POS 6736 Conduct of Political Inquiry
Fall 2018

Instructor: Professor Kenicia Wright
Class Location: TBD
Class Meeting: Monday, 6-8:50pm
Office: TBD
Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 1-3pm, and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of the instructor (3 credit hours)

This is a graduate-level seminar aimed at introducing graduate students to research design and introductory data analysis used in political science research. Students enrolled in this course will be introduced to the logic of inquiry, the basic elements of empirical research, and methodology commonly applied in the social sciences. The assigned readings and assignments in this course were selected in order to help students evaluate existing research, while critically thinking about their own research interests. Students will learn how to formulate research questions, develop theories to answer research questions, derive hypotheses from their theories, as well as the empirical "tools" necessary for hypothesis testing. We will cover an array of topics, including: the design of social inquiry, data collection, hypotheses, concepts, and variables, descriptive statistics, and causal inference.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course should:

- Gain increased understanding of the nature of political science research
- Be more aware of the research strategies scholars across disciplines commonly use
- Have the ability to read, understand, and critically evaluate scholarly research
- Effectively use the tools that are necessary to complete an original political science research paper

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Baglione, Lisa A. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods.* CQ Press. Second Edition, 2012.
    - This text is available at the UCF library and for under $10 on Amazon.

2. King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. 1994.
    - This text is available at the UCF library and for around $15 on Amazon.
3. I will also assign scholarly articles. These articles can be accessed through the UCF Library website.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Attendance, Preparation, and in-class participation: 100 points

This is a graduate-level seminar, so all students are expected to prepare and attend class, and to participate during class. The discussion questions in this syllabus offer students *starting* points for class discussion.

Quizzes: 200 points

There will be 10 quizzes in this course. Quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple choice, and open ended questions and will be randomly given throughout the semester, **at the start of class**. The purpose of these quizzes are to ensure students understand course material. Make-up quizzes will not be allowed, unless a student has a university approved excuse for not attending class.

Research Paper: Students will need to complete a research paper for this course. The paper should include an introduction, literature review, theory, and data and methods sections. I understand that this will be the first research paper for many students in this course, so there are several optional deadlines students can choose to complete that will help them complete their paper by the due date. I will be available throughout the semester to offer students any additional help they need with completing this paper.

- Literature Review and Theory: 100 points
- First Paper Draft: 200 points
- "Final" Research Paper: 250 points

Conference: During the week of finals, students will present their papers in a conference style presentation. Discussants will be assigned and additional details will be given as the semester progresses.

- Attendance and Participation: 50 points Participation points are earned when students ask a minimum of **TWO** questions during two separate presentations.
- Discussant comments: 100 points

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 who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons 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 with you on your 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.

Academic Misconduct

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. Plagiarism includes not properly citing sources, passing off someone else's work as your own, submitting a paper written for another class, etc. See the UCF Golden Rule, the FTCL page on academic integrity, and the library web-site for further information. I will adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break any rules.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I expect all students to come to class with assigned class readings complete. At a minimum, students are expected to attend class with the ability to answer the following questions:

1. What is the research question being examined in the reading?
2. What is the main theory?
3. What are the hypotheses? How are the hypotheses tested?
4. What are the key variables? How are they measured?
5. What is the data collection process?
6. What are the findings? Does it support the authors argument?
7. Are you convinced by the argument? What would you change?

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 20th - Course Introduction

Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 1: "So You Have to Write a Research Paper"
King et al. 1994, p.3-12
Hill, Kim Quaile. "Myths About the Physical Sciences and Their Implications for Teaching Political Science" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37.3 (2004): 467-471.

Week 2: August 27th
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 2: "Getting Started: Finding a Research Question"
King et al. 1994, p.12-23
Optional: **Come to class with three research questions you are interested in exploring for your paper.**

Week 3: September 3rd
NO CLASS - Labor Day

Week 4: September 10th
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 3: "Learning Proper Citation Forms, Finding the Scholarly Debate, and Summarizing and Classifying Arguments: The Annotated Bibliography"
Optional: **Come to class with an outline of your paper. No longer than 2 pages.**

Week 5: September 17th
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 4: "Making Sense of the Scholarly Answers to Your Research Question: Writing the Literature Review"

Week 6: September 24th
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 5: "Effectively Distilling Your Argument: The Thesis, Model, and Hypothesis"

Week 7: October 1st
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 7: "Making Your Plan and Protecting Yourself from Criticism: The Research Design"
King et al. 1994, p. 46-63
King et al. 1994, p. 115-139
REQUIRED: **Come to class with a draft of the literature review and theory sections of your paper.**

Week 8: October 8th
Assigned Readings:
King et al. 1994, Ch. 3 "Causality and Causal Inference"

Week 9: October 15th
Assigned Readings:
King et al. 1994, Ch. 5 "Understanding What to Avoid"

Week 10: October 22nd
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 9 "Bringing the Paper Together in Three Essential Ways: The Conclusion, Introduction, and Title"

Week 11: October 29th
Assigned Readings:
Optional: **Come to class with drafts of your Data and Methods section. This draft should include the steps you plan to take to collect data for your paper in the future (data sources, general description of experiment or case study you plan on using, or steps for qualitative research).**

Week 12: November 5th
Assigned Readings:

Week 13: November 12th
NO CLASS - Veterans Day

Week 14: November 19th
Assigned Readings:
REQUIRED: **First full paper draft is due TODAY. Papers must be turned in by the start of class.**
Students will be given details about the conference (time limits, example of presentations, assigning discussants, structure of discussant comments, etc.).

Week 15: November 26th
Assigned Readings:
Baglione 2012, Ch. 6 "Revising and Editing Your Work: It Ain't Over 'til It's Over"
REQUIRED: **Each student must EMAIL their paper to the assigned discussant with the professor "cc'ed" by the start of class today.**

Finals Week: December 3rd

Student Conference

We will have a conference where each student is expected to present their research paper. The conference will offer students a "final" opportunity to receive feedback on their paper from their colleagues as well as the professor. Each student enrolled in the course is expected to attend the conference and will earn participation points by asking a minimum of **TWO** questions during two different student presentations.

A final version of the paper with all required sections - including paper title, introduction, and conclusion - must be submitted to the provided Turnitin link by **December 5th at NOON**.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule, assigned readings, etc., at any point during this semester.