

POL 51: Scientific Study of Politics
Fall 2005
Monday and Wednesday 8:00am – 9:50am
Olson 206

Prof: James Fowler, 1265 Social Science, 752-1649
Office Hours: Wednesday 12pm – 3pm or by appointment
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Course description

How do we conduct research in political science? This course provides an introduction to the theory and method of contemporary political analysis, with an emphasis on alternative analytical frameworks, concepts, variables, measurement, and quantitative analysis of political data. Topics include: conducting a literature review, formulating research questions and subsequent hypotheses, designing a research plan, determining what methodologies are appropriate, and performing the analysis.

Required reading

The text we will use for this class is:
Janet Johnson and H. T. Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, 2004, CQ Press

The text should be available at the University book store, but it can be acquired online much more cheaply. (Try <http://addall.com> for a comparison of multiple new and used book stores).

Starting the second week of the quarter we will also be reading primary source articles (see below). All of the articles in the reading are available to you online (using a UCD machine) at: <http://www.jstor.org/> or <http://libcf.ucdavis.edu/ejournals/>.

Requirements

Your evaluation will depend on your understanding of basic research methods and your ability to apply them to problems in political science. Your grade for this course will depend on four components:

1. Attendance and Participation

With the exception of our first course meeting, you should plan to do all of the readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. While this component is not graded, experience shows that it is highly correlated with exam performance. Some lecture topics will be in addition to material in the texts.

2. Midterm Exam (15%)

This will be a short answer and essay question exam in class on Monday, **November 14th**.

3. Literature Review (25%) and Peer Review (10%)

Due **October 31st** are two copies of a literature review of some political science topic of your choosing. The literature review must be concise, thorough, and up-to-date. The paper should convince the reader that your topic is interesting and your question is important. The paper must be 1500 to 2000 words long (include a word count on the title page). We will exchange papers in class and then each student will be required to write a 500 word critique of one of their peer's papers, describing its strengths and weaknesses. The critique will be due **November 7th**. We will discuss this assignment more in class.

4. Research Paper (25%)

Due **December 7th** (the last day of class) is a COAUTHORED research design proposal. The research design must pose a testable hypothesis and explain how it will be tested. The paper should briefly convince the reader that your topic is interesting, your question is important, and then show that the answer to the question is attainable with your research design. The paper must be 1500 to 2000 words long (include a word count on the title page). It can build on work you did previously for your literature review. We will discuss this assignment more in class.

5. Final Exam (23%)

This will be a cumulative in-class final exam **10:30am-12:30pm** on **December 12th**.

6. Participation in a Political Science Study (2%)

You will have an opportunity to participate as a subject in a computer-administered political science study. We will discuss this opportunity 1-2 weeks prior to the administration of the study, but it will probably be in mid-late October.

Policies

I will only give incompletes or PTAs for compelling, unanticipated, and nonacademic reasons. Late assignments will be marked down the equivalent of a full letter grade for each 24 hour period in which they are late. I will only make an exception to this policy if 1) you contact me in writing a week in advance to discuss a conflict, or 2) you provide documentation of a severe illness or family emergency that prevented you from completing the assignment on time.

Tentative Schedule

Oct. 3rd **Science and the Study of Politics**

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapters 1-2.

Oct. 5th, 10th **Hypotheses, Explanations, and Causal Inference**

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapter 4.

James E. Campbell. "Ambiguity in the Issue Positions of Presidential Candidates: A Causal Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 27, No. 2, May 1983, p.284-293.

Terence P. Thornberry, R. L. Christenson. "Unemployment and Criminal Involvement: An Investigation of Reciprocal Causal Structures." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 49, No. 3, June 1984, p.398-411.

Oct. 12th, 17th Describing Political Phenomena & Constructing Literature Reviews

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapter 5.

Kjell Goldmann. "East-West Tension in Europe, 1946-1970: A Conceptual Analysis and a Quantitative Description (in Research Notes)." *World Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 1, October 1973, p.106-125.

Barbara J. Nelson. "The Role of Sex and Gender in Comparative Political Analysis: Individuals, Institutions, and Regimes (in Book Review Essay)" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, No. 2, June 1992, p.491-495.

Vasquez, John A. 1997. "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition." *American Political Science Review* 91 (December): 899-912.

Oct. 19th, 24th Experimental and Non-Experimental Research Designs

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapter 3.

Rose McDermott. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science*, Jun 2002, Vol. 5: 31-61.

David A. Bositis, "Design Strategies for Theory Testing: The Efficient Use of Field Experimentation in Local Level Political Research." *Political Behavior*, Vol. 7, No. 4. (1985), pp. 374-385.

Wantchekon, Leonard "Clientelism and voting behavior: Evidence from a field experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55 (2003), 399-422. (also available at http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/wantchekon/research/WP_0331.pdf)

Oct. 26th, 31st Measurement, Sampling, and Selection

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapter 6, 9.

Richard G. Niemi, Stephen C. Craig, and Franco Mattei. "Measuring Internal Political Efficacy in the 1988 National Election Study." *American Political Science Review*, December 1991, p.1407-1413.

Richard Fenno. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review*, September 1977, p.883-917.

Nov. 2nd Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables

Gabriel A. Almond and Stephen J. Genco. "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics." *World Politics*, July 1977, p.489-582.

James Fearon. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43, January 1991, 169-95.

Nov. 7th, 9th Collecting & Organizing Observations, Document & Archive Analysis

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapters 7,8

David M. Barrett "Doing "Tuesday Lunch" at Lyndon Johnson's White House: New Archival Evidence on Vietnam Decision-making." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 4. 1991, p.676-679.

Michael Laver, Kenneth Benoit, and John Garry. "Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data." *American Political Science Review* 97(2).

Midterm Exam on Monday, Nov. 14th

Nov. 16th, 21st Elite Interviews and Survey Research Principles

Johnson and Reynolds: Chapter 10.

John Seidler. "On Using Informants: A Technique for Collecting Quantitative Data and Controlling Measurement Error in Organization Analysis." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 39, No. 6, December 1974, p.816-831.

Martin R. Frankel, Lester R. Frankel. "Fifty Years of Survey Sampling in the United States." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 51, part 2: Supplement: 50th Anniversary Issue. (1987), p.S127-S138.

No class Wednesday, Nov. 23rd (day before Thanksgiving Day)

Nov. 28th, 30th, Dec. 5th Formal Models of Politics

Morris Fiorina. "Formal Models of Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science*, February 1975, p.133-159.

John Aldrich. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science*, 37 (1): Feb 1993, 246-278

Robert Axelrod. "Effective Choice in the Prisoner's Dilemma." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 24, No. 1. Mar., 1980, pp. 3-25.

Dec. 7th Comparative Methodology

Arend Lijphart. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review*, September 1971, 682-693.

Joshua A. Tucker. "The First Decade of Post-Communist Elections and Voting: What Have We Studied, and How Have We Studied It?" *Annual Review of Political Science*, Jun 2002, Vol. 5: 271-304.