POS6736 Conduct of Political Inquiry
Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Wright
Class Location: HPHO305G
Class Meeting: Monday, 6-8:50pm
Office: HPH305B (Sign in with the front office in HPH302)
Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 9 to 11am, and by appointment
Email: `Kenicia.Wright@ucf.edu`

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. This seminar introduces students to the logic of inquiry, basic elements of empirical research, and methodology commonly applied in scholarly research. Assigned readings are from scholars across disciplines to give students a well rounded introduction to political inquiry and assignments require students think critically about reading and apply the material covered to their unique research interests. Students will learn to identify scholarly research, formulate original research questions and related theories, derive hypotheses from their theories, as well as the "tools" necessary for hypothesis testing. We will cover an array of topics, including: the design of social inquiry, data collection, data analysis, descriptive statistics, and causal inference.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course will learn how to:

- Locate, understand, and critically discuss scholarly research
- Understand and explain the research strategies scholars across scholarly disciplines use
- Understand and explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative research
- Use the tools learned in this course to develop a research paper that explores an original political science related research and contains introduction, literature review, theory, hypotheses, and conclusion sections (more details below)
- Identify appropriate measures for dependent, independent, and control variables in a quantitative research project or details for examining key concepts in a qualitative research project

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are four required texts for this course. These are important texts for developing an understanding of the foundation related to social inquiry and paper writing in the social sciences. There are several options for gaining access to these texts, including borrowing one of the several copies available for check-out/ILLIAD request through the UCF Library or purchasing these texts through UCF library as well as online sites. **Students are expected to have their books by the second week of class!**

1. Baglione, Lisa A. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. CQ Press. Third Edition. 2015.
   ISBN-13: 9781483376165
   - This text is available at the UCF library and for under $20 online.
2. King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. 1994.
   ISBN-13: 978-0691034713
   - This text is available at the UCF library and for around $15 online.
3. Wheelan, Charles. *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dream from the Data*. WW Norton and Company. 2014.
   ISCN-13:978-0393347777
   - This text is available at the UCF library and for under $12 online.
4. 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 attend class fully prepared with the ability to critically discuss each assigned reading. Students will earn these points by attending class regularly, offering meaningful contribution to class discussions, and respectfully engaging in dialogue with their colleagues. Student performance will be assessed twice in this course: (1) at the midpoint of the semester (from the start of the semester to the midpoint of the course) and (2) the last class meeting before student presentations (from the midpoint to the final week of the course). The percent earned will reflect the percent of engagement from each student over the period specified in the previous sentence.

RESEARCH ABSTRACTS: 250 POINTS

Students are expected to create original research abstracts based on assigned readings. Research abstracts are comparable to conference proposals - short, clear statement of the key

components of a research project. This type of writing is important involves a skill that takes practice, effort, and time to develop. Students should complete the assigned readings for a given week and develop an abstract that clearly states: (1) a research question of interest that accounts for the major points discussed in the assigned readings for that week, (2) the main point made by at least one piece of existing research related to the question, (3) what existing research misses, and (4) steps that can be taken to examine the question; **no more than 450 words**.

A grading rubric for this assignment will be provided by Week 2 of the course. Starting in Week 3 of the course, students are expected to submit a research abstract that incorporates / relevant to points related to the assigned reading every other week (biweekly). Five abstracts must be submitted and each abstract worth 50 points. Students must log in and submit their abstract to appropriate folder for that week in Webcourses by **the Sunday before class at 11:59pm**.

STUDENT LED DISCUSSION WEEK: 150 points

Students will lead ONE discussion of ONE reading related to their research interest during Week 7. Students must email PDF versions of THREE scholarly articles related to their research interests to Dr. Wright at Kenicia.Wright@ucf.edu the Sunday before Week 5 (5 points will be deducted for each late day). Dr. Wright will review the articles, select one for each student, and post an Announcement in Webcourses that contains the full APA citation for each reading, time limit for each discussion, and the students responsible for reading each article. Requirements:

