

POS 3703.004  
Professor: Angela D. Nichols  
Spring 2018, 3 credit hours  
Office: SO 384D  
Meeting Time: T,R 12:30–1:50pm  
Office Hours: F 11am–3pm Meeting Place: ED 337  
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## **RI: Research Methods in Political Science**

### **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the scope and methodology of political analysis. It includes introductory examinations of research design, survey research, computer applications, data analysis, and library research. This course is required for all political science majors as a research tool and should be completed by the end of students' junior year. The goal of the course is to familiarize students with methods of research and statistics in the social sciences generally, and political science specifically. Information regarding the philosophy of science and various methods of applying the scientific method to social science questions is covered. The foundational skills of logic, critical thinking, and scientific inquiry are essential to this course. Students will hone and develop these skills over the course of the semester. Students are also required to demonstrate content knowledge, core principles, and research skills in political science. Additionally, students are required to formulate and test falsifiable research questions. Students will develop and complete a plan of action—or research design—guided by the professor in this class. As such, multiple iterations of assignments are designed to assist with this process and help students produce and present a rigorous final paper. There are no prerequisites for this course.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

This course is considered a research intensive course. Research projects are expected to achieve all six of the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

SLO 1: Knowledge. Students are expected to demonstrate content knowledge, and knowledge of core principles and skills in political science. They should be familiar with language specific to the discipline, as well as scientific inquiry.

SLO 2: Formulate Questions. Students are required to formulate research questions, scholarly or creative problems in a manner appropriate to the planning discipline. Students will identify a research puzzle from which a series of research questions are identified. Further, students will examine one of the identified questions throughout the course.

SLO 3: Plan of Action. Students are expected to develop and implement a plan of action to address research and inquiry questions or scholarly problems.

SLO 4: Critical Thinking. Students are expected to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate information, their own work, and the work of others. Students will be required to complete

assignments in logic and critical thinking. Students will also engage in self and peer review sessions.

SLO 5: Ethical Conduct. Students are expected to identify significant ethical issues in research and inquiry and/or address them in practice. Students will be asked to identify potential ethical issues associated with conducting research in the social sciences.

SLO 6: Communication. Students will convey all aspects of their research and inquiry (processes and/or products) in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes. Students will present during class, but are also encouraged to present at OURI Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium [http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad\\_symposium.php](http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad_symposium.php).

### **Assessment**

This course contains an assignment or multiple assignments designed to help students conduct research and inquiry at an intensive level. If this class is selected to participate in the university-wide assessment program, students will be asked to complete a consent form and submit electronically some of their research assignments for review. Visit the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI) for additional opportunities and information at <http://www.fau.edu/ouri>.

### **Florida Atlantic University's Undergraduate Research Symposium**

Students are encouraged to submit their research projects to the Undergraduate Research Symposium held at Florida Atlantic University (Boca Raton campus) each Spring Semester. Use the following link for information: [http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad\\_symposium.php](http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad_symposium.php).

### **Responsible Conduct of Research**

It is also strongly recommended that students complete the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) certificate through the CITI training of academic research on-line at <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/events/citi-training.php>. Students are also encouraged to attend FAU OURI work-shops on topics related responsible conduct of research. Information on OURI workshops can be found here [http://www.fau.edu/ouri/student\\_workshops.php](http://www.fau.edu/ouri/student_workshops.php).

### **Course Materials**

There is one book required for this class:

Pollock III, P.H., 2015. The Essentials of Political Analysis. Cq Press.

All other reading assignments typically come from academic and policy journals, and are available from three sources:

my website

google scholar

directly from an online provider (typically JSTOR)

JSTOR is likely your best option to access the assigned material. JSTOR is an academic journal service that FAU provides for us. Access is free from any FAU computer (e.g., in computer labs or dorms, or via FAU wireless networks); you can search for individual articles by author or title, or browse by journal name and issue at [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org). Additionally, you can

access the FAU electronic journal library via <http://www.fau.edu/library/ecollect/ejournals.php>.

The remaining readings are available online, via links provided in this syllabus. Be sure to access these readings early in the semester, because pages on the Web may move or disappear at inconvenient times.

