

Political Science 207-01: Political Analysis
University of Dayton
Fall 2017

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Class: TR 9:30 – 10:45 AM, Zehler Hall 104
Office: St. Joseph 205
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to expose students to the basic concepts and processes of research in political science. This course does not focus on a specific political topic, as would a traditional political science course. Rather, it focuses on the *methods* of conducting empirical research on politics. Pedagogically, the course is structured to develop individual topics through in-class lectures and practical exercises, as well as individual and group assignments that will ultimately guide students toward the concrete goal of developing a coherent research project, comprised of a literature review and research design, on a topic of their choosing.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- 1) understand how to systematically and empirically examine components of the political system;
- 2) know how to conduct research in the social sciences, and political science in particular;
- 3) have, and be able to demonstrate, the ability to critically assess political science research.

Course Expectations

Class Participation & Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly, attentively, and on time. *Students who are absent from more than 7 class sessions will fail the course;* excused absences do count toward this total. Also, excessive tardiness may be counted toward this total, at the instructor's discretion. Students who behave in a distracting way – including sleeping or using a phone or computer when the instructor has not explicitly authorized doing so – may be asked to leave, and if so will be counted as absent.

Late Assignments: Course projects and assignments *must be submitted on time*. If submitted within 24 hours after the due date and time, ten percent of all possible points will be deducted from your grade; if 24-48 hours late, fifty percent (50%) of all possible points will be deducted from your grade. If submitted more than 48 hours late, your grade for that assignment will be a zero (0). This policy is not typical for my courses; rather, it reflects the specific nature of *this* course. That is, the assignments for this course are “scaffolded” – meaning that each assignment (as well as in-class lecture material and exercises) builds upon the previous assignment, so that you cannot complete the current one if you have not completed the previous one. I cannot emphasize this policy strongly enough; it is inflexible and, based upon previous faculty experiences, necessary for this specific course.

In-class exercises may be submitted up to 24 hours late (that is, within 24 hours after the end of the class in which it was assigned) in cases where students are absent from class. Twenty percent (20%) of all possible points will be subtracted from late submissions of in-class exercises.

Required Materials

Texts: There are no required texts for this course. Course readings are listed in the syllabus and will be available for download via the course website on Isidore.

Computer: In order to complete the in-class exercises, students must bring a laptop computer to each class.

Honor Pledge, University Resources, and Policies

University of Dayton Honor Pledge

I understand that as a student at the University of the Dayton, I am a member of our academic and social community. I recognize the importance of my education and the value of experiencing life in such an integrated community. I believe that the value of my education and degree is critically dependent upon the academic integrity of the university community, and so in order to maintain our academic integrity, I pledge to:

- Complete all assignments and examinations by the guidelines given to me by my instructors;
- Avoid plagiarism and any other form of misrepresenting someone else's work as my own;
- Adhere to the Standards of Conduct as outlined in the Academic Honor Code.

In doing this, I hold myself and my community to a higher standard of excellence, and set an example for my peers to follow.

Students are expected to abide by the University of Dayton Honor Pledge.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of either cheating or plagiarism will be referred to appropriate administrative proceedings at the University of Dayton. Additionally, the student will receive a zero for the assignment.

Learning Support and Writing Resources

A wide range of support and resources are available to UD students, and I strongly encourage students to avail themselves of these opportunities. The LTC's Office of Learning Resources (OLR) is a learning resource for all students and it offers a wide variety of services to assist you in achieving academic success at the university, including study skills classes and workshops, tutoring and consultations, disability screenings, and a website with many resources (<http://learningsupport.udayton.edu>). Please contact OLR at 937-229-2066 or visit their office on the ground floor of Roesch Library (LTC 023) if you would like to talk about how you could be a more effective learner.

