analysis
   Readings: JRM Chap. 11 (pg. 348-367)
   Due: Research Question and Data Source Assignment
Tues., Oct. 4: Hypothesis Testing  
   **Readings:** JRM Chap. 12  
Wed., Oct. 5: Informal, Optional Review  
Thurs., Oct. 6: **Midterm Exam**  

Tues., Oct. 11: Hypothesis Testing  
   **Readings:** Additional Readings on Moodle  
Wed., Oct. 12: SPSS work  
Thurs., Oct. 13: Bivariate Analysis  
   **Readings:** JRM Chap. 13 (pg. 412-431, 441-465, 467-478, 492-496)  

Tues., Oct. 18: No Class: Fall Break  
Wed., Oct. 19: SPSS work  
Thurs., Oct. 20: Bivariate Analysis  
   **Due:** Literature Review  

Tues., Oct. 25: Multivariate Analysis  
   **Readings:** JRM Chap. 13 (pg. 478-496; 499-513) & 14 (pg. 516-547)  
Wed., Oct. 26: SPSS work  
Thurs., Oct. 27: Multivariate Analysis  
   **Readings:** JRM Chap. 14 (pg. 559-563)  

Tues., Nov. 1: Multivariate Analysis  
   **Due:** Observation Paper  
Wed., Nov. 2: SPSS work  

**Research Design**  
Thurs., Nov. 3: Research Design  
   **Readings:** JRM Chap. 6; Additional Readings on Moodle  

Tues., Nov. 8: **Election Day!! Exit Poll Activity!!**  
Wed., Nov. 9: Exit Poll Debrief & SPSS work  
Thurs., Nov. 10: SPSS work (class in computer lab)  

Tues., Nov. 15: The Experimental Method (Dr. Smith guest lecture)  
   **Readings:** MS Chap. 10; Additional Readings on Moodle  
   **Due:** Univariate & Bivariate Analysis Assignment  
Wed., Nov. 16: SPSS work  
Thurs., Nov. 17: Examples of Research Designs  
   **Readings:** MS Chap. 3 & 6  

**Interesting Odds and Ends**  
Tues., Nov. 22: Reviewing and Critiquing Political Science Research  
   **Readings:** Example article on Moodle  
   **Due:** Rough draft to peer reviewer  
Wed., Nov. 23: No Class: Thanksgiving Break  
Thurs., Nov. 24: No Class: Thanksgiving Break
Tues., Nov. 29: Elite Interviews  
**Readings:** JRM Chap. 10 (pg. 338-344); MS Chap. 5

Wed., Nov. 30: SPSS work  
**Due:** Peer Review Assignment

Thurs., Dec. 1: Graphs and Tables  
**Readings:** JRM p. 369-384

Mon., Dec. 5: **Due:** Final Research Paper (electronic and paper copy) by 5:00 p.m.  
Tues., Dec. 6: Review for Final Exam

**FINAL EXAM:** Friday, December 9, 12:00 – 2:30 p.m., Johns Hall, Room 109  
(The professor cannot change the date and time of the final exam.)

**Original Research Paper Assignment**

**Goal:** The goal of this assignment is for you to apply the knowledge and skills learned in this class to an important question in political science. This is an opportunity for you to examine political questions that are of particular importance to you. This is not merely a paper summarizing the research in the field. Rather, you will be expected to perform quantitative, original analyses (including regression), using the SPSS program. This is not an opinion paper.

**Assignment Guidelines:** Stick to the word count specified for each assignment. For all assignments, include your name and the word count below it. All assignments should be double spaced, use 12 point Times New Roman font, and include page numbers. Upload all assignments to your box folder and use the file name “yourlastname assignment#” (for example, Vinson 1). No hard copies needed unless otherwise stated.

Students are expected to complete these assignments independently. Do not plagiarize. Don’t do it. 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. If you have questions about proper citation methods, please contact me.

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.

