

Sam Houston State University
Research and Writing; Spring 2008
T/TH 12:30-1:50 AB1 206

Professor: Dr. Rhonda Callaway
Office: AB1 Room 319E
Office Hours: T/TH 11-12 and by appointment

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Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is two-fold: first, to provide an opportunity for students to learn the research process as it is conducted in the field of political science and second, to practice research and writing skills.

- In addressing the research aspect of the course, we will strive to accomplish the following objectives:
 - Understand theories and hypotheses, the construction of valid inferences, sampling, how to operationalize concepts into variables, and basic statistical knowledge.
- In completing the second objective, students will :
 - Learn to use electronic sources and properly cite sources, to write a literature review and other types of academic writing, and develop effective editing skills.

In general, the student will

- learn specific terminology and fundamental principles as they pertain to political science research
- learn how to locate and use resources for problem-solving
- develop and/or enhance analytical and critical thinking skills

Required Texts:

- Levitt, Steven CD., and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics*. HarperCollins.
- Stark, Rodney and Lynne Roberts, *Contemporary Social Research Methods*, 3rd edition. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning
- Corbett, Michael and Lynne Roberts, *A Microcase Workbook for Social Research*, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning
- One article from JSTOR
 - Poe, Steven C. and C. Neal Tate. 1994. "Repression of Human Rights to Personal Integrity in the 1980s: A Global Analysis." *American Political Science Review*. Vol 88, No. 4, 853-872. Available through JSTOR.
- Additional readings on electronic reserve

Course Requirements:

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| • Midterm exam | 20% |
| • Workbook Exercises/In-Class Assignments/Quizzes | 25% |
| • Literature Review Paper | 10% |
| • Methods Paper | 25% |
| • Final Exam | 20% |

Anyone who misses a scheduled exam or assignment will receive a zero. Make up exams and other assignments will be given only if you have unavoidable circumstances (with documentation) and only if you **contact the instructor in advance**.

In order to do well in the course, it is required that you attend class regularly. Please note that I do not give repeat performances. **Please be on time to class** and plan to stay, as entering a class late or leaving early is always disruptive. Such a disruption is unfair to the rest of the class and will result in you being counted absent. **NOTE: You get three no-questions asked absences (and I suggest you save one for the end of the semester when invariably you will catch whatever cold/flu is going around). Your fourth absence will result in a deduction of 10 points off of your final average (equivalent to one letter grade). Your fifth absence will result in an additional 10 point deduction. At six absences you will automatically receive an F for the course.** Excused absences may be given with a university excuse or with a dated doctor's note. In order for any absence to be excused, the professor must be advised prior to the missed class.

Participation:

Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged. As students, you will get the most out of this class if you engage in the discussions. Every student in this class has an opinion, and each of those opinions is valued in this class. I ask that you respect the diverse backgrounds and views of your fellow students, and employ common courtesies during class.

Reading:

In order to get the most out of this class you should read assigned materials before the classroom discussion on that topic. It is your job to keep up with the reading and come to class prepared to discuss the material. It may be helpful to take notes when reading the material and bring any questions to class. Throughout the semester, I may give quizzes and in-class writing assignments over the assigned reading. These assignments may be announced or unannounced, and will presume that you have read all of the assigned material up to that point. If at any point it becomes clear that you have not read for that day, I will ask you to leave the class and count you absent for that day.

Grading:

Course grades of 90 – 100 will be scored an A; a B is 80 to 89; 70 to 79 is a C; 60 to 69 is a D; below 60 is an F.

- If you think that an error has been made in calculating your grade, it is *your responsibility* to provide me with all of your work. To that end, it would be prudent to save anything that is handed back to you until you get your final grade report. Any students caught cheating on an exam will receive a minimum punishment of a failing grade for the class.
- Anyone having problems in this course is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor as early as possible. I will be happy to meet you and help you in anyway possible. I may be able to help you study more effectively or recommend other assistance. **Remember – I want you to do well in this course.**

Additional Information:

Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.* **Please be aware that plagiarized work will result in an “F” in the course.** See the following web address for more information on academic dishonesty. http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/810213.html

In general, plagiarism is defined as using another person's words and/or ideas as if they were your own. Your papers **must** be original work. If you use the exact words from another source in your academic papers, you must set off such quotes in quotation marks. After the closing quotation, you must provide an accurate citation which includes the author, date of publication, and page number. If you paraphrase, you still need to provide a citation. Use the Harvard style for citations within the text and for the reference page. The following is a helpful website: http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/harvard_5.pdf

The citation within the text should look like the following:

The events of the Easter Uprising led to many Irish men and women immigrating to the United States. It was these ex-patriots that served as the link between the United States and Ireland. Adams goes so far as to argue that the survival of the IRA was in part due to "The enormous Irish-American population has always felt a strong sentimental attachment to 'the old country' and this has been translated into a steady stream of cash and guns to the IRA" (Adams 1986, 134)

The complete citation must be provided in a bibliography.