The Write Place is a free service available to all UD students that offers peer-to-peer writing support on any writing assignment and at any stage of the writing process. Students can drop-in to the Write Place without making an appointment. It is located in Roesch Library Room 502. Contact Christina Klimo, Write Place Coordinator, if you have any questions at klimochm@notes.udayton.edu or 229-2066.

Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Formal disability-related accommodations are determined through the Learning Teaching Center's Office of Learning Resources (OLR). It is very important that you be registered with OLR and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations with a signed SLS Self-Identification Form. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. For more information, please contact OLR at 937-229-2066, by email at disability.services@udayton.edu, or stop by the OLR office in LTC 023.

Graded Assignments

In-class exercises: On several occasions throughout the semester, you will complete an in-class exercise building upon the course's reading content, lecture content, and major themes. You will complete these exercises, and submit them, by the end of the class session. I will standardize and average these grades when calculating your final course grade. Page 1 describes the policy for late submission of in-class exercises, in cases of absence.

Assignments #1-4: Assignments #1-4 require you to practice and develop skills necessary to complete the literature review, research design, and final paper projects. We will devote significant course time, including workshop sessions, to preparing for these assignments. You will complete and submit Assignments #1-2 individually, and Assignments #3-4 as a group. See the "Assignments" tab on our Isidore course page for instructions and submission dropboxes.

Group Literature Review, Research Design, & Final Paper: You will be working within a group to identify an empirical question in any subfield of political science to explore for the semester. The group will conduct an extensive review of political science research in this area, identify a related question that requires further study, and create a design for engaging in that research. Your work will utilize scholarly resources (e.g., refereed journal articles) to examine what previous scholars have found regarding this empirical question – one based on a theoretical explanation of why a particular condition exists. Further you must identify empirically measurable variables as part of a research design that is feasible for you (as an undergraduate student) to carry out, and conduct preliminary data analysis.

The literature review and research design are separate papers. The final paper essentially requires you to merge and revise those two papers, based upon my feedback, so as to create one coherent research paper explaining how your research project fills a "gap" in the existing academic literature. Each of these project assignments require group submissions. See the "Assignments" tab on our Isidore course page for complete instructions and submission dropboxes.

Grade Calculation

In-Class Exercises	10%
Assignments (#1-4)	30%
Literature Review	15%
Research Design	15%
<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>30%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale:

A: 93%-100%	A-: 90%-93%	B+: 87%-90%	B: 83%-87%	B-: 80%-83%
C+: 77%-80%	C: 73%-77%	C-: 70%-73%	D: 60%-70%	Fail: <60%

Note: If your final course grade falls within 0.25% of the next highest letter grade, I will round it up (e.g. 86.75% = B+, 89.75 = A-, etc.).

Perspective on Grading

I welcome students to discuss grades with me at any point in the semester, if concerns arise. Often, this helps a student to understand the basis for his/her grade, or to clarify something that I misunderstood when first evaluating the work.

However, let me be clear about my expectations for such conversations: It is not appropriate for a student to come to me with a general objection, such as "I thought I did better on this paper" or "I need an A." I grade your performance on assignments. I do not grade your *expected* performance, or you as a *person*. Your grade on each assignment will be broken into parts. After grading each part, I simply calculate the sum total to derive your overall grade on the assignment. The same applies to your course grade: I grade each assignment, and then sum them (in accordance with the weighting formula detailed on our syllabus) to determine your final grade. This is a *mathematical* process, not a discretionary one.

Therefore, if you want to talk with me about the possibility of changing a grade, you need to be able to tell me which specific part of that grade might be in error, and why. If you cannot tell me which part you think I got wrong/misunderstood and why, you are not ready to discuss your grade.

Finally, I do not "fix" grades. I do not offer extra assignments at the end of the semester to help you reach the grade that you wanted; if I did so, I would have to extend the same opportunity to the entire class. We will talk a lot about measurement in this course, and I view your grade as a measure of your learning. If I add in other elements to your grade that do not measuring actual *learning*, such as your desired GPA or your graduate school ambitions, I have corrupted the measurement (and acted unethically). Please know that I will not do so, and you shouldn't ask for that.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please complete each assigned reading prior to class on the first date under which it is listed below. To access a reading assignment, click on the link provided below or visit our Isidore course page (isidore.udayton.edu).

