

Sam Houston State University
Research and Writing; Summer 2008
AB1, Room 306; 12:00 – 1:50

Professor: Dr. Rhonda Callaway

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Office: AB1 Room 319E

Office Hours: M-TH 9 - 10 and by appointment

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 learn and 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
- Three articles 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* 88(4): 853-872.
 - Hall, Pamela D. 1999. "The Effect of Meditation on the Academic Performance of African American College Students." *Journal of Black Studies* 29(3): 408-415.
 - Cohen, Jeffrey E. 1995. "Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 87-107.

Course Requirements:

- Midterm exam 20%
- Workbook Exercises/In-Class Assignments/Quizzes 20%
- Article Reviews 20%
- Research Project 20%
- 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 undoubtedly make you known to the instructor for all the wrong reasons. The following outlines the attendance policy”

- **Perfect attendance will be rewarded. Those with perfect attendance will receive 3 additional points added to the final average.**
 - **NOTE: Perfect attendance means perfect...no absences for any reasons. Also note: being tardy is not perfect. If you are tardy, you will not receive any additional points. So...to receive full credit, you must be in class at 12:00! No exceptions.**

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.

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. 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 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.** 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. *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

- 7/8 Introduction to the course; Pet Peeves and Common Writing Problems
Plagiarism discussion
- The Discipline of Political Science – posted to Blackboard (read for tomorrow)
 - Read: Six Evil Geniuses of Essay Writing
 - http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/Six_Evil_Geniuses.htm
- 7/9 What is political science? Overview of the discipline
Types of Political Science Research and Writing
Writing an Article Review - handout
- Read: Writing a Political Science Essay
 - http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/Writing_PolSci_Essay.htm
- 7/10 In Class Computer Program Demonstration
- Using Research Engines including JSTOR
 - Workbook - Introductory Exercise – In-class
 - Homework – Introductory Exercises (page 13 – 17; Due Monday)
- 7/11 The Research Process : Selecting A Topic, Formulating a Research Question and the Literature Review
- Chapter 2 – Read All
 - Freakonomics – Read Introduction and Chapter One
 - Bring Hall article to class; Writing an article review

Week 2

- 7/14 Concepts and Theories: What is a theory? What is a hypothesis?
- Chapter 1 – Text (read all)
 - Workbook Exercises (read pages 19-22; do exercises # 1, #2a, b, c, e, #3, #6, #7)
 - **Hall article review due; Week 1 workbook assignments due**
- 7/15 Operationalization of Data
- Read workbook pages 29 – 38; refer back to textbook Ch 2
 - Workbook Exercises 2A, #1, #2, #4, #5
- 7/16 Descriptive Statistics
- Read workbook pages 47 – 53
 - Workbook Exercises 2B, #1, #3
- 7/17 Measurement Continued
- Workbook Ch 3 read pages 67 – 79
 - Workbook exercises Ch 3, #2, #3, #4, #6, #7
- 7/18 Census and Sampling and Review for Midterm
- Freakonomics – Chapter 2
 - Textbook Ch 4 – read all
 - Workbook (read pages 91 – 99); do exercises Ch 4, #1, #2, #5

Week 3

7/21 **No Class – study for Midterm**

7/22 **MIDTERM**

- Week 2 Workbook assignments due

7/23 Causation and Regression

- Freakonomics – Chapter 4
- Ch 5 Textbook – read all
- Read Workbook 113 – 122; 133- 137
- Workbook Exercises, 5a #1,, #2, #4; 5b, #2, #4, #5
- **Week 2 workbook exercises due**
- **Position Paper due**

7/24 Research Process Wrap-Up

- Discuss final research project
- Finalize research topic

Week 4

7/28 Ethics in Research

- **Week 3 workbook exercises due**

7/29 Basic Research Design

- Ch 6 Textbook – read all
- Read and bring Cohen article to class

7/30 Survey Research

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

7/31 Using Aggregate Data

- Textbook Ch 8 – read all
- Workbook Exercises Ch 8 #1, #3, #5, #7, #8, #10
- Bring Poe and Tate article to class

Week 5

8/4 Field Research, Experimental Research and Validity Revisited

- Textbook Ch 9 and 10 - read all
- Freakonomics – Chapter 3
- **Week 4 workbook exercises due**
- **Cohen article review due**

8/5 No Class – Finish research project assignment

8/6 No Class – Finish research project assignment

8/7 Final Exam and Research Paper Due