Adams, James. 1986. *The Financing of Terror: How the groups that are terrorizing the world get the money to do it*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. **Students must turn off all cell phones while in the classroom, this includes text messaging. Students utilizing any electronic devices during class will be asked to leave and be counted absent. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination.** Students may tape record lectures provided they do not disturb other students in the process.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. The student must inform the professor in advance. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

Students with Disabilities Policy: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Note: This syllabus should be seen as a rough guide of the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester. Readings should be completed prior to class.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1

Jan 17 Introduction to the course; Pet Peeves and Common Writing Problems
Plagiarism discussion

WEEK 2

Jan 22 What is political science? Overview of the discipline

- Handout –The Discipline of Political Science
- Read: Six Evil Geniuses of Essay Writing
 - http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/Six_Evil_Geniuses.htm

Jan 24 In Class Computer Program Demonstration

- Read: Writing a Political Science Essay
 - http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/Writing_PolSci_Essay.htm
- Workbook - Introductory Exercise – In-class
- Homework – Introductory Exercises (page 13 – 17)

WEEK 3

Jan 29 Types of Political Science Research and Writing

- Freakonomics – Introduction
- Conducting a Literature Review – electronic reserve
- **Workbook Introductory Exercises Due**

Jan 31 The Research Process : Selecting A Topic, Formulating a Research Question and the Literature Review

- Chapter 2 – Read All
- Freakonomics – Chapter One

Feb1 Twelfth Class Day. Last day to drop without a “Q” and receive 100% refund

WEEK 4

Feb 5 Library Session

Feb 7 Concepts and Theories: What is a theory? What is a hypothesis?

- Chapter 1 – Text (read all)
- Workbook Exercises 1; read pages 19-22; do exercises # 1, #2a, b, c, e, #3, #6, #7

WEEK 5

Feb 12 Operationalization of Data

- Read workbook pages 29 – 38; refer back to textbook Ch 2
- Workbook Exercises 2A, #1, #2, #4, #5
- **Workbook Exercise 1 DUE**

Feb 14 Descriptive Statistics

- Read workbook pages 47 – 53
- Workbook Exercises 2B, #1, #3

WEEK 6

Feb 19

Measurement

- Read Chapter 3
- Download Poe and Tate article and read the variable section
- **Workbook Exercises Ch 2A and Ch 2B due**

Feb 21

Measurement Continued

- Workbook Ch 3 read pages 67 – 79
- Workbook exercises Ch 3, #2, #3, #4, #6, #7

WEEK 7

Feb 26

Census and Sampling

- Textbook Ch 4 – read all
- **First Draft – literature review is due**
- **Workbook Exercises Ch 3 Due**

Feb 28

Census and Sampling continued

- Workbook (read pages 91 – 99); do exercises Ch 4, #1, #2, #5
- Freakonomics – Chapter Two

WEEK 8

Mar 4

First half wrap-up

- **Workbook Exercise Ch 4 Due**

Mar 6

MIDTERM

Mar 7

Last day for dropping Spring Semester courses without grade of F.
Last day for resignations without receiving WP or WF marks.
Degree applications to be filed in Registrar's Office by students graduating in August 2007.

Mar 10-14

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9

Mar 18

Causation

- Ch 5 Textbook – read all
- Read Workbook 113 – 122

Mar 20

Causation and Regression

- Freakonomics – Chapter Four
- Read Workbook 133 – 137
- Workbook Exercises, 5a #1., #2, #4; 5b, #2, #4, #5

WEEK 10

Mar 25

Ethics in Research

- **Workbook Exercises Ch 5 Due**

Mar 29

No Class – Basic Research Design Online Lecture

- Ch 6 Textbook – read all
- Work on literature review paper

WEEK 11

April 1 Literature Review Day - no class

- Final Literature Review paper is due at 5:00. Turnitin and hard copy.

April 3 Survey Research

- Textbook Ch 7 – read all
- Workbook Exercises Ch 7 #1, #3, #5, #7

WEEK 12

April 8 Using Aggregate Data

- Textbook Ch 8 – read all
- Workbook Exercises Ch 8 #1, #3, #5, #7, #8, #10
- **Workbook Exercises Ch 7 Due**

April 10 Resume writing

- Bring current resume to class

WEEK 13

April 15 Putting it together – assessing research

- Aggregate Data and Time Series Analysis
- Read all/remainder of Poe and Tate and bring article to class
- In class writing assignment
- **Workbook exercises Ch 8 due**

April 17 Field Research

- Textbook Ch 9 – read all
- Freakonomics – Chapter Three

WEEK 14

April 22 Experimental Research

- Textbook Ch 10 – read all
- First draft of methods paper due

April 24 Validity Revisited

WEEK 15

April 29 Review of the research process and ethics

- Return methods paper draft and discuss

May 1 No Class – work on methods paper

Week 16

May 6 No Class – work on methods paper

May 8 Course wrap-up

- Methods Paper is due in my office.