

## Course Syllabus: POL 379, Research and Writing\*

Fall 2007 (credit 3 hours)

<b>Professor:</b> Mike Yawn	
<b>Office:</b> Sam Center & AB1 315J; Phone (936) 294-1456	<b>Classroom:</b> AB1, 310
<b>Office Hours:</b> 5:30-7, MW (Sam Center)	<b>Class Time:</b> 12-1, MWF
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**Texts:** (1) *Contemporary Social Research Methods*, by Stark and Roberts (with *A Microcase Workbook for Social Research*, by Corbett and Roberts) (2) *Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches Us about Leading Longer, Healthier and More Meaningful Lives*, by David Snowdon; (3) *Homestyle: House Members in Their Districts*, by Richard Fenno

**Course Overview:** The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to research methods in the social sciences and to improve the students' writing skills. We will take up matters of design, data collection, measurement, data analysis, and writing. This class will be taught more in the manner of a graduate class than an undergraduate class.

**Course Objectives:** If you study and prepare adequately for this course, you will be able to:

- Understand basic research concepts and sampling
- Understand and apply field research, content analysis, survey, and experimental research designs
- Identify various forms of campaign behavior
- Learn more about the elected officials in the community
- Formulate a professional resume and initiate a professional development program

**Attendance:** You are strongly encouraged to attend every class session. You will not be penalized for being absent, but you will miss various quizzes, homework assignments, and extra credit opportunities that **cannot be made up**. You are responsible for obtaining notes and handouts that you missed from other students or off the website/blackboard. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

**Missed Work:** *Missed tests cannot be made up.* However, because the final is comprehensive, it includes questions from material covered on the first test, second test, and material covered subsequent to the second test. If you miss a test, I will simply grade separately the questions on the final that correspond to the missed test. The second test will be take home, so it will not be possible to miss it. The tests will be announced at least a week in advance, but it is your responsibility to accommodate the class schedule. By enrolling in the course, it is assumed that you will make all the classes.

**Grades:** Your grade in this class will be determined by your performance on three tests, quizzes, homework assignments, and a book critique. The grade breakdown is below, followed by an elaboration of the assignments.

Test 1:	10%
Test 2:	10%
Test 3:	10%
Final:	20%
Homework/Quiz:	25%
Book Critique:	15%
Participation:	10%

\*I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time for any reason.

**Tests:** The tests will be objective (multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank) and/or subjective (essay). The final is comprehensive.

**Quizzes and Homework:** Quizzes will be given to ensure that students read their daily assignments. You will have a quiz almost every day there is a reading assignment. Homework will involve various exercise sets that correspond to our reading topics. Students will also write legal briefs over US Supreme Court cases, which will be counted in the homework.

**Participation:** You are expected to participate in and outside of class. Your participation should be constructive and respectful, both to the instructor and other students. I keep a detailed record of who does and does not participate in class, who was and was not able to answer questions, and who indulged in distracting or otherwise negative behavior. You are expected to keep up with current political events. Unprofessional behavior toward me, other students, university staff, or other citizens (while working on school-related matters) is unacceptable, and will be penalized harshly.

**Classroom Conduct:** Students are expected to treat each other and the professor with respect and courtesy. Students should be attentive and engaged at all times. Cell phones and other electronic or distracting items should not be visible or audible (keep in pockets, purses, or bags—do not remove during class).

**Book Critique:** Students will write a seven-page critique of *Aging with Grace*. I will provide a brief description of the critique with a list of topics that should be addressed in the paper.

**Extra Credit:** Students will be presented with various extra credit opportunities.

**Cheating:** The *easiest* way to fail this class is to cheat. Do not copy any work from another student, and do not plagiarize (defined as using someone else's work without proper documentation). At the minimum, I will fail you, but I may also seek to have you expelled from the university. Plagiarism in any of its manifestations will be penalized with the grade of a zero or referral to the Dean. Plagiarism is any use of work that is not your own, which includes use of another's language or research without proper citation (see student handbook for more information on plagiarism). Anytime you quote something or refer to a non-obvious fact then you need a citation. In if in doubt, don't. See the student handbook if you have additional questions about what constitutes plagiarism. <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

**Student Syllabus Guidelines:** You may find online a more detailed description of the following policies. These guidelines will also provide you with a link to the specific university policy or procedure:

