POLS 3600: Political Science Research Methods

Spring 2015

Class Meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 11:00-11:50am in 214 Young Hall

This is a hybrid course. According to the Course Schedule, Fridays will be used to work independently on online assignments.

Instructor Info: Dr. Beth Rauhaus, Assistant Professor of Political Science
315 Hansford Hall ~ (706) 867-2665 ~ beth.rauhaus@ung.edu
Office Hours: Monday 1-2 pm, Wednesday 1-4pm, Friday 11-noon and 1-2 pm

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the methods most commonly used in political science research. The primary aim of this course is to provide students with the knowledge to evaluate scholarly research in political science and other social science disciplines. Students will review the theoretical underpinnings and best practices of various approaches to gather and analyze both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Topics to be covered in this course include: surveys, experiments, elite interviews, regression, ANOVA, and longitudinal analysis.

Pre-requisites: POLS 1101 and POLS 2101.

Course Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify and evaluate current research in the field of political science leading to the development of a clear and focused thesis statement or research question for a proposed research project.
- Students will be able to communicate effectively orally and in writing using the appropriate terms and theories in political science.
- Given various forms of data such as public opinion polls, original sources, and/or scholarly articles that use qualitative and/or quantitate data, students will be able to analyze and interpret the data and draw conclusions based on a well-reasoned argument.
**Course Required Reading Materials:** In addition to the three books listed below, articles will be posted to D2L for your reading.


**Course Requirements:**

In this class, students will have the potential to earn a total of 700 points through a variety of assignments and activities. Final grades will be calculated on a ten-point scale. The following course requirements are noted with the possible total points that may be earned. The due dates for each assignment and/or exam are noted in the course schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Projects</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**About the Course Requirements:**

Discussion Boards will be worth a total of 50 points. There are five discussion boards that will be held on D2L, where students are responsible for posting at least two times. Initial responses will be worth 5 points and an evaluation or feedback to a peers’ comment will be worth 5 points, making each discussion board worth a total of 10 points. Discussion boards will open Wednesday, after our class meeting and will remain open until Friday at 11:59 pm. You must post your initial response by Thursday at 11:59 pm. In order to receive full credit for each posting, students must exhibit knowledge of subject matter and contribute to the discussion in a meaningful way.

Participation points will be valued at 100 points. In this course, it is important to attend each class and participate fully. We have a number of activities, both in class and on D2L, that will be instrumental in the completion of the research project as well as preparing for exams. It is imperative to come to each class meeting prepared. Unexcused absences, lack of preparedness, and/or excessive tardiness will result in a five point deduction for each occurrence.

An Annotated Bibliography is an important requirement that will illustrate your research skills and commence the research process of completing the research project. For this assignment,
students will find five peer-reviewed academic sources that may be used to address their research question and/or topic and complete annotations as presented in our textbook.

**Examinations** will assess students’ understanding of key research skills and terminology. In order to do well on these exams, students should complete all activities and assignments, read all of the required materials, and participate in class discussions. The Midterm and Final exams will be worth a total of 100 points each.

**Research Projects** will be worth a total of 300 points, which is a significant portion of your course grade. Many of the skills and methodologies covered throughout the semester will be incorporated into this 15-20 page research paper. In this research paper, students will select a topic/public policy of importance, develop a research question, find and use appropriate research materials to address their research, and present their work in a class forum, which will be held during the last few weeks of class. Participation is mandatory, even when not presenting; it is necessary to have an attentive and engaged audience. Failure to attend peers’ presentations will result in a five point deduction of your participation grade for each occurrence. A rubric will be posted in D2L and reviewed in class prior to the due date.

Please note: All assignments are to be submitted to TurnItIn.com, unless otherwise specified. When submitting work into TurnItIn.com, be sure your attachments are uploaded prior to the deadline. Late submissions of any assignments will be subject to deductions, typically a ten percent deduction per day late.