- All students: Email PDFs to Dr. Wright the Sunday, two weeks before the student led discussion. Once the articles are determined, students will be assigned readings to discuss. (worth 30 points, 5 points reduced for each late day)
- When leading discussion: Offers well informed overview of the reading during in-class discussion (worth 35 points)
- When leading discussing: Respectfully answers questions from colleagues in the seminar during in-class discussion (worth 35 points)
- When you are not leading discussion: Email Dr. Wright two questions you have for the readings you are assigned to discuss the SUNDAY before the Week 7 student led discussion by 11:59pm. Questions should reflect critical thinking of each reading. (50 points)

RESEARCH PAPER: WORTH A TOTAL OF 500 POINTS: Students enrolled in this course must complete a research paper. Instead of submitting a paper during the week of finals, this course is designed so that students submit the required sections of the paper throughout the semester. This encourages students to complete assigned course readings,

think critically about the material we cover in the course, and incorporate information that is relevant for their paper. This process allows students to develop their ideas over several months - while learning course material over the semester - and receive feedback from the course instructor on each required section before presenting and submitting a final paper draft at the end of the course. Students should not feel overwhelmed by the feedback they receive or the fact that their paper is expected to evolve over the semester. The final paper will be graded based on how well student address comments they have received throughout the semester and overall content on the final paper draft. Remember - writing is a process, not a "one shot" game!

Research paper related assignments: all assignments below are required and worth a total of 500 points.

1. Upload THREE research questions (RQs) you're interested in exploring for your research paper to Webcourses: worth 50 points (Due Sunday at 11:59pm before Week 2)

2. Select one RQ; upload the RQ, the APA citation of three related sources, and two paragraphs - one paragraph that summarizes the key points and one paragraph that explains how the reading connects to the RQ to Webcourses: worth 50 points (Due Sunday at 11:59pm before Week 4)

3. Outline of entire paper: must contain all of the required sections for the full research papers, a minimum of five points you intend on covering in each section, and the LR should incorporate a minimum of five scholarly sources (not those from the previous assignment); additional details will be provided in class: worth 50 points (Due Sunday at 11:59pm before Week 6)

4. Literature Review draft: should incorporate a minimum of 10 scholarly sources, include a References/Work Cited page, and be written in the style of a literature review (not just a summary of each source!): worth 50 points (Due Sunday at 11:59pm before Week 8)

5. Theory and Hypotheses draft: worth 50 points (Due Sunday at 11:59pm before Week 10)

6. Data and methods draft: worth 50 points (Due Sunday at 11:59pm before Week 13)

7. A Two-part Conference Presentation at the end of the course - worth 50 points; attendance is required both days, even when you are not presenting

8. Conference: worth 150 points; (1) Upload discussant comments on assigned reading to Webcourses by Sunday, Dec. 1st or Sunday, Dec. 8th at 11:59pm (worth 75 points; deadlines depend on the date of student conference presentations) and (2) Ask minimum of TWO questions asked during two separate presentations in each part of the conference (worth 75 points)

9. "Final Research Paper": worth 100 points (Submit to Turnitin link in Webcourses by 12/11 at 11:59pm (for ALL students)

Formatting of Paper drafts: We will cover the required components in each of these sections throughout the course. Papers should be in 12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced, and include APA formatting. Students will upload their final paper drafts to the Turnitin link provided in Webcourses. Final paper drafts must include a title as well as section headings for the required sections listed below:

- I. Introduction
- II. Literature Review
- III. Theory and Hypothesis/es
- IV. Data and Methods
- V. Findings / Discussion
- VI. Conclusion

Conference details: Conference attendance is REQUIRED. Students who do not attend must have a University approved excuse or will receive a "0" for all conference related assignments. During this conference, which will be held during Finals Week, students will complete a conference style presentation of their paper, answer questions from their colleagues, and serve as a discussant for one another paper in the course. Discussants are expected to thoroughly read and upload a Word document with five comments for their assigned paper; the comments should reflect critical thinking and discussant assignments will be made near the date of the conference. Additional details will be provided over the course of the semester.

