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**Office Hours:** Daily from 1pm-2pm and by appointment.

**Class Hours:** Daily from 11-11:50am.

## **PS 14 Introduction to Political Analysis**

This course introduces students to the methodology of contemporary political science, including research techniques for studying political behavior. More specifically, this course is intended to introduce students to the “science” side of *Political Science*. Over the term, students will be encouraged to think like social scientists, learn how to pose questions in the manner of their discipline, undertake a study of their own and present their findings in a customary fashion. They will also participate in an analysis of the work of other scholars (and their peers), a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of various methodologies, and a broader critical evaluation of the application of the scientific method to the study of politics.

Although the topic of research methods may initially appear to be a dull one, in fact, it is of outstanding importance. The noun “science” originates from the latin verb “scire” and translates into “knowing objectively” – the ultimate goal of all mankind and not only political scientists. Does democratization lead to peaceful external relations? Do diverse cultures necessarily clash with each other? Does religion impact politics? If so, in what ways? Do “values” have an impact on politics? The popular media and journalistic accounts of international and domestic events have led to many “false truths” in answering these and other important questions. However, both citizens and political scientists have an interest in acquiring “truth statements” about such questions. Political scientists especially have a responsibility to provide such knowledge as they are to communicate their results not only to a community of scholars but also to the community of mankind.

Over the decades, but especially since the so-called behavioral revolution in the 1950s and 1960s, social scientists in general, and political scientist in particular have developed “tools,” if you will, that enable us to “come to know objectively” about political issues and phenomena of interest and importance. These tools include theoretical versus historical, and practical or policy oriented modes of inquiry and are often (mistakenly) dichotomized into qualitative and quantitative methodologies and research designs. Among them are experiments, case studies, field research, survey research and many more.

The competence in these and other methods of enquiry justifies the making of “rationally redeemable validity claims” (Jurgen Habermas’ term) that help constitute general or particular bodies of knowledge justifiably described as “truthful,” “situationally

adequate,” “historically accurate,” “mature,” “cumulative” or “scientific.” However, we shall also always remember that scientific knowledge is only one form of knowledge alongside other forms of knowledge. These include, for example, intuition, common sense, superstition, mystical knowledge, or religious knowledge, and it is important to retain the respect for these forms of knowledge while engaging in science. This course aspires to cultivate a moderate, yet discriminating level of scientific competence in delineating, constructively criticizing, adapting and rationally utilizing scientific research practices. The books we will use towards this end are:

Janet Buttolph Johnson and H.T. Reynolds (with Jason Mycoff) (2007) *Political Science Research Methods*. **Sixth Edition**. CQ Press.

**Suggested, but not mandatory:**

It never hurts to know of other research method books when you are having trouble understanding a particular concept. Here are a few books that are available at our library:

Gering, John (2001) *Social Science Methods: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge University Press.

Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, Tim Futing Liao eds. (2004) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. Sage Press.

Goodin, Robert and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (1996) *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford University Press.

Miller, Richard (1987) *Fact and Method: Explanation, Confirmation and Reality in the Natural and Social Sciences*. Princeton University Press.

Please, also feel free to ask me for further material, be it books or articles, on specific concepts, theories, and methods. Also, please visit the Society for Political Methodology and the Consortium for Qualitative Research Methods group’s website. The URLs are:

<http://web.polmeth.ufl.edu>

<http://www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm/quaklmeth.html>

**Classroom Courtesy**

No laptop computers are allowed in the classroom. Members of the class will be expected to exhibit appropriate behavior to the instructor and each other. Most importantly, students are required to give to others the respect and consideration they would wish for themselves. At its best, a classroom operates as a marketplace of ideas, where open discussion permits students to digest and evaluate information. Students must realize that while it is permissible to question a competing point of view, it is never appropriate to allow the conversation to degenerate into personal attacks. It is also expected that students will exhibit good manners, listen when others are talking, and generally behave

in a professional manner. Students who behave inappropriately may be asked to leave the classroom and will have points deducted from their final grades.

### **Academic Honesty**

Cheating on a test or other assignment will result in an automatic loss of all points for that assignment and possibly an F for the entire course. Cheating includes looking at notes/readings during closed-book tests. Cheating also includes copying any part of a classmate's work or plagiarism of any kind. If you have any questions concerning what constitutes cheating and/or plagiarism, please consult with me.