### **Student Assignments & Responsibilities**

*Exam:* Twenty-five percent of your grade will be determined by an exam. The exam will be a combination of short answer, multiple choice, and essay and take place about half-way through the semester. This midterm exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

*Make-up Exams:* If you cannot attend one of the exams, you need to notify me as soon as possible by email and in person. Make-up exams will only be given to students who have been unable to sit for the examination as a consequence of illness requiring medical care, required university activities, or a personal emergency of a serious nature. To be excused without penalty, documentation and/or prior permission is required. Additionally, an alternative exam may be provided. I reserve the right to assign a short answer or essay make-up exam in place of the standard exam for this class.

*Article Length Research Paper:* You must also complete a research paper for this course. The paper will be broken down into component parts with multiple due dates and peer review sessions. These assignments will comprise your homework grade for the course and be equal to 15% of your final grade. These assignments are designed to help you familiarize yourself with the scientific method as applied to social science. It also allows you to learn from your mistakes and adjust before the final product is due. Further, a rough draft worth 10% of your final grade is also due prior to the final draft. Again, this is intended to allow you to improve your work and improve your grade. More information regarding this assignment will be distributed throughout the course. The final version of this assignment is worth 25% of your final grade. All of this combined is worth 50% of your final grade. **THIS ASSIGNMENT IS NOT OPTIONAL AND MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE IN THIS COURSE.**

*Attendance & Participation:* The topics and issues we will cover throughout the semester can be most clearly understood through discussion and the evaluation of alternative perspectives. In other words, participation increases active learning. While this course will have a substantial lecture component, there will also be opportunities for participation in classroom exercises and discussions. Thus, attending class and participating regularly are key to achieving the course objectives discussed above.

To this end, attendance and participation is worth 25% of your final grade. I will take attendance daily throughout the semester. I will also take note of how regularly you participate in class, both in productive and distractive ways. Your base attendance and participation grade will be based upon the proportion of times you are in class. Then, I will adjust that grade up or down depending on your participation. To maximize this part of your grade, it is highly recommended that you come to class prepared (e.g., having done the assigned readings) and willing to participate. Merely showing up and occupying a seat will not constitute full

participation. Other ways to lose participation points include but are not limited to: being a disruption to others (e.g., side conversations with friends, reading for other classes), repeatedly failing to answer a question if called upon, and not participating in classroom discussions and exercises in a productive manner.

### **Grading & Evaluation**

Grades are assigned in accordance with the following scale:

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

### **Other Policies**

Lecture notes and slides will not be posted online or otherwise handed out to students under any circumstances.

Materials handed out in class by the instructor (e.g., review sheets, simulation materials, etc.) will under no circumstances be distributed electronically or outside of class.

Allow a reasonable amount of time for a response when you send me an email. Do not email me an hour before an exam and expect me to respond to or receive the email before class. I will not answer questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus or accessing blackboard via email. I encourage students to utilize office hours to answer their questions whenever possible.

Grades will not be released to any student via email, phone, or other electronic means. If you wish to discuss your grades, report to the appropriate office hours or make an appointment, and come prepared with your university identification.

You can expect to be graded solely on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, composition, spelling, and grammar.

### **Code of Academic Integrity**

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001 or [http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg\\_4.001\\_5-26-10\\_FINAL.pdf](http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf).

### **Accommodations (SAS)**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodation due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student

Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses: Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter. However disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, see <http://osd.fau.edu/>

### **University Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center**

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

### **Classroom Conduct**

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: laptops, cell phones, and the like, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you use a laptop to take notes during class, turn off the sound and restrain yourself from unnecessary surfing. I reserve the right to suspend the use of laptops if this policy is abused. If you need a 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 class. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the professor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Class discussions of political issues can often stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. I ask all of you to respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you do not agree with them. In simple terms, that means not interrupting other students while they are speaking and not verbally attacking them for their beliefs. While I believe that it is essential to connect theory to current events, I will cut short debates of current events that do not enhance the understanding of course concepts. I expect you to offer substantive comments and questions when appropriate in class. I also expect you not to dominate a discussion, but to allow free discussion and

exchange of ideas.