Grading:
A: 929.5 - 1000 points
A-: 899.5 - 929.4 points
B+: 869.5 - 899.4 points
B: 829.5 - 869.4 points
B-: 799.5-829.4 points
C+: 769.5 - 799.4 points
C: 729.5 - 769.4 points
C-: 699.5-729.4 points
D+: 669.5 - 699.4 points
D: 629.5-669.4 points
D-: 600-629.4 points
F: 599.4 points and below

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) `http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/` (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

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

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at `http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc`. Section 1, "Academic Misconduct" lists the behavior students are prohibited from engaging in. Dr. Wright adheres to the highest standards of academic integrity, so do not ask or expect me to change your grade illegitimately; the appropriate steps will be taken for any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment in this course. Plagiarism includes not properly citing sources, passing off someone else's work as your own, submitting a paper you wrote for a different class, helping otehrs violate academic behavior standards, etc. Contact Dr. Wright if you have any questions about appropriately citing work you refer to or rely on to create any assignments for this course. See the UCF Golden Rule, the FTCL page on academic integrity, and the library web-site for further information on this. Expect penalties for failing for academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating; penalties can include a failing grade on an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade.

CAMPUS SAFETY STATEMENT

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, everyone needs to work

together. Students should be aware of the surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts; there is an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door in every UCF classroom. To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to my.ucf.edu and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the tool bar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on your Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert," fill out the information, including your e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK." Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Students are expected to attend class with assigned class readings complete. At a minimum, each student should be able to discuss the following questions for empirical readings:

1. What is the research question being examined in the reading?
2. What does the existing literature "say" about the question?
3. What is the theory?
4. What are key variables / concepts related to the question?
5. What are the hypotheses? How are they tested?
6. What data is used? How are key concepts measured?
7. What are the findings? Implications of the results?
8. Are you convinced by the argument? What would you change?

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 26th - Course Introduction

In-class exercise on finding and reading scholarly research and writing a research abstract

Assigned Readings:

1. How to email a professor: https://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor and http://web.wellesley.edu
2. "The Weekly Standard Makes a Fact Free Argument about Political Science. Here are Some Facts" (Find using Google search)
3. Gustafsoon and Hagstrom. 2017. "What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students how to control political science research puzzles."

4. USC Library Guide on writing a research abstract. Available at: `https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/abstract`.

Week 2: September 2nd - No class! (Labor Day) Although we will not have a seminar meeting on this day, students are expected to email three research questions they are interested in exploring in their final paper to Dr. Wright at Kenicia.Wright@ucf.edu by Sunday, Sept. 1st, at 11:59pm. Students are also expected to read and understand:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 1: "So You Have to Write a Research Paper"
2. Baglione 2012, Ch. 2: "Getting Started: Finding a Research Question"
3. Wheelan 2013, Introduction

Week 3: September 9th - The Basics of Social Science Research
The first Weekly Research Abstract must be submitted by Sunday, Sept. 8th at 11:59pm. During today's class we will have an exercise on using research published in the *Annual Review of Political Science* as a foundation for identifying seminal research related to your RQs.
Assigned Readings:

1. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 1 "What's the Point?"
2. Baglione 2012, Ch. 3: "Learning Proper Citation Forms, Finding the Scholarly Debate, and Summarizing and Classifying Arguments: The Annotated Bibliography"
3. King et al. 1994, p.3 - p.23

Week 4: September 16th - Understanding the Scholarly Debate
Students must email the ONE RQ they will explore in the final paper to Dr. Wright with a summary of three related scholarly sources. Today's seminar will be heavily discussion based. Come to class with an idea of the puzzle related to your research question and one related source from the *Annual Review of Political Science*.
Assigned Readings:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 4: "Making Sense of the Scholarly Answers to Your Research Question: Writing the Literature Review"

Week 5: September 23rd - Difference between Quantitative and Qualitative Research
Students must email three PDFs they are interested in discussing during the student led discussion (Week 7) by Sunday, Sept. 22nd, at 11:59pm. The second Weekly Research Abstract must be submitted by Sunday, Sept. 22nd at 11:59pm to Webcourses.
Assigned Readings:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 5: "Effectively Distilling Your Argument: The Thesis, Model, and Hypothesis"
2. King et al. 1994, p. 75-82 AND p. 99-109
3. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 3 "Deceptive Description"

Week 6: September 30th - Correlation vs. Causation
Students must submit an outline of their research paper by Sunday, Sept. 29th, at 11:59pm.
Assigned Readings:

1. King et al. 1994, p. 46-63
2. King et al. 1994, p. 115-139
3. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 4 "Correlation"

Week 7: October 7th - Student led discussions
The third Weekly Research Abstract must be submitted by Sunday, Oct. 6th at 11:59pm; this abstract should relate to one of the student selected assigned readings this week. Students must also email two questions about each of the readings they were assigned by Sunday, Oct. 6th, at 11:59pm. Students will lead the discussion during Monday's seminar.