<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

**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.*

**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 are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination.

**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. *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.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Activities
M, 8-20	Intro		
W, 8-22	Resume & Professionalism		
F, 8-24	Resume & Professionalism	Resume Done	Resume Discussion
M, 8-27	Sampling	Chapter 4 (Stark)	Quiz
W, 8-29	Sampling		
F, 8-31	<b>Walk</b>	<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Walk</b>
M, 9-3	<b>Labor Day</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
W, 9-5	Field Research	Chapter 9	
F, 9-7	Field Research	Fenno Introduction; 253-263	Fenno HW #1
M, 9-10	Field Research	Fenno 249-253; 263-295	Fenno HW #2
W, 9-12	Field Research	Fenno Ch 1	Fenno HW #3
F, 9-14	Field Research		
M, 9-17	Field Research	Fenno Ch 3	Fenno HW #4
W, 9-19	Field Research	Fenno Ch 4	Fenno HW #5
F, 9-21	Field Research		
M, 9-24	<b>Test 1</b>	<b>Test 1</b>	<b>Test 1</b>
W, 9-26	Surveys	Chapter 7	Quiz
F, 9-28	Surveys		
M, 10-1	Surveys	JSTOR #1 (Jennings & Niemi)	Survey HW (wkbk)
W, 10-3	Surveys		Survey HW (wkbk)
F, 10-5	Content Analysis	Chapter 11	Quiz
M, 10-8	Content Analysis		
W, 10-10	Content Analysis		
F, 10-12	<b>Test 2</b>	<b>Test 2</b>	<b>Test 2</b>
M, 10-15	Experiments	Chapter 10	Quiz
W, 10-17	Experiments		Quiz
F, 10-19	Experiments		
M, 10-22	Experiments	JSTOR #2 (Iyengar, Peters, Kinder)	Quiz/HW
W, 10-24	Experiments		Experiment HW (wkbk)
F, 10-26	Experiments		Experiment HW (wkbk)
M, 10-29	Experiments		
W, 10-31	Archival Data	JSTOR #3 (Greenstein)	Quiz
F, 11-2	Archival Data		
M, 11-5	Recap	JSTOR #4 (Jacobsen)	Quiz/HW
W, 11-7	Recap	JSTOR #5 (Yawn et al)	Quiz/HW
F, 11-9	<b>Test 3</b>	<b>Test 3</b>	<b>Test 3</b>
M, 11-12	TBA	TBA	TBA
W, 11-14	Legal Briefs	Schenck v. US (1919); Gitlow v. NY (1925); Brandenburg v. OH (1969)*	Quiz
F, 11-16	Legal Briefs	Tinker v Des Moines (1969); Johnson v TX (1989); VA v Black (2003)*	Legal Brief #1
M, 11-19	Legal Briefs	Mapp v. Ohio (1961); Gideon v. Wainwright (1963); Miranda v. AZ (1966)*	Legal Brief #2
W, 11-21	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
F, 11-23	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
M, 11-26	Aging With Grace	Prologue, Ch 1, Ch 2	Quiz
W, 11-28	Aging With Grace	Chs 3-5	Quiz
F, 11-30	Aging With Grace	Chs 6-8	Quiz
M, 12-3	Aging With Grace	Chs 9-11	Quiz
W, 12-5	Aging With Grace	Ch 12	Quiz
F, 12-7	<b>Dead Day</b>	<b>Dead Day</b>	<b>Dead Day</b>
	<b>Final</b>	<b>Final</b>	<b>Final</b>

\* JSTOR is a database and index on the SHSU Library webpage. To access this, you should

- 1) go to [www.shsu.edu](http://www.shsu.edu),
- 2) go to the Newton Gresham Library page,
- 3) click on Databases and Indexes link (under “Research”),
- 4) find JSTOR in the pull down menu.
- 5) Once you get to JSTOR, you should click on “Search” and then “Advanced Search.”

You can then find the article by typing in the author’s name or the title.

**JSTOR #1:** Jennings & Niemi “Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child” *The American Political Science Review*, 1968

**JSTOR #2:** Shanto Iyengar, Mark Peters, and Donald Kinder, “Experimental Demonstrations of the Not So Minimal Consequences of Television News Programs.” *The American Political Science Review*.

**JSTOR #3:** Fred Greenstein, Eisenhower as an Activist President: A look at new evidence. *Political Science Quarterly*, 1979.

**JSTOR #4:** Gary Jacobsen, “The Marginals Never Vanished.” *The American Journal of Political Science*, Feb 1987.

**JSTOR #5:** Mike Yawn, Bob Beatty, Kevin Ellsworth, Kim Kahn “How a Presidential Primary Debate Changed Attitudes of Audience Members” *Political Behavior*, 1998