Use the following information to access POLS 3600 in TurnItIn.com:
Class ID: 9233322
Enrollment Password: shades

**Classroom Decorum:**

1. Attendance is compulsory. You are considered responsible for being attentive to lectures and class discussions, for taking notes, and for being aware of the content of all class announcements. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. Those arriving after the roll is called or leaving early will be marked as absent. Excused absences will be honored with a medical note or university-related activity documentation. Present any documentation to me immediately upon your return to campus. In order to receive participation points, attentive and engaged attendance is required.

2. In order to have an excellent learning environment, basic classroom rules should be obeyed. These rules are for your own benefit, as it is my responsibility to prevent any distractions that hinder the learning process. Please power off cell phones and refrain from texting or using your mobile device for any reason. Laptops are allowed for note-taking only. Respect others’ opinions and be courteous.

3. Deadlines are firm. Assignments are not to be emailed to me, unless otherwise noted or approval is previously sought. Online activities will not be accepted late. Make-up examinations are not given. In the event of an emergency or excused absence, provide formal documentation
(medical or university documentation) and speak with me during office hours or contact me via email to discuss the possibility of an alternate exam. Be sure to report to examinations and presentations on time! Once students proceed to leave the room, other students may not be admitted for reasons of test security. Submission of work beyond the deadline shall result in a deduction of one letter grade per day late.

A note regarding communicating with your instructor: For your own security, I cannot discuss grades over the telephone or via email. I post grades to D2L for your viewing and/ or hand return graded assignments in class. If you wish to discuss your performance, schedule an appointment to meet with me or stop by during office hours.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction to the Course  
Wednesday, January 7: Syllabus Overview  
Friday, January 9: Hybrid --- Discussion Board, “Why are research methods useful in political science?”

Week 2: Research Methodology in Politics and Policy  
Readings: Ch. 1 Babble; Ch. 1 & 2 M&M  
Friday, January 16: Hybrid---Exploring Policy Problems, MM text exercises, pg. 39

Week 3: Finding and Using Research Materials  
Readings: Ch. 3 Baglione; Ch. 3 M&M  
Friday, January 23: Hybrid--- Find academic journals to use for a literature review

Week 4: Theory and Research  
Readings: Ch. 2 Babble  
Monday, January 26: No class meeting- Work on Annotated Bibliography  
Friday, January 30: Hybrid--- Discussion Board, “Why type methodology and theory may be used in researching your policy area?”  
**Annotated Bibliography due January 30th**

Week 5: Theory, Research, and Questions  
Readings: Ch. 2 Babble; Ch. 4 & 5 Baglione  
Friday, February 6: Hybrid--- Evaluating Op-Ed pieces, Interpreting arguments, and locating a thesis, Exercise #1, Baglione p.85

Week 6: Midterm Review and Exam  
Monday, February 9: Review
Wednesday, February 11: **In Class Midterm Exam**
Friday, February 13: Hybrid Activity--- Discussion Board, “Identifying stakeholders in your policy area”

Week 7: Research Design and Sampling
Readings: Ch. 3 & 4 Babble; Ch. 7 Baglione
Friday, February 20: Hybrid Activity --- Public Opinion Poll Analysis

Week 8: Questionnaires and Surveys
Readings: Ch. 6 Babble; Ch. 4 M&M
Friday, February 27: Hybrid Activity--- Discussion Board, Create a survey to be used in class focus groups

Week 9: Conducting Field Research
Readings: Ch. 7 Babble
Monday and Wednesday, March 2 & 4: Focus Groups and Interviewing Activities
Friday, March 6: Analyze findings of data collected in focus groups and interviews

Week 10: Content Analysis
Readings: Ch. 8 Babble
Monday, March 9: No Class Meeting ---Take Home Content Analysis Activity
Friday, March 13’ Content Analysis--- Discussion Board, “What is the true meaning of political/social/economic lyrics in songs?”

