Introduction to Political Science Research Methods
Spring 2008
PLS 201-002

Class Meetings:
M, W, F: 1:00-1:50 p.m. (Leutze Hall 110)

Instructor: Dr. Jungkun Seo
Office: Leutze Hall 272
Office Phone: (910) 962-2287
E-mail: seoj@uncw.edu

Office Hours:
M, W, TH 2:00-4:00 p.m. or by appointment

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Can the study of politics be scientific? How come do students of politics call themselves scientists? What do we need for scientific inquiry of policymaking processes? How similar and different are qualitative approaches and quantitative analyses? Ultimately, can we as political scientists predict who is going to be the next president of the United States? If yes, how so? If not, why not?

This course will introduce you to the basic principles of research design in political science and to research tools and skills for analyzing politics rigorously. We will explore a wide range of political science methods, including research design, qualitative approach, and basic statistical analysis. When the semester is over, I expect you to be equipped with various research approaches, qualitative and quantitative. Using the tools of scientific inquiry, you can improve your ability to pose and answer research questions on your own.

II. COURSE READING

Required Reading (Textbook)

Suggested Reading
III. GRADING

Students are expected to read and reflect upon assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. Grades will be based on the following:

1. First-Midterm (Feb 18) = 30%
2. Second-Midterm (March 26) = 30%
3. Three Homework Assignments (Due April 11, 18, 25) = 15% (5% each)
4. Final Exam (May 5) OR Research Proposal* (Due on the same day) = 15%
5. Attendance/Participation = 10%

- Instead of taking the final exam, you can submit a 10-page and double-spaced political science research proposal. You can choose your own topic, but you need to discuss your choice with me in advance. Of course, you are supposed to apply the lecture and course materials to your research proposal.
- The exams will be a mixture of multiple choice, short identification, and problem-solving questions. Exams will cover lecture notes and assigned readings.
- Make up exams will only be given for EXCUSED absences and emergencies. For those with excused absences, ONLY ONE make-up exam time will be available during my next available office hours.

Students who miss class will find themselves, and their participation grades, quickly falling behind. I will do attendance check and apply it into your final grade. If necessary, all documentation should be submitted to me in a timely manner. A grade of incomplete (“I”) will be given if unforeseeable circumstances keep you from completing the course requirements within the normal semester. Under these circumstances you submit the missing assignments during the subsequent semester (not revisions of previously graded work).

For the whole course, letter grades will be assigned according to the following point totals:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5 or more</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5-92.49</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5-89.49</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>82.5-87.49</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>59.5-62.49</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>less than 59.5</td>
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IV. OTHER ISSUES

You are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the University of North Carolina Bulletin and the Student Handbook. You are advised that: (1) Do not commit plagiarism. (2) Do not receive unauthorized assistance during the exams. (3) Violations of these rules in any assignment may be subject to a minimum penalty of failing grade for the assignment and could result in a grade of “F” for the course.

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Services; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. The contact number is 910-962-7555.
V. CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan 9 (W)  
Course Introductions and Expectations  
Studying Politics Scientifically

Jan 11 (F)  
Studying Politics Scientifically  
Prediction and Falsifiability  
Chapter 1 & 2

Jan 14 (M)  
Logic and Rigor in Political Science Research  
Chapter 1 & 2

Jan 16 (W)  
Collective Action Problems  
Prisoners’ Dilemma Game  
Chapter 2

Jan 18 (F)  
Experimental Research Design  
Chapter 3

Jan 21 (M)  
Martin Luther King Holiday

Jan 23 (W)  
Spurious Correlation  
Non-experimental Research Design  
Chapter 3

Jan 25 (F)  
Time-series, Cross-sectional, and Panel Studies  
Chapter 3

Jan 28 (M)  
Literature Review  
Chapter 5

Jan 30 (W)  
Document Analysis  
Chapter 8

Feb 1 (F)  
Content Analysis  
Chapter 8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Chapter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Guest Lecture on the Library Research: Part I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Guest Lecture on the Library Research: Part II</td>
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<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Elite Interviewing and Survey Research</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
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<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>Dependent and Independent Variables</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Constructing Hypotheses</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Review Session for the First Midterm Exam</td>
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<td><strong>Feb 18</strong></td>
<td>First Midterm Exam (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td>Measurement I</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Measurement II</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Feb 25</td>
<td><strong>Sampling I</strong></td>
<td>Population parameter vs. Sample statistic</td>
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<td><strong>Sampling I</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Feb 27</td>
<td><strong>Sampling II</strong></td>
<td>Probability Sample</td>
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<td><strong>Sampling II</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Feb 29</td>
<td><strong>Sampling III</strong></td>
<td>Statistical Inference</td>
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<td><strong>Sampling III</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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Mar 1 - Mar 9  **Spring Break !!!**

Mar 10 (M)  **Making Empirical Observations**  
Chapter 7

Mar 12 (W)  **Univariate Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics**  
Chapter 11

Mar 14 (F)  **Central Tendency**  
Chapter 11

Mar 17 (M)  **Sample Standard Deviation**  
**Normal Distribution**  
Chapter 11

Mar 19 (W)  **Standard Normal Distribution and Z-score**  
Chapter 11

Mar 21 (F)  **Good Friday Holiday**

Mar 24 (M)  **Z-score: Practice**  
**Review Session for the Second Midterm Exam**

**Mar 26 (W) Second Midterm Exam (Chapters 6, 7, 9, 11)**

Mar 28 (F)  **Measuring Relationships and Testing Hypothesis**  
Chapter 12

Mar 31 (M)  **Crosstabulation Analysis**  
Chapter 12

Apr 2 (W)  **Statistical Independence**  
Chapter 12

Apr 4 (F)  **No Class --- Instructor in Chicago for the 2008 MPSA Conference**
Apr 7 (M)  Testing the Hypothesis: Chi-square Test I
Chapter 12

Apr 9 (W)  Chi-square Test II
Chapter 12

Apr 11 (F)  Chi-square Test: Practice
Homework #1 Due

Apr 14 (M)  Testing the Hypothesis: Population Mean Test I

Apr 16 (W)  Population Mean Test II

Apr 18 (F)  Population Mean Test: Practice
Homework #2 Due

Apr 21 (M)  Testing the Hypothesis Difference-of-means Test (t-test) I
Chapter 12

Apr 23 (W)  Difference-of-means Test (t-test) II
Chapter 12

Apr 25 (F)  Difference-of-means Test: Practice
Homework #3 Due

Apr 28 (M)  Course Wrap-up: Last Class Day

May 5 (M)  Final Exam (Ch. 12) OR Research Proposal Due by 5 p.m.