

October 1, 2009

POS 3713-01: Research Methods

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Fall 2009	voice: 850.644.6924
Tue & Thu 3:35-4:50, Carraway 101	will.moore@fsu.edu
Office Hours: Tue 9:30-10:30, Thu 2:00-3:00	http://campus.fsu.edu/

Course Description

This is a course about how to use the scientific method to study politics. It demands that you think precisely. Indeed, science is about precision and humility. The humility is needed to protect us against our hubris and the seductiveness of our own ideas. When a group of people agree to employ the method in the pursuit of knowledge it leads the work to become both precise and humble. That might strike you as an odd description of science, but over the course of this semester I intend to persuade you of its merit.

Requirements & Evaluation

There will be two mechanisms for evaluation and the assignment of grades in the course:

- Three exams (75%; 25% each for the best three scores on four exams)
- Cumulative final exam (25%)

Four Exams

There will be four ‘midterm’ exams. Your best three scores on these exams will count (25% each) toward your course grade. The exams will have multiple choice and true false questions, and you will mark your answers on a scantron (bubble) sheet. *You must bring a pencil to the exam.* They will be open notes, open book, and open Internet (you may bring a laptop to the exam). All work must be your own—you may not confer with anyone in or outside of the class. You are also welcome to bring an MP3 player, if you wish, but you will need to keep the volume low enough that those around you cannot hear it.

The exams will be given in class on the following dates:

Tue 29 September
Thu 22 October
Thu 12 November
Thu 3 December

The questions on the exam will cover the material in the reading, but many questions will be inspired by the classroom meetings. I will post a study sheet on the BB site at least 24 hours prior to each exam.

Cumulative Final Exam

The final exam will cover the material on the four ‘midterm’ exams. The exam will have multiple choice and true false questions, and you will mark your answers on a scantron (bubble) sheet. *You must bring a pencil to the exam.* It will be open notes, open book, and open Internet (you may bring a laptop to the exam). All work must be your own—you may not confer with anyone in or outside of the class. You are also welcome to bring an MP3 player, if you wish, but you will need to keep the volume low enough that those around you cannot hear it.

The final exam will be given from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Monday 7 December (http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir_class/fall/exam_schedule.htm). There will be no early exams: you are responsible for making yourself available to take the exam on that date and time.

The Fine Print

Information on the following administrative issues is available under the Syllabus link on the course BB site (campus.fsu.edu).

- Make-up Exam Policy
- Grading Scale
- Classroom Comportment: Civility
- Students with Challenges

Reading

The required reading for class is available for download at the course BB site (<http://campus.fsu.edu/>). I have also listed recommended readings for those of you who either want more detail or find that you benefit from multiple presentations of material. You can order that textbook online at your favorite book vendor: Kellstedt, Paul M. & Guy D. Whitten. 2009. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, Cambridge University Press.

Class Meeting Schedule

Tue 25 Aug:

Take roll (note: per university policy, you will be dropped from the course if you do not attend this day).

Science

Thu 27 Aug:

Class Exercise: Building a model of wins and losses.

Required Reading: Souva, Mark. 2007. "Fostering Theoretical Thinking in Undergraduate Education." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 40(3):557-561 –AND– King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane & Sidney Verba. 1994. "Defining Scientific Research in the Social Sciences," in *Designing Social Inquiry*, Princeton University Press, pp. 7-12 (available on course BB site, campus.fsu.edu).

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 14-18, 26-28, 40-42 (available for optional purchase at your favorite online book seller).

Tue 1 Sep:

Class Exercise: Descriptive examination of Student Evaluations of Faculty Performance.

Required Reading: Babbie, Earl. 1998. "Human Science and Inquiry," in *The Practice of Social Research*, 8th ed., Wadsworth, pp. 14-37 and 51-66.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 1-3.

Thu 3 Sep:

Class Exercise: Analysis of Student Evaluations of Faculty Performance.