Last spring, Furman University subscribed to an online plagiarism detection service (www.Turnitin.com). Here is how the service works: Faculty submit electronic versions of assignments to Turnitin via the Web. Turnitin compares these papers to the materials available in its extensive database, sending the course instructor an "originality report" identifying any overlap between the students' papers and other sources accessed through the database. All materials submitted to the service become part of the Turnitin database.

### **Course Assignments**

Regarding any of the assignments for this course, I encourage you to remain in close contact with me before and after the due dates for the assignment. Course assignments are path-dependent. This means that the further you dig yourself into a potential mistake, the more costly it will be for you to return. We want to avoid this! Moreover, I consider it important for students to get to know faculty and for faculty to get to know students. I will give more specific information regarding any of the assignments below as we approach their respective due dates. What you find in these descriptions are guidelines.

For a satisfactory result in any of the assignments below you will have to demonstrate good writing abilities. A clear writing style is an absolute prerequisite for you to be able to communicate your substantive points and arguments effectively. It is also very important that you proofread your papers for grammar and style. Once you have finished, let it sit for a few hours and then revisit it. This way you are more likely to detect errors and correct them in time before the due date. The due dates for the assignments are noted in the course schedule below. All assignments are to be typed, 1 ½ spaced, 12 point font New Times Roman with 1 inch margins.

#### ***Assignment 1: Introspective/Value Essay – Political Science? (10 points)***

For this essay you are to get in touch with your heart and soul and reflect over your inner beliefs as well as the materials we have dealt with so far. In class we will compare and contrast the social world with which political scientists are concerned with the material world, which is the concern of physicists, chemists and so on. Overriding questions for this assignment are: Is objective knowledge possible in either one of these worlds? Can we attain *absolute* knowledge or is this ambition in vain? Is a science of politics possible? Despite the subjective nature of this essay, what you are writing should be comprehensible,

plausible and logical. Clear logical writing and reasoning are a must. This essay is to be 3-4 pages long.

***Assignment 2: Choice of a Research Topic (0 points)***

In this class each of you will conduct a rigorous research project. The end product will be of high academic and scholarly quality and it will be an original and creative contribution to our knowledge in a particular issue area. Engaging in this project will be a demanding process but you will learn a variety of skills that will prove very valuable to your methodological and logical thinking and to your career aspirations of any kind. Among the skills you will acquire are: Asking relevant and important questions, searching relevant literature, collecting data, entering data, analyzing data with the aid of computer software, interpreting the results and writing a research paper. You are to choose from one of the two suggested topics below:

Topic A: Images of Islam

Topic B: Deterioration of the Environment?

***Assignment 3: Taking an online tutorial (0 points).***

Because your research project involves human subjects the university requires you to take an online tutorial on the webpage of the National Cancer Institute. This is easy and quickly done. Be aware that I cannot accept any of your further papers without this tutorial completed.

***Assignment 2: Submission of 2-3 survey questions (5 points).***

Your research paper will be your own individual project. However, survey research includes various very labor-intensive tasks. Among them are composing a sufficient number of well-written survey questions, designing a survey instrument, copying the survey in large quantities, administering the survey, collecting data, and entering data. Taken together these tasks are simply too much for any single person and I cannot expect this from you. Therefore, we will conduct these tasks in two groups (corresponding with topic selection). With each member of a group composing two survey questions, we will be able to build a comprehensive survey instrument.

***Assignment 4: Research Question Paper (10 points)***

In this assignment you are to formulate your own research question(s). You are also to devise your research design/strategy for examining your research question. Central tasks and questions you need to address in this assignment are the following: Introduce the subject matter. Why is it important to study this subject matter? What is/are your research question(s)? In what way will the answers be valuable and beneficial? How will you proceed in the larger paper? This paper is to be about 2-3 pages long.

***Assignment 5: Literature Review Paper (15 points)***

Your literature review paper should identify some efforts by other scholars on your selected topic plus any controversies associated with them. The paper should feature a

minimum of 5-7 scholarly works pertaining to the subject area. It should contain an assessment of what we know about the topic and the empirical bases for any disagreements. This paper should also identify the “space” where you will enter the scholarly discourse in your own research paper. This paper is to be 4-5 pages long.