Week 11: SPRING BREAK

Week 12: Ethics, Analyzing Data and Linking Theory and Practice
    Readings: Ch. 9 & 10 Babble; Ch. 8 Baglione
Friday, March 27: Hybrid Activity ---Finalize drafts of Research Papers

Week 13: Research Seminar
    Discussion of Preliminary Findings and Progress on Papers
Friday, April 3: Hybrid Activity--- Submit Research Papers

Week 14: Student Presentations
Friday, April 10: Hybrid Activity --- View film on ethics in research and answer questions using the film guide
Week 15: Student Presentations
Friday, April 17: Hybrid Activity --- View film and answer questions using the film guide

Week 16: Student Presentations
Friday, April 24: Hybrid Activity--- Study Guide on D2L

Final exam will be held Monday, April 27\textsuperscript{th} at 10:20-12:20.
Appendix A: Supplemental Syllabus

ACADEMIC SUCCESS PLAN PROGRAM
UNG has implemented an Academic Success Plan Program to identify and provide assistance to at-risk undergraduate students. Refer you to your campus Academic Advising Center for the development of strategies that will enhance your academic success. You will be expected to take advantage of advising and other campus resources to achieve your academic goals.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities, and welcomes otherwise qualified students with disabilities. Students who require accommodations and services must register with Disability Services and submit supporting documentation. Disability Services provides accommodation memos for eligible students to give to their instructors. Students are responsible for making arrangements with instructors, and must give reasonable prior notice of the need for accommodation.

Contact Information for Disability Services:
§ Gainesville Campus: Carolyn Swindle, Assistant Director, carolyn.swindle@ung.edu, Dunlap-Mathis Building, Room 107, 678-717-3855
§ Dahlonega Campus: Thomas McCoy, Assistant Director, thomas.mccoy@ung.edu, Stewart Student Success Center, Room 313, 706-867-2782
§ Oconee Campus: Erin Williams, Assistant Director, erin.williams@ung.edu, Administration Building, Room 112, 706-310-6202
§ Cumming Instructional Site: Nicola Dovey, Director nicola.dovey@ung.edu or Beth Bellamy, Test Facilitator, beth.bellamy@ung.edu 678-717-3855. (For on-site assistance, contact Rebecca Rose, Head Librarian, rebecca.rose@ung.edu, Library University Center 400, 470239-3119.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
Student Code of Conduct: Please review the Student Code of Conduct located on the Dean of Students website.

Plagiarism and Turnitin.com: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Copyright: Both Federal and State laws forbid the unlawful duplication of copyrighted computer software or other reproductions of copyrighted material. In accordance with these policies, University of North Georgia expressly forbids the copying of such materials supplied by or used in the College. Unlawful duplication of copyrighted materials by a user may result in disciplinary action by the College under the Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic Infractions--Prohibitions, Theft), and/or possible criminal action by the owner of the copyright.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY
Students who exhibit behaviors that are considered to obstruct or disrupt the class or its learning activities are subject to sanctions under the Board of Regents Policy on Disruptive Behavior. Behaviors which may be considered inappropriate in the classroom includes, but is not limited to, sleeping, coming in late, talking out of turn, inappropriate use of laptops or mobile devices, verbal behavior that is disrespectful of other students or the faculty member, or other behaviors that may be
disruptive. Students who exhibit such behavior may be temporarily dismissed from the class by the instructor and will be subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

CLASS EVALUATIONS
Class evaluations at UNG are conducted online. Evaluation of the class is considered a component of the course and students will not be permitted to access their course grade until the evaluation has been completed. The evaluations will be accessible beginning one week prior to Final Exam week.

