Seminar in Political Science, Fall 2017
POLS 4303.001
TR 9:30-10:45, OCNR 241

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Course Description. This course is the capstone class for Political Science majors. This course begins with an overview of the research process, followed by students producing an original research paper, and a segment on professional development. Students will have an opportunity to apply the summary of skills, knowledge, and abilities learned in the major by the end of the course.

Learning Objectives
At the end of the semester you will be able to:
1. Design and conduct an independent research project.
2. Communicate effectively in written and verbal form.
3. Analyze, interpret, and present empirical data.
4. Prepare the appropriate materials for a job or graduate school application.
5. Demonstrate advanced knowledge in one of the major areas of political science: American institutions, American political behavior, International/comparative politics, and political theory.

Major Course Requirements
10% Class Participation- demonstrated by attendance, participation with in class activities, and thoughtful class discussion.

10% Participation in the Major Field Test (MFT)- exit exam for Political Science majors scheduled towards the end of the semester; allows students to gauge their progress relative to their peers at other institutions across the United States; time and registration TBD.

10% Professional Profile- This assignment is focused on producing a resume or CV, as well as a cover letter for either an entry-level professional position or graduate school. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.

10% Annotated Bibliography/Paper Outline- This assessment requires you to analyze and provide a summary of (5) empirical journal articles relevant to your research paper. You will provide an evaluation of these articles and breakdown the major themes and elements of their research design, as well as provide an outline demonstrating how you will build on these articles to produce an original research paper. You will provide an outline for your paper for my review noting the research problem, research question(s), literature review, and possible data sources and will receive constructive feedback. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.

10% Empirical Presentations- Students will present the results of their empirical analyses to the class. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.

40% Original Research Paper- each student will generate an original research paper on a topic within one of the major sub-fields of Political Science (Due date, on or before the university approved final exam period). Specific details forthcoming.

10% Final Exam

Points/Grade Breakdown
1000-900 = A; 999-800 = B; 799-700 = C; 699-600 = D; 599 or less = F

Required Readings
Students must have access to the Pollock books that were assigned in your Contemporary Political Analysis course, which is a prerequisite for this class. Required readings will be available in your course Blackboard shell.

The Essentials of Political Analysis, 5th Edition, Pollack
An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis, 5th Edition, Pollack

Optional Software Purchase: SPSS (information on purchasing SPSS is on Blackboard)
Class Schedule:

Segment I: Review of the Field and Research Process

Week 1: Introduction (8/29 & 8/31)
Introduction to the Class

Week 2: Understanding Empirical Research (9/5 & 9/7)
Overview of the research process and SPSS

Week 3: Political Science as a Discipline (9/12 & 9/14)
Overview of the field
*Week 3 Article

Segment II: Generating Original Research

Week 4: Generating Research Ideas (9/19 & 9/21)
Finding sources, data, and coming up with research topics
*Week 3 Article

Week 5 Research Workshop-Generating Paper Ideas (9/26 & 9/28)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class
*Week 5 Articles

Week 6: Research Workshop-Final Research Designs (10/3 & 10/5)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class
*Week 6 Articles

Week 7: Analyzing and Interpreting Data Part 1 (10/10 & 10/12)
Statistical modeling and interpreting data
*Week 7 Articles

Week 8: Analyzing and Interpreting Data Part 2 (10/17 & 10/19)
Week 8 Articles

Week 9: Research Workshop-Analyzing your Data (10/24 & 10/26)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class

Week 10: Research Workshop-Analyzing your Data (10/31 & 11/2)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class

Segment III: Professional Development, Careers, and Graduate Programs

Week 11: Create a Professional Profile (11/7 & 11/9)
*Week 11 Articles

Week 12: Graduate Programs and Law School (11/14 & 11/16)
Discussing career options with a Political Science degree
**Week 12 Articles

Segment IV: Empirical Presentations

Week 13: Empirical Presentation Workshop (11/21)

Week 14: Empirical Presentations (11/28 & 11/30)

Week 15: Empirical Presentations (12/5)

Finals Week:
Tuesday, 12/12, 8-10:30 AM
Student Responsibilities. TURN OFF CELL PHONES!! Pay attention during class. Private conversations, sleeping, and reading non-class related material will not be tolerated. Learn something! Participate in class discussions.

Attendance/tardiness. Unlike many political science classes, POLS 4303 is sequential, with each reading and assignment building on the next. Consistent attendance is essential if students are to succeed. Students are allowed two unexcused absences for the semester. After that, students will lose 50 points off their point total for each unexcused absence. Students that choose not to attend are responsible for material discussed in class.

Grade Appeals Process: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.

Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan aud must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call (361) 825-3466.

Disability Services: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity. In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Academic Honesty. University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as ilicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog. Instances of plagiarism will be handled on an individual basis, but generally speaking the first offense will result in a zero for the assignment; subsequent plagiarism will result in failing the course and/or reporting chronic plagiarism to the university administration for disciplinary action. Reuse of previous work, even if that work is original, is known as academic recycling; such work is not accepted in this course and instances of recycling will receive the same treatment as plagiarism.

Extra Credit Work: Extra credit work will not be assigned nor allowed under any circumstances.

Dropping a Class: Events occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your professors before deciding to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in you being dropped from the class.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be given in the event of medical or family emergencies. In addition, incompletes will only be given if there is appropriate documentation.