***Assignment 6: Research Paper (20 points)***

This final assignment should represent accumulation of your previous assignments in that you assemble them into a coherent research paper and add a conclusion. This is, however, not a “cut and paste” exercise. You will need to incorporate corrections and revisions made based on the feedback you have received over the course of the semester. In its ideal form your research paper will represent a scholarly article with all the necessary components. It should be approximately 13-15 pages long.

***Examinations (2 x 15 points)***

We will have two written examinations. The exams are based on our in-class readings. I will give further details as we approach the examination dates.

***Class Attendance and Class Participation (10 points)***

It is of crucial importance that you attend class and participate actively. You cannot achieve a satisfactory score in this category if you just “sit in.” I expect the following from you:

- Preparation — your contributions demonstrate that you carefully read the assignment and engaged in it.
- Quality of Your Argument — your contributions are original, accurate and relevant to the subject matter under consideration and you reason by reference to proper evidence. Quality of Your Expression — your contribution is intelligible, concise, and addressed to your peers and the instructor.
- Contribution to the Process — knowledge is a cumulative achievement. Therefore, your contributions should demonstrate that you are listening to other students’ comments, take their ideas into consideration when responding, respect them, and criticize their arguments (not them!) constructively.
- Critical Thought — your contributions show critical awareness, do not reiterate conventional and/or common wisdom and avoid basic logical fallacies.
- Academic Openness — The etymology of the term “education” is latin (ex-ducere) and translates into “leading yourself *out* of yourself.” Be open for alternative and dissident arguments as this is very important for our intellectual maturation.

Unexcused absences will result in a loss of points towards your final grade (1 point per missed class). Excused absences are those that are accompanied by a written explanation, together with legitimate supporting documentation. For example, if you miss a class due to extra curricular activities, please provide a letter from the faculty member organizing the event; if for medical reasons, a letter from your doctor and so on.

## Grading and Late Papers

Your final grade is a composition of all the items described above. Late papers are generally not tolerated and will lead to a deduction of 2 points per day on that particular assignment. Here is the grading scheme:

|            |            |              |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| 95-100 = A | 78-79 = C+ | 60-64 = D-   |
| 90-94 = A- | 75-77 = C  | Below 60 = F |
| 88-89 = B+ | 70-74 = C- |              |
| 85-87 = B  | 68-69 = D+ |              |
| 80-84 = B- | 65-67 = D  |              |

Any student with a disability or special need should speak with me at the end of class the first day so that we can make any necessary arrangements or accommodations.

## Course Schedule

**This course is divided into five sections. These are: I. Setting the Stage; II. Matters of Research Topic; III. Matters of Research Design, Data Collection and Research Design; IV. Matters of Data Analysis; V. Research Presentations. Each section has a different focus and a brief description is given in the course schedule below.**

### I. Setting the Stage

*In this section of our course we will set the stage. We will discuss epistemological issues, namely whether a science of the politics is possible, and/or desirable. We will also compare and contrast the social world with which political scientists are concerned with the material world, which is the concern of physicists, chemists and so on. One of the overriding questions for this section will be: Is objective knowledge possible in either one of these worlds?*

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 4 March (Tuesday):   | Introduction to Class and Syllabus  |
| 5 March (Wednesday): | The Study of Political Science (no reading assignment).   |
| 6 March (Thursday):  | Johnson and Reynolds, ch.1: Introduction.   |
| 7 March (Friday):    | Johnson and Reynolds, ch.2: Studying Politics Scientifically.                                     |
| ***                  |   |
| 10 March (Monday):   | Brian Greene, "The Elegant Universe." PBS documentary based on Greene's book with the same title. |

- 11 March (Tuesday): Brian Greene, “The Elegant Universe,” cont.
- 12 March (Wednesday): Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco (1977) Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics. *World Politics* 29(4): 489-522 (available online at <http://www.jstor.org>).

## II. Matters of Research Topic

*In this section of our course we will discuss the various research topics that you can engage in for your research project. I made an effort to select feasible, timely and exciting topics. I hope you will like them.*

- 13 March (Thursday): Introduction to first research topic.
- 14 March (Friday): Introduction to first research topic, cont. [**Value Essay Due**]
- 17 March (Monday): Introduction to second research topic.
- 18 March (Tuesday): Introduction to second research topic, cont.