Week 8: October 14th - Identifying the Appropriate "Data" for your RQ
Students must submit their Literature Review draft by Sunday, Oct. 13th, by 11:59pm and should come to class with an example of quantitative and qualitative research related to their RQ.
Assigned Readings:

1. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 2 "Descriptive Statistics"
2. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 5 "Basic Probability"
3. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 7 "The Importance of Data"

Week 9: October 21st - Understanding your "Data"
The fourth Weekly Research Abstract must be submitted by Sunday, Oct. 20th at 11:59pm.
Assigned Readings:

1. King et al. 1994, Ch. 6 "Increasing the Number of Observations"
2. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 5 1/2 "The Monty Hall Problem"
3. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 6 "Problems with Probability"
4. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 8 "The Central Limit Theorem"

Week 10: October 28th - Theory and Hypotheses Development
Students must submit the draft of their Theory section by Sunday, Oct. 27th, at 11:59pm.
Assigned Readings:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 8: "Evaluating the Argument: The Analysis and Assessment Section"
2. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 9 "Inference"
3. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 10 "Polling"
4. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 13 "Program Evaluation"

Week 11: November 4th - Research Design
The fifth Weekly Research Abstract must be submitted by Sunday, Nov. 3rd at 11:59pm.
Assigned Readings:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 7: "Making Your Plan and Protecting Yourself from Criticism: The Research Design"
2. King et al. 1994, Ch. 5 "Understanding What to Avoid"
3. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 11 "Regression Analysis"
4. Wheelan 2013, Ch. 12 "Common Regression Mistakes"

Week 12: November 11th - No class (Veterans Day)
Although we will not have a face-to-face seminar meeting today, students are expected to complete the exam online. The exam will be available from Nov. 12th to Nov. 17th; additional details were discussed during class on 9/23.

Week 13: November 18th - Bringing Your Paper Together
Students must submit the draft of their Data and Methods sections by Sunday, Nov. 17th, at 11:59pm.
Assigned Readings:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 9 "Bringing the Paper Together in Three Essential Ways: The Conclusion, Introduction, and Title"
2. Wheelan 2013, Conclusion

Week 14: November 25th - Course Wrap-Up
All students must EMAIL their paper to the assigned discussant with the professor "cc'ed" by Monday, Nov. 25th at 3pm. Points will be deducted for papers that are emailed after this deadline.
Assigned Readings:

1. Baglione 2012, Ch. 6 "Revising and Editing Your Work: It Ain't Over 'til It's Over"

December 2nd - Student Conference, Part One
Discussant comments must be uploaded in a Word document by Sunday, Dec. 1st, at 11:59pm to Webcourses. **Attendance and participation are required!**
During today's seminar, we will have the first part of the student conference. Students assigned to present this day will have a "final" opportunity to receive feedback on their paper from their discussant, colleagues, as well as Dr. Wright. Additional details will be provided in class.
Students must upload a final version of the paper with all required sections - including paper title, introduction, and conclusion - to the Turnitin link in Webcourses by **December 11th at 11:59pm**.

December 9th - Student Conference, Part Two
Discussant comments must be uploaded in a Word document by Sunday, Dec. 8th, at 11:59pm to Webcourses. **Attendance and participation are required!**
This is the final meeting day for the course and we will have the second part of the student conference. Students assigned to present this day will have a "final" opportunity to receive feedback on their paper from their discussant, colleagues, as well as Dr. Wright. Additional details will be provided before this class.
Students must upload a final version of the paper with all required sections - including paper title, introduction, and conclusion - to the Turnitin link in Webcourses by **December 11th at 11:59pm**.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule, assigned readings, due dates, etc., at any point.