

POLS 3031: Research Design for Political Science (Fall 2017)PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Meeting time:	T/TH 12.30 – 13.45pm
Meeting room:	Brewster D104
Instructor:	Dr. Magda Giurcanu
Office:	Brewster A 118
Email:	<a href="mailto:giurcanum16@ecu.edu">giurcanum16@ecu.edu</a>
Office Hours:	MWF 12.00 - 13.00 & T/TH 11.00 - 12.00
Office Phone:	252 328 5427
Course website:	On Blackboard

All students are automatically enrolled in Blackboard after registration and can access the course using their ECU id and password. All communication about this course will be conducted via the blackboard system.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to familiarize students with the research methods most commonly used to study political phenomena. The course has two main objectives: 1) to aid students in understanding and evaluating quantitative and qualitative analyses and 2) to provide students with the necessary tools to design and conduct their own research projects in political science. While the examples used to illustrate the techniques and methodologies throughout the semester are pertinent to the political science discipline, it is important to mention that the various stages of the research process covered are suitable to research questions across all social science disciplines.

The course is structured around important aspects of the research process and will span over identifying and refining research questions, formulating hypotheses and assessing theories, writing literature reviews, and formulating original research projects. Methodologies covered will include experimental and non-experimental approaches to research design, ‘large - N’ quantitative analysis, survey analysis, content analysis, and ‘small - N’ qualitative reasoning.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing of this course, students will be able to:

1. Formulate research questions;
2. Craft hypotheses;
3. Design a research plan to test hypotheses; and
4. Determine appropriate methodologies for inquiry.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

The following books have been assigned for this course and are available at one of the local bookstores:

1. Johnson, J., H.T. Reynolds, and J.D. Mycoff. 2016. *Political Science Research Methods*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. CQ Press.
2. Mycoff, Jason D. 2016. *Working with Political Science Research Methods: Problems and Exercises*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. CQ Press.

Additional readings will be available through Blackboard. They will consist of scholarly articles that will allow us to evaluate methodologies across different political science subfields – American Politics, Comparative Politics, and International Relations.

**GRADING POLICIES**

Grading Scale: The course grade and individual exams will use the following scale:

<b>Course Average</b>	<b>Grade</b>
93% and above =	A
90% to 92.99% =	A-
87% to 89.99% =	B+
83% to 86.99% =	B
80% to 82.99% =	B-
77% to 79.99% =	C+
73% to 76.99% =	C
70% to 72.99% =	C-
67% to 69.99% =	D+
63% to 66.99% =	D
60% to 62.99% =	D-
Below 60% =	F

Students will be able access their grades throughout the course via Blackboard. Grades for individual assignments will be posted as soon as they are graded. Students may secure their final course grades via the Pirate Port <https://pirateport.ecu.edu/portal/> using their exchange user-id and password.

Course Grade: The course grade is based on the following components:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Attendance and Participation	20%
Homework Assignments	30%
Research paper	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	10%

3 important points to remember:

1. Please read the policies carefully and note that around 20% of your grade will come from in-class activities with no make-ups offered. In other words, the key to success in this class is to make sure you're COMING to class regularly.
2. All assignments will be submitted via BLACKBOARD. Do not send your homework via email because it will not be considered. Late submissions are always penalized by 50%.
3. I am checking my emails once a day, during office hours. In other words, if you write a message Friday evening, you will receive a reply on Monday at noon.

Further policies regarding grading:

### **ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION (20%)**

**Attendance** will be monitored as necessary during lectures (roll) and through participation in in-class assignments. **If you arrive excessively late to class or if you leave class early, you will receive only partial credit for attendance.** Your class attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes you attend (e.g., a student who attends every class will earn a 100%; a student who attends half of the classes will earn a 50%, and so on).

**Participation** in class discussions is also required (15%). Throughout the course students are encouraged to raise questions and relevant discussion topics in class, and students are expected to contribute to class discussions. To prepare for discussions, it is important that assigned readings are completed PRIOR to the corresponding class period. We will have 13 unannounced short in-class activities that will count towards the participation component and will contribute to the 15% of the final grade. Only 10 will be counted towards the final grade, **following that 3 are either dropped or included as extra credit.** There will be no make-ups granted for missed in-class activities.

### **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (30%)**

Homework will mainly come from the workbook that is bundled with the textbook. It will require you to read the chapter of the respective week in advance. You will have to type the answers and submit them via BLACKBOARD by 9.30 am on THURSDAY. Late work is penalized by 50% and is accepted only during the week when the assignment is originally scheduled for.