## III. Matters of Research Design, Data Collection and Research Strategies

*In this section we will discuss the basic concepts on which all sciences are founded and progress. We will also discuss methods of how to collect data for empirical research and some of the research techniques and methods that political scientist use as they engage in the research of political phenomena.*

- 19 March (Wednesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 4, The Building Blocs of Social Scientific Research: Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables, pp. 60-70.
- 20 March (Thursday): Johnson and Reynolds, Building Blocs cont., ch. 4, pp. 70-86.
- 25 March (Tuesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 10, Elite Interview and Survey Research [**Online Tutorial Certificate Due**].
- 26 March (Wednesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 10, Elite Interview and Survey Research, cont.
- 27 March (Thursday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 6, Measurement, pp. 88-104.

- 28 March (Friday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 6, Levels of Measurement, pp. 104-110 [**Survey Questions Due**]
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- 31 March (Monday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 6, Measurement, pp. 110-118.
- 1 April (Tuesday): Meeting to organize the survey instruments.
- 2 April (Wednesday): Founder's Week Convocation
- 3 April (Thursday): Meeting with Group A
- 4 April (Friday): Meeting with Group B
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- 7 April (Monday): Review Day
- 8 April (Tuesday): **Exam I**
- 9 April (Wednesday): Arend Lijphart (1971) Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *American Political Science Review* 65: 682-193. (Available online at <http://www.jstor.org>).
- 10 April (Thursday): Andrew Bennett and Alexander George (1997) Case Study Methods and Research on the Democratic Peace. Available at: <http://asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm/papers.html>
- 11 April (Friday): Examples of Experiments.
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- 14 April (Monday): Exemplary experiment article: Richard Crutchfield (1955) Conformity and Character. *American Psychologist* 10: 191-198; Solomon Asch (1958) Conformity, Obedience, and Persuasion.
- 15 April (Tuesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 3, Research Design/Experiments, pp. 122-138.
- 16 April (Wednesday): Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 5, Literature Review.
- 17 April (Thursday): Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 5, Literature Review, cont.
- 18 April (Friday): Introduction to SPSS [**Research Question Paper Due**]
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- 21 April (Monday): Building the SPSS dataset.

- 22 April (Tuesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 7, Making Empirical Observations: Direct and Indirect Observations, pp. 185-205.
- 23 April (Wednesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 8, Document Analysis: Using the Written Record, pp. 266-282.
- 24 April (Thursday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 8, Document Analysis, pp. 282-293.
- 25 April (Friday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 9, Sampling, pp. 209-227.
- 28 April (Monday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 9, Sampling, pp. 227-238.

#### IV. Matters of Data Analysis (and Exemplary Research)

*In this section we will discuss on how to analyze statistical data in systematic ways. This will involve the application of sophisticated computer software. In this section we will also read examples of interesting research and attempt at critiquing it.*

- 29 April (Tuesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 11, Univariate Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics.
- 30 April (Wednesday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 11, Univariate Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics, cont.
- 1 May (Thursday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 12, Measuring Relationships and Resting Hypotheses: Bivariate Data Analysis, pp. 339-366 (some omissions tba.).
- 2 May (Friday): Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 12, Measuring Relationships, pp. 366-400 (some omissions tba.). **[Literature Review Due]**
- 5 May (Monday): The Professor's Hour. I will present my own research program and you will have the chance to debunk it.
- 6 May (Tuesday): The Clash of Civilization Lecture; no reading assignment
- 7 May (Wednesday): Examining the Clash of Civilizations
- 8 May (Thursday): Analyzing Data with SPSS
- 9 May (Friday): Analyzing Data with SPSS, cont.

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12 May (Monday): B. Keith Payne (2001) Prejudice and Perception: the Role of Automatic and Controlled Processes in Misperceiving a Weapon. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81(2): 181-192

13 May (Tuesday): tba.

14 May (Wednesday): tba.

15 May (Thursday): Research Presentation

16 May (Friday): Research Presentation

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19 May (Monday): Review Day

20 May (Tuesday): Last Day of Classes [**Research Paper Due**]

26 May (Monday): **Final Exam**