

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT WILMINGTON  
SPRING 2012

PLS 201  
INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS

**Class Logistics:**

Time: MW, 3:30-4:45 pm  
Place: Leutze Hall 104

**Instructor: Dr. Jungkun Seo**

Office Hours: MW, 11 am – 1 pm or by appointment  
Office: Leutze Hall 118, E-mail: SEOJ at UNCW.EDU

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Can we study politics scientifically? Or, even should we? This course will introduce the fundamental principles of research design in political science, along with research tools and skills for rigorous analyses of political institutions and behavior. Although we will explore together some basic mathematical and quantitative approaches in political science, note that this is not a statistics course. The ultimate goal of this course is to have students to be equipped with various political science research perspectives and skills so that they could do empirical political science research on their own.

**COURSE READINGS**

There is one suggested (NOT required) textbook for this course; Janet B. Johnson, H. T. Reynolds and Jason D. Mycoff, *Political Science Research Methods*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (CQ Press)

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-

7555). If you require accommodation for test-taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than three days before the test.

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

According to *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.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY**

Students using laptop computers MUST sit in the back of the classroom to avoid disturbing fellow students. When tests and quizzes are being administered, laptops are obviously not permitted. And, use of cellphones and texting are never permitted in class. Any violation of these policies may result in a zero for your attendance grade.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- ✚ 20% Midterm I (**Feb 15, W**)
- ✚ 25% Midterm II (**Mar 28, W**)
- ✚ 25% Final exam (**May 4, F, 3-6 pm**)
  
- ✚ 10% Library Assignment (**Due by Feb 22, W**)
- ✚ 10% Two Homework Assignments (**Due by May 4, F, 3 pm**)
  
- ✚ 10% Attendance/Participation

Submit assignments by the announced due dates. Grades on late submission drop one third of a grade for each day they are late

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

A=92.5 or more	A-=89.5-92.49
B+=87.5-89.49	B=82.5-87.49
B-=79.5-82.49	C+=77.5-79.49
C=69.5-77.49	D=59.5-69.49
F= less than 59.5	

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

**Jan 11, W:** Course Introduction

**Jan 16, M:** No Class (MLK Holiday)

**Jan 18, W:** Studying Politics

Scientifically I

- predicting, explaining, and testing

**Jan 23-25:** Studying Politics

Scientifically II

- the American presidency

**Jan 30-Feb 1:** Hypotheses, Variables, and Measurement

- Dependent vs. independent variables
- Constructing “good” hypotheses
- Level of measurement

**Feb 6-8:** Research Design I

- Experimentation
- Non-experimental research design
- The “Prisoners’ Dilemma” Game

**Feb 13, M:** Research Design II

**Feb 15, W: Midterm I (20%)**

**Feb 20-22:** Special Session I

**Library Assignment (10%)**

**Due by Feb 22, W**

**Feb 27, M:** Special Session II

**Feb 29, W:** Document Analysis and Literature Review

- Citation Guide
- APSA Style Manual

**Mar 5-7:** Sampling and Statistical Inference

- Confidence level
- Sampling distribution
- Descriptive Statistics
- Central tendency
- Dispersion

**Mar 12-14:** Spring Break!

**Mar 19-21:** Standard Normal Distribution

**Mar 26, M:** Z-score applications

**Mar 28, W: Midterm II (25%)**

**Apr 2-4:** Cross-tabulation Analyses & Statistical independence

**Apr 9-11:** Chi-square analysis

**Apr 16-18:** Population-mean test

**Apr 23-25:** Difference of means test (t-test)

**Apr 30, M:** Last Day of Classes

**May 4, F, 3-6 pm: Final Exam (25%)**

**Homework Assignments (10%)**

**Due by May 4, F, 3 pm**