Extracurricular commitments, computer problems, family events, or job obligations should not interfere with turning your work in. I do not accept emailed assignments.

**EXAMINATIONS (30%)**

There are two exams associated with this course: a midterm (20%) and a final (10%). These tests will consist of approx. 10 short answer questions, similar in format to the homework assignments.

Failure to be present for any of the scheduled exams will result in an automatic “0.” On all exam dates, please come prepared with a pencil. If you cannot attend an exam, you must contact me at least 30 minutes before I have administered the test. I will grant a make-up exam only for circumstances that I deem extraordinary or for circumstances that meet university guidelines. If you miss an exam because of an illness, you are still required to contact me before the exam. You must also present me with proper verification as noted above.

**PAPER (20%)**

In this class, you are asked to write, using the skills we develop throughout the semester, the first half of a political science research paper. We will craft this paper in stages, each building on the previous.

The following is a list of these stages, and the due date for each:

- #1: Identify and State the Research Question: Due Oct 12 (1 page) (10 %)
- #2: Identify and State Possible Explanations: Due Oct 19 (2-3 pages) (10 %)
- #3: Review the Literature: Due Nov 2 (5-7 pages) (20 %)
- #4: Define and Describe Your Variables: Due Nov 9 (2-4 pages) (10%)
- #5: Completed Paper: Due Nov 28 (12-15 pages) (40%)
- #6: Prepare a brief (5-minute – 3 slides) PowerPoint presentation on your research question and design and present it in front of your classmates: Due Nov 28 (10%)

Note that your paper grade will combine my evaluation of the individual stages, and, the final product.

For a number of reasons, it is desirable to narrow the list of possible (very broad) topics from which you can select to do your paper. Data sets along with their code books will be uploaded on the course website. Before you decide on a topic, you should download and look at the code books for each dataset.

In my evaluation of your paper, I will be taking into consideration how well the paper has been written. This means that you will benefit from proofreading your paper at least a few times before you turn it in. All papers will be required to be written in the citation format of the American Political Science Association (APSA). The abbreviated style guide can be found on the course website (BLACKBOARD).

The completed paper must be submitted to Safe Assign on Blackboard and as a hard copy in class.

### COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance is critical:** I will excuse absences, including those on exam dates, for the following reasons: (1) participation in an authorized activity as an official representative of the university (this includes athletic events, university-sponsored performances, or academic conferences); (2) participation in other activities deemed by the Dean of Students to warrant an excused absence; (3) an extreme personal emergency; (4) the death of an immediate family member; (5) participation in a religious holiday; and (6) health reasons such as an incapacitating or contagious illness or unavoidable surgery.

If your absence meets any of the criteria mentioned above, I will need you to present me with **some form of verification** no later than one week after the absence if you wish to have your absence excused. Some acceptable forms of verification include the following: a note from Student Health Services; a note from a doctor or medical office; an obituary; or official documentation from the athletic department indicating your travel schedule. **Please note that an email saying, 'I will be missing class on ....' is not considered acceptable excuse documentation.**

**Academic Integrity:** The standard plagiarism and academic integrity rules apply, i.e. all the materials you submit in paper or online must be the results of your own individual work. Any signs of plagiarism will be taken very seriously. The university code of academic integrity will be strictly enforced in this course. According to the East Carolina University Honor Code, violations of academic integrity include the following:

- *Cheating.* Unauthorized aid or assistance or the giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work.
- *Plagiarism.* Copying the language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and adopting same as one's own original work. DO NOT submit someone else's homework.
- *Falsification.* Statement of any untruth, either spoken or written, regarding any circumstances relative to academic work.
- *Attempts.* Attempting any act that if completed would constitute an academic integrity violation as defined herein.

For more information about university policies concerning academic integrity, please visit the web at [http://issuu.com/ecustudentaffairs/docs/at\\_the\\_helm/111.htm](http://issuu.com/ecustudentaffairs/docs/at_the_helm/111.htm) . If you violate the Honor Code you will be reported to the Academic Integrity Board for disciplinary action. The penalties for violating the university code of academic integrity *range* from having assigned an F for that assignment to more stringent measures such as failure in the course and/or expulsion from the university.

### **Courtesy:**

- Don't come late and turn off your cell-phones.
- Be civil to each other. We may have different opinions on issues, but we must respect each other's points of view. Please be courteous to your classmates and respectful of your fellow students' views, comments, and questions.

