

PS 14, Political Analysis

Winter 2002

1:40 p.m. - 2:55 p.m.

Johns Hall 109

Professor Elizabeth S. Smith

Office: 111L Johns Hall

Office Hours: 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. by appointment

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Course Objective:

The objective of this course is to introduce you to the purpose and methods of political science research. We will explore how one goes about developing a good research question, creating and testing hypotheses, and selecting a research design. We will grapple with such issues as: What determines the intrinsic and extrinsic value of a research question? What normative and ethical considerations must be considered in developing a research topic? How does one operationalize the concepts of interest? How does one interpret one's findings? In doing so, throughout the course you will be exposed to a variety of political science research methods including participant observation, experiments, content analysis, elite interviewing, and statistical analysis.

We will learn the research methods used by political scientists by engaging in a service-learning project. Your task will be to engage in research for a non-profit organization in the community. You will work with the coordinator at the organization to identify a question of interest to the organization and choose an appropriate research method learned about in class to answer this question. More information about the organizations we will work with and the requirements for your research will be discussed in class.

Required Readings: The following book is required and available for purchase in the bookstore.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Joslyn, Richard A. and H.T.

Reynolds. 2001. *Political Science Research Methods*
(Fourth edition). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Some additional required readings will be made available in triplicate on the shelf outside the door of the Political

Science Library in Johns Hall. Given that all of the students in the class will need access to the readings, students should sign out a copy and return it within two hours. I suggest (but do not require) that students make their own personal copy of the readings to have available for class discussion and studying for the final exam.

Course Expectations: You are expected to do all of the required reading and assignments and to come to every class session. In addition, you are expected to participate actively in the class discussion. **You will not do well in this class without consistent attendance, participation and the lecture information.** Students will be responsible for material covered in class. Therefore, if you must miss a class, it is very important that you get the notes from another student in the class (not from me). Students are also responsible for any changes in the syllabus announced in class.

There are several assignments for this course. You are expected to complete each assignment on time. Assignments are due **at the beginning of class** on the day indicated in the syllabus. **Late assignments will be graded down one letter grade increment (e.g., from a B+ to a B) for each day they are late. Any assignment handed at the end of class on the scheduled date will be considered one day late.** Exceptions will be made only in the case of illness or other University-excused absence. Students who must miss a class for a University-scheduled event must make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time or have another student turn in the assignment at the scheduled time.

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. Exercises and Quizzes (25% of grade): A number of exercises from the book and on the computer will be assigned. Only a random subset of these assignments will be graded. I will not indicate which assignments will be graded, thus, you should do every assignment as if it were to be graded (because it may be). The assignments will also serve as the basis for many of the class discussions.
2. Research Paper (20% of grade): Students are expected to write a 10-15 page research paper. The research paper can use any of the research methods (participant observation,

survey research and statistical analysis, elite interviewing, etc.) discussed in class. It should be modeled after the scholarly articles we read and should address a question of interest to the community organization. The paper should include a review of the scholarly literature relevant to the organization and research question you have chosen to study. Further guidelines for the research paper will be handed out in class. Students should read the guidelines carefully as failure to follow them will affect the final paper grade. The research question and hypotheses should be approved by the professor no later than January 16th.

3. Service Work: (15% of grade): The coordinator at the organization for which you work will provide an evaluation of your commitment to and performance on the research project. This evaluation will be used to determine this portion of your grade for the class.
4. Final (30% of grade): The final exam will cover all of the material covered in the course. It will consist of short answer questions and essays. The final exam will be at its university-scheduled time on Thursday, February 21 from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The date for the exam is not negotiable.
5. Participation (10% of grade)

93-100 = A	77-79 = C+	60-62 = D-
90-92 = A-	73-76 = C	Below 60 = F
87-89 = B+	70-72 = C-	
83-86 = B	67-69 = D+	
80-82 = B-	63-66 = D	

Any student with a disability or special need should speak with me at the end of class the first day so that we can make any necessary arrangements or accommodations.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. A STUDENT FOUND TO BE INVOLVED IN AN ACADEMIC IRREGULARITY, INCLUDING CHEATING ON AN EXAM, FAILURE TO USE PROPER CITATIONS IN HIS/HER WRITTEN WORK OR COPYING ANOTHER'S WORK, WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AS DETERMINED BY THE PROFESSOR INCLUDING RECEIVING AN F FOR THE ASSIGNMENT AND/OR FOR THE COURSE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING WHAT

CONSTITUTES CHEATING AND/OR PLAGIARISM, PLEASE CONSULT WITH ME PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.

Assignment Outline:

- January 4: Introduction
- January 7-8: Discussion of Service Learning and Political Science Research and the Behavioral Revolution
Read: *PSRM*, Chapter One
Complete by January 8: Exercise 1, Ch. 1
- January 9: Library Research Instruction and Issues in the Study of Political Questions
Complete: Exercise 2, Ch. 1
Read: Ch. 2
- January 10 and 14: The Research Process: the Interplay between Theory and Observation and the Importance of Speculation; Developing a Research Question
Read: Ch. 3
- January 11: Service project field work
Complete: Exercise 4, Ch. 2
- January 15: Conducting a Literature Review
Read: Chapter 6
- January 16: **Research Proposals Due**
- January 17: Defining Concepts and Formulating Hypotheses
Complete: Exercise 1 (a & b), Ch. 3
- January 18: Service project field work
Read: Sullivan et al., "The Sources of Tolerance"
- January 21 - 22: Measurement Issues:
Operationalizations,
Levels of Measurement, Reliability and Validity
Read: Chapter 4
Complete Exercises: 1 and 5 from Ch. 4

January 23 - 24: Experimentation in Political Science
 Read for the 23rd: Chapter 5 and Kinder and Palfrey, "An Experimental Political Science?"
 Complete for the 24th: Chapter 5, Exercise 5

January 25: Service project field work

January 28: Participant Observation
 Read: Chapter 8 and Fenno, "Notes on Method: Participant Observation"

January 29: Secondary Data Analysis
 Read: Chapter 9
 Complete: Chapter 9 Exercise 4

January 30: Elite Interviewing
 Read: Chapter 10

January 31, Feb. 4: Survey Research
 Complete January 31: Chapter 10 Exercises 4
 Read for Feb. 4: Sullivan et al, "Ideological Constraint in the Mass Public"

February 1: Service project field work

February 5: Survey Research (continued)
 Read: J&J, Chapter 7
 Complete: Chapter 7, Exercise 2, 4 and 14

February 6: Univariate Data Analysis
 Read: Chapter 11
 Complete: Chapter 11, Exercises 1, 3, 4

February 7 - 11: Data Analysis: Crosstabs
 Complete for Feb. 7: Chapter 11, Exercises 5, 6, 7
 Read for Feb. 11: Chapter 12, p. 338-

Complete for Feb. 12: Chap. 12,
Exercises 1, 2
Complete for Feb. 13: Chap. 12,
Exercises 3, 4
Complete for Feb 14: Chap. 12,
Exercises 8, 9, 10
Read for Feb. 15: Chap. 13, pp. 393-402
Complete for Feb. 18: Chap. 13,
Exercise 1, **Research Papers Due**

February 19: Catch up and Review

February 21: **Final Exam, 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**