POS 3703: Scope and Methods of Political Science (3 credit hours)
Department of Political Science, The University of Central Florida
Fall 2011 Syllabus

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Office: UCF Valencia West Campus
Building 9, Room 135

Lecture:
Howard Phillips Hall Room 0310
TuTh 1:30 to 2:45 pm

Main Campus Office Hours:
PH 3rd Floor Regional Offices
TuTh noon to 1:30
And by appointment

Course Syllabus:
This is the course syllabus, and should be treated as a written agreement between the professor and student. Students should refer to the syllabus for any questions pertaining to the course, grading, etc. Any deviations from this syllabus will be announced in class. Therefore, students are responsible for any announcements made in class, and any information or handouts given out in class. Absence is not an excuse for ignorance.

Course Description:
The scope and methodology of political analysis. Extensive examination of the discipline, research design and methodology. The first half of the semester covers basic research designs, the research process, and gives students the tools and information needed to complete the course research paper. The second half of that paper covers other methods of investigation and analysis, survey research, sampling, qualitative research, and ethical considerations.

Goals and Scope of the Course
--Providing students with an overview of research methodology and techniques used by political scientists, and ethical considerations in political science research.
--Engaging students in political science methods of inquiry and the research process.
--Introducing the use of statistical software to analyze data, and how to present professional reports of findings.
--Giving the students the tools to conduct their own research and critically evaluate the research and findings of others.

Additional Items of Note:
--This class is a combination of lectures and activities. Relevant concepts will be covered in the lecture, and many of these concepts will be applied via various activities. Therefore, it is imperative that students attend class regularly to fully understand the research process.
--The reading associated with any of the lectures is meant to be read BEFORE that lecture.
--**Bring a flash drive or external drive to save your work**.
--If you have any questions, please ask.
--The best way to reach me is via email.
--You may NOT record classroom meetings (voice or video recordings), unless you first ask and receive permission.

Readings (To be completed before each class):

Required:
Brians, Craig Lenord, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard Rich. 2011. *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*. 8th Edition. Boston: Longman.
* 7th Edition also acceptable, but some chapters may not match up.

Optional:
Pollock III, Philip H. 2005. An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis. 2nd Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Grading and Responsibilities

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is mandatory, and will be counted as part of the overall course grade. Students are allowed two "free" absences per semester. Anyone who may have problems with this rule should contact me. Attendance will be taken in various ways, from a calling of role to quizzes at the beginning of class. If a student misses the taking of attendance, they are considered tardy. If a student arrives to class after the first 10 minutes of class, they are considered absent. It is the student's responsibility to inform the professor after class if they arrived late to class, but arrived in the first 10 minutes, in order to be counted tardy. For the purpose of the grade calculation, each tardy will be counted as 1/3 of an absence. The student's attendance (discounting the 2freebies) will be taken as a number and divided by the total number of meetings.

The student's participation will also depend on the student's conduct. Any disruptive behavior, inappropriate comments, activities not related to the course, etc. will reflect poorly on the student's participation grade. In addition, students will be engaging in group activities, discussions, and quizzes in class and on the course's blackboard site. Together, attendance and participation are 20% of the student's overall course grade.

Assignments:

Assignment due dates are included in the lecture schedule in this syllabus. Assignments are due **IN CLASS** on the due date. There will be a total of three (3) assignments over the course of the semester, the lowest of which will be 5% of the student's course grade and the other two (2) will each count toward 10% of the student's course grade. Assignments will be graded on their content and the completion of the assigned task, as well as proper English, grammar and professional writing. As writing is an essential part of this class and is a skill essential to communication and professional development throughout life, students should take all written work to the Writing Center.

Failure to turn in your assignment on time will result in a score of zero (0) on the assignment as **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**.

Exams:

There will be a total of two (2) exams, the lowest counting toward 10% of the student's course grade, and the highest as 15% of the student's course grade. The second exam is comprehensive. The last exam will occur during the regularly scheduled final exam period, during the University's finals week. No make up exams after the final.

NO MAKE-UP EXAMS, except in exceptional, extenuating circumstances. Students with a valid reason such as serious illness and documentation that satisfies the instructor can schedule a make-up exam, but must do so **prior** to the scheduled exam. The make-up exam will be different from the one given in class.