Introduction

- August 24 (Thu.) Syllabus & Research Topics
- August 29 (Tue.) What is Political Science?
Reading: Lalwani & Winter-Lery, "Catholics like the European Union More Than Protestants Do. Here's Why."
([click here](#))
- August 31 (Thu.) Writing Research Questions

Literature Review

- September 5 (Tue.) What is a Literature Review?
Reading: Forestiere, "Reviewing the Literature"
- September 7 (Thu.) Workshop: How to Find Academic Sources
- September 12 (Tue.) Workshop: Assignment #1 (Annotated Bibliography)
- September 14 (Thu.) Workshop: Assignment #1 (Annotated Bibliography)
- Assignment #1 (Annotated Bibliography) due Sunday, September 17 @ 11:55 PM

Research Design

- September 19 (Tue.) Theory, Hypotheses, & Variables
Reading: Hoover & Donovan, "Refinements"
- September 21 (Thu.) Writing a Hypothesis
- September 26 (Tue.) Operationalizing Variables

Statistics

- September 28 (Thu.) How to Interpret Statistical Evidence, Part I
Reading: Pantoja & Gershon, "Statistical Research: To Naturalize or Not to Naturalize?"
- October 3 (Tue.) How to Interpret Statistical Evidence, Part II
- October 5 (Thu.) No class (Mid-Term Break)

Integrated Literature Review

- October 10 (Tue.) How to Critique Academic Research
Reading: Johnston & Sarbahi, "The Impact of US Drone Strikes on Terrorism in Pakistan"
- October 12 (Thu.) Workshop: Assignment #2 (Article Critiques)
- Assignment #2 (Article Critiques) due Sunday, October 15 @ 11:55 PM
- October 17 (Tue.) Workshop: Literature Review (Planning)
- October 19 (Thu.) Workshop: Literature Review (Planning)

Outline of Literature Review (Individual Submission) due Sunday, October 22 @ 11:55 PM

October 24 (Tue.) Workshop: Literature Review (Editing)

October 26 (Thu.) Workshop: Literature Review (Editing)

Literature Review Paper (Group Submission) due @ end of class on Thursday, October 26

Research Design, Revisited

October 31 (Tue.) Revisiting Your Research Question
Reading: Forestiere, "Asking Questions in Political Science"

November 2 (Thu.) How to Find Data

November 7 (Tue.) Workshop: Assignment #3 (Preliminary Research Design)

November 9 (Thu.) Workshop: Assignment #3 (Preliminary Research Design)

Group Submission of Assignment #3 (Preliminary Research Design) due Thursday, November 9 @ end of class

Data Analysis

November 14 (Tue.) How to Analyze Data

November 16 (Thu.) Workshop: Assignment #4 (Data Analysis)

November 21 (Tue.) Workshop: Assignment #4 (Data Analysis)

Group Submission of Assignment #4 (Data Analysis) due Tuesday, November 21 @ end of class

November 23 (Thu.) No class (Thanksgiving Break)

Research Design, Implemented

November 28 (Tue.) Workshop: Research Design

November 30 (Thu.) Workshop: Research Design

Group Submission of Research Design Paper due Friday, December 1 @ 3:00 PM

Final Paper

December 5 (Tue.) Workshop: Final Paper
Reading: Empire State College, "Rewriting or Revising"

December 7 (Thu.) Workshop: Final Paper

Group Submission of Final Paper due Sunday, December 10 @ 11:55 PM

*Disclaimer: This course schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion, including the addition, subtraction, or replacement of reading assignments listed above. I will notify you of any changes in class and/or via e-mail, and post an updated version of the syllabus to Isidore if any such changes are made.