

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Course Web page: <http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/pls401/index.htm>
Office Hours: http://people.uncw.edu/lowery/Weekly_schedule_Spring_2009.pdf

COURSE PREREQUISITES & OBJECTIVES

- **Prerequisites:** senior standing and 33 hours in political science. If you do not have these prerequisites, then contact me immediately.
- **Outcomes assessment:** This is a capstone course that measures graduating seniors' mastery of the scope and methods of the discipline of political science. This assessment, will gauge your understanding of the four major subfields of the discipline: 1) American government and politics, 2) political theory and methods, 3) comparative politics, and 4) international relations. Weekly quizzes and midterm and final examinations will measure your understanding of basic concepts and analytical techniques in each of those subfields.
- **Applied learning:** An independent research project will allow you to further demonstrate your understanding of the study of politics. In this research project you will identify an important question, review relevant published research, collect appropriate empirical data, specify and test hypotheses, draw warranted conclusions, and identify the implications of your findings for policy and research.
- **Oral competence:** In addition to providing a written report of your independent research project, you will also summarize your work in a 10-minute oral presentation to your classmates. This presentation will utilize MS-PowerPoint slides.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Shively, W. Phillips. 2008. *Power & Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. 11th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- *CPS₂nd Generation Student-Response Keypad for Higher Education*. 2007. Denton, TX: eInstruction Corporation Classroom Performance System.
 - **Make sure that you buy a new – not a used – white and blue colored keypad.**
 - **Do not buy the older blue and orange keypad.**

TESTS AND GRADING

Your course grade will be based on a total of 400 points divided in equal parts between: 1) your quiz average, 2) a midterm examination, 3) a final examination, and 4) your term project.

- A series of 9 quizzes keyed to the assigned readings will contribute a possible 100 points toward your course grade. Your total quiz score will be computed by first deleting the lowest quiz score and then averaging the remaining quiz scores and multiplying that quiz average times 10.
- The 100-point midterm and 100-point final examinations will be half objective and half essay in format and based on assigned readings and class discussions. The final exam will not be cumulative. Prior to each exam, a list of essay topics will be provided. Prior to each assigned reading and class discussion, a chapter outline will be provided that includes material that relates to one of the essay topics. For each exam, I will select two of the essay topics and you can choose to write on either one of the two. You will not know ahead of time which two essay topics I have selected.
- The research project will be graded in two parts: 80 points for the written report and 20 points for the oral report.

- Up to 25 bonus points can be added to your (400 possible) total points, if you are the first to report (by email) any typographical or substantive errors in either your textbook or in any course materials available on the course Web site or discussed or handed out in class. If you are the first to report it, each *typographical error* (spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntax, etc.) adds 1 point to your total course points. Each report of a *substantive error* of fact or interpretation adds 3 points to your total course points. Any misstatements by me in class are fair game for a bonus-point award (if you are the first to question the validity of the misstatement). **The purpose of these bonus points is to encourage and reward critical listening, reading, and thinking – three of the most important skills that you can acquire in your undergraduate career.** A basic tenant of the founding fathers of the United States was to question authority. Those in authority (whether political leaders or professors) are not always right in what they think, say, or do.

Grading will be on a 10 point scale -- i.e., 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, etc. Scores below 60% are failing. ***Any form of cheating on any exam or plagiarism on the research report will result in an automatic grade of F for the course, no matter what the quality of all other course work.***

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

If you are a full-time, in-state student, the tuition and fees that you pay (~ \$4527) account for *only 39%* of the annual *operating-budget* cost of your education at UNCW (~ \$11,700). The taxpayers of North Carolina, the federal government, and donors to the university pay the other 60%. **This public and private assistance amounts to almost \$7,200 per year (think of it as tuition stamps) for each in-state, full-time student.** Out-of-state students pay more per year in tuition and fees (~ \$14,694), so they are paying more than their share of the campus annual *operating* budget. However, if each student's share of the campus *capital* budget (i.e., the cost of the buildings and grounds) were factored in, then even out-of-state students are subsidized. **NC and federal taxpayers (over three-fourths of whom are *not* college graduates) have a right to expect that you attend classes -- their money pays for much of your public-university education.**

PENALIZED ABSENCES

- In the real (job) world, unforeseen circumstances (alarm clock doesn't go off, car trouble) are accepted as legitimate excuses for *short and infrequent* absences from work. ***Similarly, in this course two un-penalized absences will be allowed. For each additional absence, your final course grade will be reduced by one letter grade.***
- ***No makeup quizzes or exams will be given for un-excused absences. An un-excused absence will result in a grade of zero for any quiz or exam.***
- If late to class, it is your responsibility to ensure (*immediately after class*) that you are recorded present on the class attendance roll. Should you fail to ask to be marked present after class, you will have used up one of any remaining unpenalized absences. Your being late to class is not a problem *as long as this happens infrequently*. ***If you are tardy, see me immediately after class to make sure that your name was counted on the roll -- otherwise, you will be marked absent.***
- Once in class, it is expected that you will stay until dismissed or unless some foreseen or unforeseen emergency occurs. In the former case, please advise me ahead of class; in the latter case, leave class as quietly as possible and inform me as soon as possible of the circumstances that led to your unexpected departure. ***Otherwise, you will be marked absent for that day.***

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- In the real (job) world, frequent or lengthy absences are excused only in cases of serious illness or injury, death in the immediate family, or other catastrophic events. ***Similarly, in this course, truly extraordinary circumstances that rarely occur may warrant special arrangements that will be made on a case-by-case basis. Requests for excused absences must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation.***
- ***The following circumstances do not constitute an excused absence: job conflicts, car trouble, or an alarm clock that doesn't go off; save your two "free cuts" for situations like these.***

THESE ARE THE TERMS OF THIS COURSE.

YOUR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT WILL SIGNIFY THAT YOU UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THEM.

I WISH YOU SUCCESS AND WILL PROVIDE EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT TO ASSIST YOU;

HOWEVER, THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE RESTS WITH YOU.