Paper:

The paper is research design/analysis. This paper will build off of the previous assignments and will use information from existing data sets that you will use in the computer lab/sections. An "A" paper will incorporate all the concepts introduced in the class such as a clear theory, research question, hypotheses, measures and variables as well as a test of statistical significance and proper analysis of the statistical results. Proper English, grammar, structuring, citation, and professional writing will also be a factor in the overall paper grade. There will be a paper outline (handout), and we will go over the paper assignment in detail in class and discussion sections. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED**. ***The paper is due IN CLASS: Thursday, November 17, 2011.***

Research and Writing Skills:

References required for written/class/online assignments must be relevant to our research, academic, authoritative and reliable. If you are a little shaky on academic standards governing acceptable references, ask questions of myself, or a librarian (or refer to the UCF library website).

All written communication follows standard rules of English grammar and spelling. If you are a little rusty on the standards acceptable in the academic community, go to the writing center, or ask me. All written work should be presented in a formal, professional manner; using proper language and formatting, and should be edited for grammar, spelling, and writing flow/style.

Writing Center:

The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any

point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at http://www.uwc.ucf.edu, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

Computer Useage:
Students will be expected to have access to a computer frequently, as all writing assignments used will be typed out and not handwritten. The software you use to write your assignments is irrelevant, as long as you follow my writing guidelines outlined later in my syllabus. I recommend to have access to a computer weekly. If you do not own a computer, there are computer accessible to you in all UCF's computer labs. For further information on computer labs, please see the following website: http://registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/webguide/index_quickfind.aspx.

Late Papers and Make-Ups:
DUE DATES for the term paper and assignments are FINAL. Late work will NOT be accepted for a grade. Students are encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete assigned work. Only under exceptional circumstances and with the permission of your professor are students allowed to make-up an exam (if the instructor is informed and gives permission prior to the scheduled exam). To qualify for this exemption from the DUE DATE rule, you must: notify me in advance of the exam/paper due date of your possible absence, AND provide a legitimate reason for your absence (death in family, serious injury, etc.). Do not anticipate any deviation from this policy.

Grade Breakdown:		*Grading Scale*:	
		90% and above	A
Attendance/Participation	20%	80% to 89%	B
Assignments (lowest 5%, other two 10%)	25%	70% to 79%	C
Research Paper (Due In Class: 4/19)	30%	60% to 69%	D
Exams (lowest 10%, highest 15%)	25%	Anything below 60%	F

Grading Rubric

A-Level Work	Fully addresses each element in the assignment. Demonstrates mature critical thinking skills. Uses relevant examples and support for argument(s). Uses appropriate and relevant language and terminology. Uses a coherent and logical structure. Writing is free of spelling and grammatical errors; is strong and concise; and demonstrates good word choices.
B-Level Work	Achieves above average quality in most, but not all, of the elements above.
C-Level Work	Achieves an acceptable level in most, but not all, of the elements above, but has some deficiencies in full completion of the assignment, argument or logical structure, and/or writing.
D-Level Work	Fails to achieve acceptable level in most of the elements above. Assignment has significant deficiencies in full completion of the assignment, argument or logical structure, and/or writing.
F-Level Work	Unacceptable amount of writing, logic, argument, or completion deficiencies. Contains many flaws and omissions of importance. Any submission of plagiarized work will also fall into this category.

Instructor Availability
Students wishing to meet with me can do so before or after class, during office hours (listed at top of first page), or by appointment. Please be aware that the easiest way to reach me is via e-mail.

E-Mail:
I will communicate with you through e-mail to answer questions regarding class assignments and exams. Regarding exams, I will *not* give exact answers for possible exam questions, but rather will provide information to help you find the answers. Professional e-mail communication is an important skill that will last beyond the class and college experience. Keep in mind how you want to present yourself through e-mail.

In this class our official mode of communication is through email. All communication between student and instructor and between student and student should be respectful and professional. As of 2009, Knightsmail is the only official student email at UCF. Class rosters list Knightsmail addresses rather than external email addresses, and all official class communications will be sent only to the Knightsmail addresses. Students are responsible for checking their Knightsmail accounts regularly. See www.knightsemail.ucf.edu for further information.

