POS 6736: Conduct of Political Inquiry

Fall 2017

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Course Description

Research design and quantitative and qualitative analysis in political science.

Prerequisites: Admission to graduate school or C.I.

Credit Hours: 3

Course Objectives

1. Explore the fundamental logic of social science research

2. Evaluate and critique different aspects of research design

3. Develop a research design for an original research question

4. Write a high quality social science research paper

Required Texts

Gerring, John, and Dino Christenson. 2017. *Applied Social Science Methodology: An Introductory Guide*. Cambridge University Press.

Course Requirements

Readings & Classroom Participation (15% of grade)

It is extremely important that students fully read, review, and take notes on all assigned readings. Students will regularly be called on to participate in class, and the quality of this participation will have a direct impact on grades. Quizzes will occasionally be distributed to ensure students are keeping up with the material.

Article Reviews/Responses (25% of grade)

Students will turn in three brief response papers. These will indicate an ability to critically assess, respond to, and/or apply an article covered in class. More details will be provided in an assignment prompt the second week.

Paper Proposal (10% of grade)

Each student will submit one 800-1000 word proposal for a paper they wish to complete during this class. More details will be provided in an assignment prompt in the second week.

First Draft (front end) of Paper (25% of grade)

This draft will include an introduction that clearly articulates a specific research question, reviews of relevant academic literature, presents a clear theoretical argument, includes a discussion of appropriate and accessible data sources, and should be fully cited using APSA's in-text citation format (plus page numbers). You might not know the exact method you intend or need to use to answer your research question, but you need to clearly demonstrate the project is feasible by discussing your data sources. This draft will probably be in the range of 2,500 to 4,000 words.

Second Draft of Paper (25% of grade)

This will be a full and revised draft of a serious research paper and will have either addressed all previous comments from the instructor and classmates, or, in memo form, provide a justification for why the comment was not addressed. Specifically, the explanation will need to explain why the instructor's suggestion was inappropriate. Complete drafts will generally be between 5,000 and 7,000 words. These are general guidelines, as papers will be assessed based on the quality of their content, their coverage of required aspects of the assignments, and competence in executing those requirements.

Late Work

As a rule, late work will not be accepted and assignments not completed on time will receive a grade of 0. Students should pay close attention to due dates, should be aware of the length of readings, and should plan on finishing their assignments in advance of the final due date.

Summary of Dates (subject to change)

8/22	Getting Started
8/29	• GC Ch 1: A Unified Framework • GC Ch 2: Arguments • GC Ch 3: Concepts and Measurements • Kendall-Taylor, Andrea, and Erica Frantz. 2014. "How Autocracies Fall." *Washington Quarterly* 37(1):35-47.
9/5	• GC Ch 4: Analyses • GC Ch 5: Causal Frameworks • GC Ch 6: Causal Hypotheses and Analyses • Huntington, Samuel. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72(3):22-49. • Minorities at Risk Project. 2005. "Assessment for Darfur Black Muslims in Sudan."
9/12	• GC Ch 7: Experimental Designs

	• Posner, Daniel. 20014. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why the Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4):529-545. • Article TBA
9/19	• GC Ch 8: Large-N Observational Designs • Article TBA • Article TBA
9/26	• No Class • Paper Proposals Due
10/3	• GC Ch 9: Case Study Designs • GC Ch 10: Diverse Tools of Causal Inference • Finkel, Evgeny. 2015. "The Phoenix Effect of State Repression: Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust." *American Political Science Review* 109(2):339-353.
10/10	• GC Ch 11: Reading and Reviewing • GC Ch 12: Brainstorming • GC Ch 13: Data Gathering • Dwyer, Maggie. 2015. "Peacekeeping Abroad, Trouble Making at Home: Mutinies in West Africa." *African Affairs*.
10/17	• GC Ch 14: Writing • GC Ch 15: Speaking • GC Ch 16: Ethics • Article TBA
10/24	• GC Ch 17: Data Management • GC Ch 18: Univariate Statistics • Article TBA • First paper draft due
10/31	• GC Ch 19: Probability Distributions • GC Ch 20: Statistical Inference • Article TBA
11/7	• GC Ch 21: Bivariate Statistics • Article TBA
11/14	• GC Ch 22: Regression • Article TBA
11/21	• GC Ch 23: Causal Inference • Articles TBA
11/28	• Articles TBA
12/1	• Final Paper Due

Evaluation and Grading

Written assignments will generally be graded by the Thursday following the due date. Quizzes will generally be graded by the following Tuesday. Each assignment will weighted in webcourses, so that your updated semester grade will be automatically updated when grades for individual assignments are submitted. Missing assignments may be excluded from these calculations if a grade of 0 has not been specifically added. Students are strongly advised to track their progress on their own.

Letter Grade	Points
A	93 – 100 points
A-	90 – 92.99 points
B+	87 – 89.99 points
B	83 – 86.99 points
B-	80 – 82.99 points
C+	77 – 79.99 points
C	73 – 76.99 points
C-	70 – 72.99 points
D+	67 – 69.99 points
D	63 – 66.99 points
D-	60 – 62.99 points
F	59 and below

Communication

Students should be prepared to

- Correspond directly through webcourses or via their official UCF Knights email account (this is required by UCF; messages from other email accounts may be ignored)
- Include "POS 6736" in the subject line of messages (I will prioritize emails I see coming from the class)
- Include a salutation and write messages in proper English

Academic Honesty

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.

Accessibility Statement

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 connect with Student Accessibility Services, Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

University 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.

Copyright

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Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

Religious Observances

Students are expected to notify their instructor in advance if a holy day of their religious faith is expected to influence their participation in the class. Given the online nature of the class, this is not expected to be an issue. If a conflict does exist, immediately notify the instructor. For a current schedule of major religious holidays, see the Faculty Center's main web page under "Calendars," and for additional information, contact the Office of Diversity Initiatives at 407-823-6479.