Required Reading: Zuckerman, Alan S. 1991. "How We Know When We Know," in *Doing Political Science: An Introduction to Political Analysis*, Westview, chap. 5, pp. 115-150.

Tue 8 & Thu 10 Sep:

Class canceled due to instructor illness

Tue 15 Sep:

Class Exercise: Analysis of the Titanic's passengers.

Required Reading: Zuckerman, Alan S. 1991. "What We Mean When We Call Political Science a Science," in *Doing Political Science: An Introduction to Political Analysis*, Westview, chap. 6, pp. 151-181—AND—Blalock, Hubert M., Jr. 1970. *An Introduction to Social Research*, Prentice Hall, pp. 3-11.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 15-18, 28-40.

Theory: Concepts & Causation**Thu 17 Sep:**

Class Exercise: Analysis of 9/11 and the Airline Industry

Required Reading: Zuckerman, Alan S. 1991. *Doing Political Science: An Introduction to Political Analysis*, Westview, pp. 6-13.—AND—de Vaus, David A. 2001. *Research Design in Social Research*, Sage, pp. 1-8, 10-15.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 3-14.

Tue 22 Sep:

Class Exercise: Is party ID all we need to explain vote choice in US presidential elections?

Required Reading: Blalock, Hubert M., Jr. 1970. *An Introduction to Social Research*, Prentice Hall, pp. 62-68, 78-85.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 22-26.

Thu 24 Sep:

Class Exercise: What impact do gender, race, and religion have on vote choice in US presidential elections?

Required Reading: Babbie, Earl. 1998. "Conceptualization and Measurement," in *The Practice of Social Research*, 8th ed., Wadsworth, chap 5, pp. 115- 129.

Tue 29 Sep:

Exam #1

Measurement

Thu 31 Sep:

Class Exercise: Are US presidential elections really all about "the economy, stupid"?

Required Reading: Blalock, Hubert M., Jr. 1970. *An Introduction to Social Research*, Prentice Hall, pp. 86-97 and 105-111—AND— Fair, Ray C. 2002. "It's the Economy, Stupid," in *Predicting Presidential Elections and Other Things*, Stanford University Press, chap. 1, pp. 5-15.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 86-91.

Tue 6 Oct:

Class Exercise: Does poverty or major religion account for varying numbers of terror events?

Required Reading: Babbie, Earl. 1998. "Conceptualization and Measurement," in *The Practice of Social Research*, 8th ed., Wadsworth, chap 5, pp.129- 136—AND—Babbie. "Operationalization," chap 6, pp. 139-147.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 91-101, 105-109.

Research Design

Thu 8 Oct:

Class Exercise: Does democracy account for varying numbers of terror events?

Required Reading: de Vaus, David A. 2001. *Research Design in Social Research*, Sage, pp. 8-9—AND—de Vaus, 2001. "Causation and the Logic of Research Design," chap. 3, pp. 34-52—AND—Manheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich & Lars Wilnat. 2002. "Working from a Plan" in *Empirical Political Analysis*, Longman, chap. 5, pp. 79-85, 96-98.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 45-54, 67-68.

Experiments

Tue 13 Oct:

Class Exercise: Pedagogical Agent Experiments

Required Reading: Lagorio, Christine. 2006. "Hot for Teacher: Students Rate Profs Online—and Vice Versa," *The Village Voice*, 11 January—AND—Blalock, Hubert M., Jr. 1970. *An Introduction to Social Research*, Prentice Hall, pp. 12-33—AND—Manheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich & Lars Wilnat. 2002. "Working from a Plan" in *Empirical Political Analysis*, Longman, chap. 5, pp. 85-86.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 54-65.

Thu 15 Oct:

Class Exercise: Race and Sentencing in Group Formation & US Courts

Required Reading: Coolican, Hugh. 2004. "Uses of Experiments in Psychological Research" in *Research Methods in Statistics and Psychology*, 4th ed., Hodder & Stouhgton, chap. 3, pp. 54-62—AND—Coolican. 2004. "Validity in Experiments. . .," chap. 4, pp. 78-96.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 68-77.