Blackboard:

Webcourses is an online course management system (accessed through my.ucf.edu and then the "Online Course Tools" tab) which will be used as a medium for turning in assignments and a forum for communicating with your teammates. Under the "Discussion" section, you will have a designated forum section. My recommendation is to check Webcourses every 2-3 days for updates from your teammates or myself. I will post the lecture outlines, study guides and lab assignments on Blackboard. If you are not familiar with this web site or you need more information please let me know.

Privacy: Access to Blackboard is extended to you for the duration of your enrollment in the course, providing that you comply with class and school policies. You may not share that access with another person who is not enrolled in the course. Students who do so violate the privacy of other students as well as school policy. The act may lead to the violator being denied access to the Blackboard shell.

On occasion, I permit others to enter the course, to critique my work, to view the operations of the course, or to work on a technical problem. For the entire term, my technical consultant has access to the course to provide continuity for you should the unexpected happen to me.

Non-Academic Misconduct

The scope and content of the material included in this course are defined by the professor in consultation with the responsible academic unit. Although the orderly exchange of ideas, including questions and discussions prompted by lectures, discussion sessions and laboratories, is viewed as a key part of the educational environment, the professor has the right to limit the scope and duration of these interactions.

Students who engage in disruptive behavior, including persistent refusal to observe boundaries defined by the professor regarding inappropriate talking, discussions, and questions in the classroom may be subject to discipline for non-academic misconduct for disruption of teaching or academic misconduct, as defined in the Golden Rule Student Handbook also defines potential sanctions for these types of infractions.

Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to: text messaging, talking or using cell phones, (turn off cell phones prior to class), surfing the internet, listening to music, downloading music, watching movies, checking scores, cursing, using offensive or inappropriate language of any kind, name calling, inappropriate actions of any kind, etc. Any student acting in a disruptive manner may be asked to leave the classroom and will forfeit participation and attendance credit.

Classroom Conduct:

Turn off all cell phones: **Each time a cell phone rings during class**, *everyone* will lose one point from their final grade, but if the professor's cell phone rings then everyone will receive an extra point on their final grade. In-class disturbances waste your classmates' time and money (tuition). Also, please do not read the newspaper, use class time to sleep, do work for other classes, or listen to music during class.

Academic Misconduct

Don't Plagiarize (not properly citing sources, passing off someone else's work as your own). Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com: In this course we may utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database

of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you may be expected to submit assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as an instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process, visit http://www.turnitin.com

Students with Disabilities

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Schedule (Tentative)—Instructor reserves the right to change or alter the schedule; announcements of changes and alterations will be made in class and posted on the blackboard site.

8/23 Course Introduction & Syllabus

8/25 General Inquiry, Topic, Theory
Chapters 1 &2

8/30 Theory, Research Question, Literature, Hypotheses and Variables
Chapters 2 & 3

9/1 Literature Review, Library Research, Introduction to Excel and SPSS
Chapters 3 & 4

9/6 Concepts and Measures; Nominal, Ordinal and Ratio Measures; Reliability and Validity
Chapters 5 & 11

9/8 Types of Charts, Graphs, and Central Tendency
Chapters 14 & 15
ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE

9/13 Graphing, Central Tendency, Distributions
Chapters 15 & 16

9/15 Cross-Tabulations, Chi-Squared, Correlations
Chapter 17

9/20 Statistical Testing and Professional Tables

9/22 **EXAM 1**

9/27 Controlling for Other Factors, Regression
Chapter 18

9/29 Regression and Other Statistical Methods
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE

10/4 Indexes and Scales & Type of Surveys
Chapters 8 & 9

10/6 Questionnaire construction

Chapters 8 & 9

10/11 Discussion of Assignment 3 and Research Paper

10/13 LAB

10/18 LAB

10/20 Sampling
Chapter 7
ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE

10/25 Sampling
Chapter 7

10/27 Research Designs, Role of Time and Other Quantitative Methods
Chapters 4 & 6

11/1 Case Studies, Qualitative Methods, and Focus groups
Chatpers 20 & 21

11/3 Case Studies, Qualitative Methods, and Focus groups
Chapters 12 & 19

11/8 Other Research Methods—Content Analysis
Chapter 10

11/10 LAB

11/15 LAB

11/17 Ethics
****PAPER DUE**

11/22 Ethics

11/24 THANKSGIVING

11/29 Ethics

12/1 Review and Wrap-up

FINAL EXAM
Tuesday, December 6, 1 to 4 pm