POLS 4303.001: Seminar in Political Science
Spring 2012
TR 3:30-4:45pm
Center for Instruction 108

Course Description
This course is the capstone class for political science majors. The course steps students through the process of independent research, from research design to data analysis. We will also explore professional development themes, such as writing resumes versus curriculum vitae and the choice of careers post-graduation as compared to graduate school. Prerequisite: POLS 3303

Student Learning Objectives
At the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Identify the role of theories, concepts, variables, and hypotheses in political science research.
- Design and conduct an independent research project.
- Write effectively.
- Analyze and interpret empirical data.
- Demonstrate advanced knowledge in one of the major areas of political science: American institutions, American political behavior, International/comparative politics, and political theory.
- Identify the career and graduate school opportunities available to political science graduates.
- Prepare the appropriate materials for a job or graduate school application.

Required & Recommended Materials

Required
POLS 4303 Spring 2012 Workbook - available through the POLS department.
Blackboard – all course communication, material, and grade posting is done through Blackboard.

Recommended

Professor Contact Information
Professor: Dr. Ashley Ross
Email: ashley.ross@tamucc.edu
Office Hours: T & R, 9-11am/ W 10-11am
Or by appointment
Phone: (361) 825-5781
Office: Bay Hall 3.39
Webpage: http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~aross3/
Course Assignments and Grades

Course Grades
Course grades are based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>A = 89.5 - 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Workbook Assignments</td>
<td>B = 79.5 - 89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>C = 69.5 - 79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Major Field Test</td>
<td>D = 59.5 - 69.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades will be assigned as follows:

F = 59.4 and below

Research Project
A fundamental part of this course is independently designed and administered research. You will design a research project examining a political science theory of your choice. As part of this project you will write a paper that presents and tests an original hypothesis in this field. The paper will follow a standard political science research format and will test your hypothesis with quantitative data analysis. Your paper is due May 1 and is worth 30% of your final course grade. More details will be discussed in class.

As part of your research project, you will have two milestone presentations: 1.) Research design and 2.) Research findings. The research design presentations will take place February 21 -23, and research findings presentations will occur April 24-26. Each presentation is worth 10% of your final course grade. More details on the requirements for these presentations will be covered in class.

Workbook Assignments
Every week, you will complete workbook assignments to apply the concepts and skills covered in class. These assignments will be due as announced in class. However, as a rule, you should always bring your workbook with you to class. The assignments will be graded in some format, either by me, your peers, or yourself (self-evaluation). The assignments are cumulatively worth 30% of your final course grade.

Class Participation
Your attendance and participation in class is critical to your success in this course. You will earn participation points through class discussion, quizzes, and reflection essays – all administered in class. Missed participation point opportunities can be made-up only in the event of an excused absence. Participation points make up 10% of your final course grade.

Major Field Test
You are required to take the Political Science Major Field Test (MFT). This test is administered by The Academic Testing Center. To register for the MFT online: http://testing.tamucc.edu/major_field.html#5
Your completion of the MFT is worth 10% of your final course grade.
Grading Policies

Make-Up Exams and Assignments
Make-up exams and assignments will be given only if you have an excused absence or documented emergency. Excused absences include: participation in a university-affiliated activity that requires you to miss class, a religious holiday, death or major illness in your immediate family, illness of a dependent family member, participation in legal proceedings that require your presence, injury or illness too severe to allow you to attend class, or required participation in military duties. To be excused, you should notify me in writing (an e-mail message is acceptable) prior to the date of absence if possible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. accident, or emergency), you should provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence. If needed, you must provide additional documentation substantiating the reason for the absence within one week of the last date of the absence. Make-up exams and assignments must be completed on the day agreed upon by you and me.

Late Assignments
Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day late. In the event of an emergency or excused absence, a student may be given additional days to complete the assignment without penalty if we discuss it and agree that additional time is necessary.

Extra Credit
Extra credit is offered at my discretion but is not routine.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, if you believe that you have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, you may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon you to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. If you have a complaint, please first discuss it with me. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, you may contact the Office of Student Affairs at 825-2612.

Dropping the Class
If you are considering dropping this course, please discuss it with me to be sure it is the best course of action. Should you decided to drop the course, you must initiate the process by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Simply stopping attendance and participation will NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 5, 2011 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Classroom Policies

Attendance and Tardiness
You are expected to attend class and be on time. A portion of your course grade reflects your attendance and participation in class, and, therefore, it is imperative that you attend class to be successful in this course. If you have scheduling conflicts, please see me to make suitable arrangements.

Class Decorum
During class you are expected to behave respectfully and contribute to a positive learning environment. This means that you turn off your cellphone and refrain from text messaging in class. Also, during class discussion, you are expected to be respectful of others’ opinions and open to a diversity of ideas.

Course Communication
All course communication is sent through your university email account (Islander account). You are also expected to routinely check Blackboard for course materials and announcements. If you need assistance with either of these, please contact the Student Computer Helpdesk at 361-825-5618 or visit the website: http://islander.tamucc.edu/. When sending an email to me or your class peers, you are expected to use professional standards, including proper salutations, capitalization, and grammar.

Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity
You are expected to do your own work. As commonly defined, plagiarism is passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, and writings which belong to another. You commit plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of the person. If I discover you have cheated in any way, I will recommend an F as your final grade and contact the appropriate university officials regarding your behavior.

Applying for Graduation
If you are planning to graduate this year, you must apply for graduation with The Registrar’s Office. The deadline to apply for graduation for Summer 2012 is May 1, 2012. You may also apply for May graduation late. See The Registrar’s website for more information: http://registrar.tamucc.edu/apply_for_grad.html
**Tentative Course Schedule**

*Dates are subject to change with advance notice.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 17 – 19</td>
<td>Research &amp; Professional Development in POLS</td>
<td>Baglione, Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 24 – 26</td>
<td>Finding a Research Question and Data</td>
<td>Baglione, Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 31 – February 2</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review</td>
<td>Baglione, Chapters 3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 7 – 9</td>
<td>Concepts, Variables, Hypotheses</td>
<td>Pollock, Chapters 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 14 – 16</td>
<td>Research Design &amp; Methods in POLS Research</td>
<td>Baglione, Chapter 5 &amp; 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 21 – 23</td>
<td>Research Design Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 28 – March 1</td>
<td>Data Analysis I</td>
<td>Pollock, Chapter 5 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 6 – 8</td>
<td>Data Analysis II</td>
<td>Pollock, Chapter 7 – 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 12 – 16</td>
<td><em>Spring Break</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 20 – 22</td>
<td>Data Analysis III</td>
<td>See Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 27 – 29</td>
<td>Interpreting Data Findings</td>
<td>See Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 3 – 5</td>
<td>Writing Empirical Results</td>
<td>Baglione, Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>See Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(No class meeting April 12 – use as a workday)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 17 – 19</td>
<td>Wrapping Up the Paper &amp; Preparing a Presentation</td>
<td>Baglione, Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 24 – 26</td>
<td>Research Findings Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>See Blackboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>