ACADEMIC EXCHANGE
Universities welcome diversity, free speech, and the free exchange of ideas. Discussion should be held in an environment characterized by openness, tolerance of differences, and civility. The values of an intellectual community are trust, honesty, free inquiry, open debate, respect for diversity, and respect for others’ convictions. Further, the intellectual community always seeks to foster the virtues and characteristics of intelligence, curiosity, discipline, creativity, integrity, clear expression, and the desire to learn from others. It is these that must guide our work and exchanges in this class. These principles are delineated further in the ACE Statement on Academic Rights and Responsibilities. If these values and principles are breached, students have the right and responsibility to discuss their concerns with the course instructor and, as needed, the department head. Usually, the concerns are addressed at this level, but sometimes the department head may refer students to another resource. In the event that either the student or the instructor is not satisfied after discussion with each other, he/she may take his/her concerns in writing to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration.

INCLEMENT WEATHER
TV and radio stations will announce if the college is closed. Information on closing will also be available on our website http://www.ung.edu. Students, faculty and staff who have registered under Blackboard Connect Emergency Notification System will receive information not only about college and individual campus closures but also about the status of college and campus hours, including late openings.

Blackboard Connect Emergency Notification System
Emergency situations - from natural disasters to health scares to the threats of violence - require that our campus community be fully prepared and informed. Accordingly, University of North Georgia has implemented the Blackboard Connect service to enhance university communication and emergency preparedness. The Blackboard Connect system is a communication service that enables key administrators and Public Safety personnel to quickly provide all students, faculty, and staff with personalized voice and text messages.

All UNG emails are added into the system automatically. In addition, you may enter a phone number so that emergency announcements can be sent to you via voice and text message. To do this, go to our Banner self-service environment; click on the tab labeled "Personal Information"; then, click on the tab named "Enter Emergency Contacts for Blackboard Connect." Here you can update your information for the Blackboard system.

If you have questions, please contact Public Safety at 706-864-1500 or send an e-mail to emeralert@ung.edu.

COURSE GRADES AND WITHDRAWAL PROCESS
Grades: A, B, C, D, F, W, WF, MW
Incomplete grades (I) - This grade indicates that a student was doing satisfactory work but, for non-academic reasons beyond her/his control, was unable to meet the full requirements of the course. For undergraduate programs, if an I is not satisfactorily removed after one semester (excluding
summer), the symbol of I will be changed to the grade of F by the appropriate official. For graduate programs, if an I is not satisfactorily removed after two semesters (excluding summer), the symbol of I will be changed to the grade of F by the appropriate official. Under special circumstances, this period of time can be increased with the approval of the department head and the dean.

IP (In Progress) - This grade is appropriate for thesis hours, project courses, Learning Support (LS) and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. It is not appropriate for traditional credit courses. If an IP grade isn't satisfactorily removed after 3 semesters, the symbol of IP will be changed to the grade of F by the appropriate official. Under special circumstances, this period of time can be increased with the approval of the dean. However, students who receive a grade of IP in a LS course or an ESL will retain this grade due to the nature of the course.

K - This symbol indicates that a student was given credit for the course via a credit by examination program.

MW – Withdrawal for military exigencies

CR – Credit (for Military experience)

NR - This symbol indicates that the grade was not reported by the instructor.

S- This symbol indicates that a student completed the course with satisfactory work.

U- This symbol indicates that a student did not complete the course with satisfactory work.

V - This symbol indicates that a student was given permission to audit the course. Students may not transfer from audit to credit status or vice versa. If an audit student withdraws from a course prior to the end of the term, a grade of W will be assigned as the course grade rather than a grade of V. Any audit student who is dropped by the instructor for excessive absences will be assigned a grade of W.

W or WF – A W grade indicates that a student was permitted to withdraw from the course without academic penalty. Students may withdraw from courses prior to the midterm and receive a grade of W. Withdrawals without penalty will not be permitted after the midpoint of the total grading period except, in cases of hardship as determined by the appropriate official. If a student withdraws before the deadline, the grade of W will be given. The grade of WF is for students who withdraw after the deadline for the term or commit academic integrity violations.