- Any disruptive behavior -- such as reading newspapers or materials related to other courses, talking outside of class discussions, sleeping in class -- will not be tolerated and you will be asked to leave the class.
- Do not leave before class is dismissed or you'll lose your attendance points for that day.

**Disability Services Statement:** East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 ((252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY)). <http://www.ecu.edu/accessibility/>

**Campus Emergencies and Severe Weather:** In case of campus wide emergencies, you may obtain information about changes in the University class schedule by calling 252 328-0062.

**ECU Alert:** In addition, in case of adverse weather or other campus emergencies you may consult <http://www.ecu.edu/alert/> for information.

If and when face-to-face classes are suspended, you will receive an email from me and a Blackboard Announcement that detail how we will communicate, where you can locate course information, and what you can expect during this time period.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The following will help orient you to what we will be doing throughout the course. It includes readings for each week, as well as important dates.

#### **WEEK 1 Aug 22-24: Studying Politics Scientifically**

Read Chapter 1 of textbook by TH

Clive Thompson, *Why We Should Learn the Language of Data*

[https://www.wired.com/2010/04/st\\_thompson\\_statistics/](https://www.wired.com/2010/04/st_thompson_statistics/) (ON BLACKBOARD)

#### **WEEK 2 Aug 29-31: Studying Politics Scientifically**

Read Chapter 2

Workbook Assignments Due Thursday, 9.30am: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7

#### **WEEK 3 Sept 5-7: Beginning the Research Process/Identifying a Research Topic**

Read Chapter 3

Workbook Assignments Due Thursday, 9.3 am: 3.1, 3.2, 3.5

#### **WEEK 4 Sept 12-14: Beginning the Research Process, and the Building Blocks of Research**

Review Ch. 3

Read Knopf. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review". PS—Political Science & Politics. 39: 127-132 (ON BLACKBOARD)

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, Sept. 14: 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10

\*\* During Week 3 or 4 we will have a political science librarian visit the class to help you navigate the ECU databases when searching for relevant articles. As soon as I have a confirmation for this visit, I will let you know.

**WEEK 5 Sept 19-21: The Building Blocks of Research: Hypotheses, Concepts, Variables**

Read Chapter 4

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30 am: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

**WEEK 6 Sept 26-28: The Building Blocks of Research. Measurement**

Read Chapter 5

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30 am 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8

Discuss Paper Assignment #1

**WEEK 7 Oct 3-5: Midterm Examination/FILM**

Tuesday, Midterm Exam, (chapters 1-5, and, all in-class work)

Thursday: Film: The Zimbardo Prison Simulation

**WEEK 8 Oct 10-12: The Research Design/EXPERIMENTS**

Read Chapter 6 (up to p195)

Read Morton and Williams. 2008. 'Experimentation in Political Science' in The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology. Oxford: Oxford University Press (on BLACKBOARD)

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30 am: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Due Thursday, Oct 12, 9.30 am: Paper Assignment #1

**WEEK 9 Oct 17-19: Research Design/OBSERVATIONAL STUDIES**

Read Chapter 6 (from p. 195 on)

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30 am: 6.6, 6.7, 6.

Due Thursday, Oct. 19, 9.30 am: Paper Assignment #2

**WEEK 10 Oct 24-26: Sampling**

Read Chapter 7

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30am: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.7

**WEEK 11 Oct 31-Nov 2: Data (Observations)**

Read Chapter 8

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30 am: 8.1, 8.3

Due Thursday, Nov 2, 9.30 am: Paper Assignment #3

**WEEK 12 Nov 7-9: Data (Document Analysis)**

Read Chapter 9

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30am: 9.4

Due Thursday, Nov 9, 9.30 am: Paper Assignment #4

**WEEK 13 Nov 14-16: Survey Research and Interviewing**

Read Chapter 10

Workbook Assignment Due Thursday, 9.30am: 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.6a

**WEEK 14 Nov 21**

Review Chapter 10

Workbook Assignment due Tuesday: 10.7

**WEEK 15 Nov 28-Nov 30: In-class presentations**

Due Tuesday, Nov 28, 9.30am: Paper Assignment #5

Due Tuesday, Nov 28, 9.30am: PowerPoint Presentation

Students randomly assigned to present – Tuesday (20 students), Thursday (20 students)

Final Exam: Wednesday, Dec. 6, 11:00am - 13.30pm