**Assignment 1:** Research Question and Data Source Assignment (600-750 words). Due September 29.  
Describe your research question, and provide the hypothesis or hypotheses that you will examine. By now you should have found the dataset(s) that you will use for your paper. Describe the dataset, and detail why it is appropriate for your research question. What are your units of analysis? You should explain the important variables in your analysis and how they are measured in your dataset. What are the levels of measurement for your variables? What are the limitations of your data?
Assignment 2: Literature Review (Theory Paper) (1100-1400 words, including bibliography). Due October 20.
Provide a synthesis of the appropriate research on your topic. The goal is to explain what we already know about your topic and the theory that might explain or guide your own investigation of it. Focus on the important theories and causal mechanisms. What does the literature say about how or why your independent variables affect your dependent variable(s)? Explain how your research is related to this literature. How does your research update or improve on previous work?

You must cite at least 4 academic books or journal articles. You should be looking for the most important works on your research topic. These should be primary sources. Be sure to restate your research question. All work should be properly cited. For examples of the proper citation method, see articles in the American Political Science Review and the description on Moodle (EXAMPLE APSR Citations.pdf) or ask me.

Assignment 3: Univariate & Bivariate Analysis (650-950 words). Due November 15.
Present your univariate and bivariate analyses. You should describe the levels of measurement for your variables. It should be clear how each of your variables is operationalized. Correctly perform and interpret the univariate and bivariate analyses. Provide tables or figures that present your results. Most papers will have between four and eight tables. Be sure to restate your research question.

Assignment 4: Draft of Paper (3400-4000 words, including bibliography). Due November 22.
An electronic copy of your paper is due to me and to your peer reviewer (assigned by me). This should not be your first or “rough” draft. It should be your second or third draft. The more polished your paper is the better feedback you will receive from your reviewer. Incomplete papers will result in lower grades on your final paper.

Paper structure:
- Title of the paper
- Abstract
  - A one paragraph summary of your paper. It should include your research question, a description of your analysis and results, and a summary of your conclusions.
- Introduction
  - Explain your research question and why it is an important topic for the reader to understand.
- Literature review (theory)
  - Provide a synthesis of the appropriate research on your topic. Explain how your research is related to this literature.
- Hypotheses
  - Clearly describe your hypotheses.
- Data and Methods
  - Describe the dataset that you are using, as well as the variables that you examine. How are they measured? Describe the statistical techniques you are using.
- Analysis and Results
  - Present your analysis in a clear fashion. Provide the appropriate maps, tables, or figures. Explore alternative explanations. Describe how you reached your conclusions.
- Conclusions
o Summarize your results. Discuss how they fit in with the literature. Describe how future studies could improve on what you did. Discuss implications if appropriate. Answer the “so what?” question.

Assignment 5: Peer Review Assignment (700-800 words). Due November 30. Review the paper of one your classmates. I will assign the paper to you. There are two parts of the assignment. First, you will proofread the paper and provide grammatical corrections on the paper. You can use “track changes” or make your edits on a hard copy of the paper. Second, you will provide a peer review in which you provide substantive feedback. Review the rubric below and highlight areas for improvement. What questions do you have after reading the paper? What is unclear? What is missing? What about alternative explanations? Also comment on the strengths of the paper.

Assignment 6: Final Paper (3400-4000 words including bibliography). Due Monday, December 5 by 5:00pm.

Three versions of your paper are due on December 5.
1. You should upload one version to Box.
2. Hand in a paper copy.
3. Email a copy of the paper to Lori Schoen. In the email, list the course number (PSC 150-02) & the date. Make sure your name is not on the paper.

You will be graded on how well you frame your research question, review the appropriate literature in political science, perform and interpret your analyses, and form conclusions. Students should reference course materials in their papers when appropriate. All papers should be properly cited and well-written. The completeness of your draft to the peer reviewer will also be taken into account.

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<td>Research question unclear</td>
<td>Research question is adequately articulated, but with insufficient review of the relevant literature</td>
<td>Research question is well articulated, with sufficient review of the relevant literature</td>
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<td>The paper is well written and constructed from start to finish, but still contains a handful of typos and grammatical errors.</td>
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