### **Course Content & Schedule**

The following is an approximate calendar of class readings and assignments. Please complete each week's reading prior to the first class that week. Every attempt will be made to adhere to this schedule. However, departures from the schedule may occasionally occur. Exam and activity dates should be considered firm, and you should arrange your personal schedule to be present at the appointed dates and times.

#### *Class 1: Introduction*

Introduction, no required reading

#### *Class 2: Logic, Deductive Reasoning, and Scientific Inquiry*

Silver Blaze

Logic Homework Assigned

#### *Class 3: Overview of Research Design*

Enterline's Guide

Pollock Chapter 4

Logic Homework Due

#### *Class 4: Puzzles, Questions, & Inquiry*

Start Research Projects

Research Question Exercise due  
annotated bib assigned

#### *Class 5: Puzzles Cont'd*

Fisman, Ray, and Edward Miguel. "Cultures of Corruption: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets."

Putnam, R.D., 1995. Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6, pp.65-78.

keep working on annotated bib

#### *Class 6: Theory Building*

Annotated Bibliography Due Monday, January 29 at 8:00am (upload to canvas)

Pugh, Jeff. 2005. "Democratic Peace Theory: A Review and Evaluation." <http://www.cemproc.org/democraticpeaceCWPS.pdf>

Gurr, T.R., 1993. Why minorities rebel: A global analysis of communal mobilization and conflict since 1945. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), pp.161-201. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019251219301400203>

*Class 7: Theory Cont'd*

Gurr, T.R., 1993. Why minorities rebel: A global analysis of communal mobilization and conflict since 1945. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), pp.161-201. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019251219301400203>

Enterline's Guide

*Class 8: Theory Building And Hypotheses*

Hudson, V.M., Caprioli, M., Ballif-Spanvill, B., McDermott, R. and Emmett, C.F., 2009. The heart of the matter: The security of women and the security of states. *International Security*, 33(3), pp.7-45.

Olson, Mancur, Jr., 1971. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (Read Introduction and Chapter 1, link posted on personal website)

*Class 9: Midterm Review*

Peer Review

Proposal Due (2-3 pages)

Midterm Review

*Class 10: Midterm*  
MIDTERM EXAM

*Class 11: Hypotheses and Research Design*  
Enterline Guide

Pollock Chapter 3

LR due (2 copies in class and via canvas)

Peer review

Theory and Hypothesis Exercise Assigned

*Class 12: Research Design and Measurement*  
Pollock Chapters 1 and 2

DeMeritt, J.H. and Young, J.K., 2013. A political economy of human rights: Oil, natural gas, and state incentives to repress. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 30(2), pp.99-120.

Geddes, Barbara. How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. <http://www.dobing.info/pdf/0002142211.pdf>

*Class 13: Surveys and Ethical Practices in Research*  
Pollock Chapters 1 and 2

Gibson, J.L., 2002. Truth, justice, and reconciliation: Judging the fairness of amnesty in South Africa. *American Journal of Political Science*, pp.540-556.  
Theory and Hypothesis Due, peer review

Peer Review

Research Design Assigned

*Class 14: Research Design*  
Research Design Due

Peer Review

*Class 15: Big Data*  
Hello Data!

Research Design Revisions Variable Identification Due, (bring one copy to class and submit via canvas)

*Class 16: SPSS*  
Intro to SPSS

Individual Research Design Assignment

*Class 17: Summary Statistics*  
Pollock Chapters 1 and 2 (revisited)  
SPSS Assignment 1

*Class 18: Probability*  
Chapter 5

SPSS Assignment 2

*Class 19: Correlation and Linear Regression*  
Pollock Chapters 8–9  
SPSS Assignment 3

*Class 20: Statistical Significance*  
Pollock Chapters 6–7

SPSS Assignment 4

*Class 21: Final Peer Review*  
Pollock Chapter 10

Complete Draft Due, peer review

*Class 22: Presentations*  
no assigned reading

*Class 23: Presentations*  
No assigned reading

*Class 24: Presentations*  
no assigned reading

*Class 25: Final Class*  
Review

FINAL DRAFT DUE IN CLASS (print hard copy and upload file to canvas)  
ALL EXTRA CREDIT DUE

This syllabus is a guideline and is subject to change at any time.