

January 5, 2011

POS 3713-01: Research Methods

Will H. Moore

Spring 2011

Tue & Thu 3:35-4:50, Fisher 275

Office Hours: Wed 10:30-11:30 am & Thu 1:30-2:30 pm <http://campus.fsu.edu/>

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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 three mechanisms for evaluation and the assignment of grades in the course:

- Four problem sets (20%; 5% each for the best four scores on the five problem sets)
- Three exams (60%; 20% each for the best three scores on the four exams)
- Cumulative final exam (20%)

Five Problem Sets

There will be five problems sets. These are homework assignments that give you practice doing some of the technical work in the course. The assignments will become available on the course BB site (under Assignments) two days before they are due. Your best *four* scores on the five problem sets will count for 20% of your course grade (5% each).

NB: There are no make-up problem sets.

Four Exams

There will be four ‘midterm’ exams. Your best three scores on these exams will count (20% 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.*

NB: The make-up exam policy is under the Syllabus link on the course BB site.

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

Tue 1 Feb

Tue 22 Feb

Thu 24 Mar

Thu 21 Apr

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 on the BB site the lecture slides I present in class at least 48 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.* The final exam is open notes, open book, open Internet. All work must be your own—communication with classmates or anyone else is forbidden.

The final exam will be given from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Tue 26 April (http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir_class/spring/exam_schedule.htm). There will be no early exams: you are responsible for making yourself available to take the exam on that date and during the scheduled 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 comes from a textbook available for purchase at the campus bookstore and Bill's Books:

Paul M. Kellstedt & Guy D. Whitten. 2009. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, Cambridge University Press.

Class Meeting & Reading Schedule

Tue 4 Jan:

No assigned reading.

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

Science, Theory and Causation

Thu 6 Jan:

K&W chap 1, pp. 1-14.

Tue 11 Jan:

K&W chap 1, pp. 15-19.

Thu 13 Jan:

K&W chap 2, pp. 22-31.

Tue 18 Jan:

No assigned reading.

Thu 20 Jan:

K&W chap 2, pp. 31-43.

Tue 25 Jan:

K&W chap 3, pp. 45-65.

Thu 27 Jan:

No assigned reading.

Tue 1 Feb:

Midterm Exam #1

Measurement & Descriptive Statistics

Thu 3 Feb:

K&W chap 4, pp. 67-77.

Tue 8 Feb:

K&W chap 4, pp. 77-84.

Thu 10 Feb:

K&W chap 5, pp. 86-102.

Tue 15 Feb:

K&W chap 6, pp. 104-118.

Thu 17 Feb:

Problem Set #1 due: means, medians, etc.

No assigned reading.

Tue 22 Feb:

Midterm Exam #2.

Statistical Inference & Hypothesis Testing

Thu 24 Feb:

K&W chap 7, pp. 120-127.

Tue 1 Mar:

K&W chap 7, pp. 128-139.

Thu 3 Mar:

K&W chap 8, pp. 139-145.

Tue 8 Mar & Thu 10 Mar:

Spring Break: class does not meet.

Tue 15 Mar:

K&W chap 8, pp. 150-156.

Wed 16 Mar:

Problem Set #2 due: χ^2

Thu 17 Mar:

K&W chap 8, pp. 145-150.

Tue 22 Mar:

Problem Set #3 due: correlation coefficient, etc.
No assigned reading

Thu 24 Mar:

Midterm Exam #3.

Regression

Tue 29 Mar:

K&W chap 9, pp. 159-172.

Thu 31 Mar:

K&W chap 9, pp. 172-182.

Tue 5 Apr:

K&W chap 10, pp. 183-96.

Thu 7 Apr:

Problem set #4 due: bivariate regression.
K&W chap 10, pp. 196-200.

Tue 12 Apr:

K&W chap 11, pp. 202-209.

Thu 14 Apr:

K&W chap 11, pp. 212-20.

Tue 19 Apr:

Problem set #5 due: multiple regression.

Thu 21 Apr:

Midterm Exam #4.

Tue 26 Apr:

Final Exam, 5:30-7:30 pm, Fisher 275