Quasi-Experiments

Tue 20 Oct:

Class Exercise: What types of countries go to war with one another?

Required Reading: Coolican, Hugh. 2004. "Quasi-Experiments" in *Research Methods in Statistics and Psychology*, 4th ed., Hodder & Stouhgton, chap. 4, pp. 98-100—AND—Manheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich & Lars Wilnat. 2002. "Working from a Plan" in *Empirical Political Analysis*, Longman, chap. 5, pp. 91-96.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 77-83.

Thu 22 Oct:

Exam #2

Inference

Tue 27 Oct:

Class Exercise: Voter Turnout

Required Reading: Zuckerman, Alan S. 1991. "Explaining Political Phenomena: The Case of Turnout in National Elections," in *Doing Political Science: An Introduction to Political Analysis*, Westview, chap. 2, pp. 17-41.

Thu 29 Oct:

Class Exercise: The American Electorate, 1952-96

Required Reading: King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane & Sidney Verba. 1994. "Descriptive Inference" and "Causality and Causal Inference," in *Designing Social Inquiry*, Princeton University Press, pp. 34-36 and 75-76, 82-85—AND—Blalock, Hubert M., Jr. 1970. *An Introduction to Social Research*, Prentice Hall, pp. 68-78.

Sampling & Uncertainty

Tue 3 Nov:

Class Exercise: The wisdom of crowds and futures markets: discussion of the Iowa Electronic Market, Politics.

Required Reading: Babbie, Earl. 1998. "The Logic of Sampling," in *The Practice of Social Research*, 8th ed., Wadsworth, chap 8, pp. 191-229—AND—"The Wisdom of Crowds," Wikipedia entry, available online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wisdom_of_Crowds.

Confidence Intervals and Levels; Margin of Error

Thu 5 Nov:

Class Exercise: Religiosity in America, 1972-2000

Required Reading: "Confidence Intervals," available online at: http://www.stats.gla.ac.uk/steps/glossary/confidence_intervals.html—AND—"Meaning of Confidence," available online at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confidence_interval#Meaning_of_confidence—AND—"Margin of Error," available online at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margin_of_error.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 128-130.

Surveys

Tue 10 Nov:

Class Exercise: Infidelity

Required Reading: Manheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich & Lars Wilnat. 2002. "Survey Research" in *Empirical Political Analysis*, Longman, chap 7, pp. 120-147.

Thu 12 Nov:

Exam #3

Regression

Tue 17 Nov:

Class Exercise: What Human Rights Are Violated Most?

Required Reading: Berry, William D. & Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. *Understanding Multivariate Research*, Westview Press, chaps. 1 and 2, pp. 1-28.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 131-132.

Thu 19 Nov:

Class Exercise: Do democratic countries respect rights more than autocratic ones?

Required Reading: Berry, William D. & Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. *Understanding Multivariate Research*, Westview Press, chaps. 3 and 4, pp. 29-50.

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 159-165.

Tue 24 Nov:

Class Exercise: Do autocratic countries torture more than democratic ones?

Reading: Berry, William D. & Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. *Understanding Multivariate Research*, Westview Press, chap. 5, pp. 51-62

Additional Reading: Kellstedt & Witten. 2009. pp. 183-199.

Thu 26 Nov:

Class does not meet: Thanksgiving Day

Tue 1 Dec:

Readings: Schutte, Jerald G. 1977. *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Elementary Statistics (but were afraid to ask)*, Prentice Hall, pp. 67-87.

Thu 3 Dec:

Exam #4

Monday 7 Dec: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Final Exam (Carraway 101)

The exam will be open notes, open book, open Internet. All work must be your own—communication with classmates or anyone else is forbidden.