

**POS 3703.004**

Spring 2017, 3 credit hours

Meeting Time: M, 11:00am–1:50pm

Meeting Place: BU 401

Course website: <https://canvas.fau.edu>Personal website: <http://angeladnichols.weebly.com/>**Professor: Angela D. Nichols**

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Office Hours: M 2:00–4:00pm

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**Research Methods in Political Science****Course Description and Objectives**

This course is required for all political science majors as a research tool. The goal of the course is to familiarize students with methods of research and statistics in the social sciences generally and political science specifically. We will cover information regarding the philosophy of science and various methods of applying the scientific method to social science questions. An introductory stats class should be required for this course. Since it isn't, spend some time acquainting yourself with the basics. Khan academy is a decent tool for this.

**Course Materials**

There are no books required for this class! Reading assignments typically come from academic and policy journals, and are available from three sources:

- my website
- google scholar
- directly from an online provider (typically JSTOR)

JSTOR is likely your best option to access the assigned material. JSTOR is an academic journal service that FAU provides for us. Access is free from any FAU computer (e.g., in computer labs or dorms, or via FAU wireless networks); you can search for individual articles by author or title, or browse by journal name and issue at [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org). Additionally, you can access the FAU electronic journal library via <http://www.fau.edu/library/ecollect/ejournals.php>.

The remaining readings are available online, via links provided in this syllabus. Be sure to access these readings early in the semester, because pages on the Web may move or disappear at inconvenient times.

**Student Assignments & Responsibilities**

Exams: Fifty percent of your grade will be determined by two (non-cumulative) exams. The first exam will be short answer and essay. The second exam will be conducted using SPSS. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

Make-up Exams: If you cannot attend one of the exams, you need to notify me as soon as possible by email and in person. Make-up exams will only be given to students who have been unable to sit for the examination as a consequence of illness requiring medical care, required university activities, or a personal emergency of a serious nature. To be excused without penalty, documentation

and/or prior permission is required. Additionally, an alternative exam may be provided. I reserve the right to assign a short answer or essay make-up exam in place of the standard exam for this class.

Article Length Research Paper: You must also complete a research paper for this course. The paper will be broken down into component parts with multiple due dates and peer review sessions. This assignment is designed to help you familiarize yourself with the scientific method as applied to social science. More information regarding these assignments will be distributed throughout the course. Combined, this assignment is worth 25% of your final grade. *THIS ASSIGNMENT IS NOT OPTIONAL AND MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE IN THIS COURSE.*

Homework Assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. These assignments are designed to help you learn and demonstrate your competence in applying statistics to political science. A homework schedule will be distributed the first week of class. Late assignments will not be accepted. Homework Assignments are worth 15% of your final grade.

Attendance & Participation: The topics and issues we will cover throughout the semester can be most clearly understood through discussion and the evaluation of alternative perspectives. In other words, participation increases active learning. While this course will have a substantial lecture component, there will also be opportunities for participation in classroom exercises and discussions. Thus, attending class and participating regularly are key to achieving the course objectives discussed above.

To this end, attendance and participation is worth 10% of your final grade. I will take attendance daily throughout the semester. I will also take note of how regularly you participate in class, both in productive and distractive ways. Your base attendance and participation grade will be based upon the proportion of times you are in class. Then, I will adjust that grade up or down depending on your participation. To maximize this part of your grade, it is highly recommended that you come to class prepared (e.g., having done the assigned readings) and willing to participate. Merely showing up and occupying a seat will not constitute full participation. Other ways to lose participation points include but are not limited to: being a disruption to others (e.g., side conversations with friends, reading for other classes), repeatedly failing to answer a question if called upon, and not participating in classroom discussions and exercises in a productive manner.

## Grading & Evaluation

Grades are assigned in accordance with the following scale:

|                |               |               |               |               |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 93 - 100% = A  | 86 - 89% = B+ | 76 - 79% = C+ | 66 - 69% = D+ | below 60% = F |
| 90 - 92 % = A- | 83 - 85% = B  | 73 - 75% = C  | 63 - 65% = D  |               |
|                | 80 - 82% = B- | 70 - 72% = C- | 60 - 62% = D- |               |

## Other Policies

- Lecture notes and slides will not be posted online or otherwise handed out to students under any circumstances.

- Materials handed out in class by the instructor (e.g., review sheets, simulation materials, etc.) will under no circumstances be distributed electronically or outside of class.
- Allow a reasonable amount of time for a response when you send me an email. Do not email me an hour before an exam and expect me to respond to or receive the email before class. I will not answer questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus or accessing blackboard via email. I encourage students to utilize office hours to answer their questions whenever possible.
- Grades will not be released to any student via email, phone, or other electronic means. If you wish to discuss your grades, report to the appropriate office hours or make an appointment, and come prepared with your university identification.
- You can expect to be graded solely on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, composition, spelling, and grammar.

### **Academic Honor Code**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Incidents of plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a failing grade for the class and further penalties per the University's judicial process. Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see [http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg\\_4.001\\_5-26-10\\_FINAL.pdf](http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf)

### **Accommodations (SAS)**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 203 (954-236-1222); or in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8585) and follow all SAS procedures. For more information, see <http://osd.fau.edu/>

Additionally, if you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please notify me by the second week of class.

### **University Attendance Statement**

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice

prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Classroom courtesy is an essential component of creating an effective learning environment. All students have the right to learn without unnecessary distractions. These distractions include: laptops, cell phones, and the like, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you use a laptop to take notes during class, turn off the sound and restrain yourself from unnecessary surfing. I reserve the right to suspend the use of laptops if this policy is abused. If you need a phone for *emergency purposes*, leave it on vibrate. Entering and leaving are also significant sources of distraction. It is your responsibility to be on time and to stay for the entire class. In circumstances where you need to leave early, tell the professor beforehand. Repeated disruptions of class will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Class discussions of political issues can often stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. I ask all of you to respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you do not agree with them. In simple terms, that means not interrupting other students while they are speaking and not verbally attacking them for their beliefs. While I believe that it is essential to connect theory to current events, I will cut short debates of current events that do not enhance the understanding of course concepts. I expect you to offer substantive comments and questions when appropriate in class. I also expect you not to dominate a discussion, but to allow free discussion and exchange of ideas.

### **Course Content & Schedule**

The following is an approximate calendar of class readings and *assignments*. Please complete each week's reading prior to the first class that week. Every attempt will be made to adhere to this schedule. However, departures from the schedule may occasionally occur. Exam and activity dates should be considered firm, and you should arrange your personal schedule to be present at the appointed dates and times.

READINGS TBD

#### **(I) COURSE INTRODUCTION**

*Week 1: Jan 9*

- Introduction, no required reading
- *Pre-quiz, in class*

*Jan 16–NO CLASS–MLK DAY*

*Week 2: Jan 23*

- Silver Blaze
- Enterline's Guide
- *Logic Homework*

*Week 3: Jan 30*

- Puzzles, Questions, & Inquiry
- Fisman, Ray, and Edward Miguel. "Cultures of Corruption: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets." <https://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/mygsb/faculty/research/pubfiles/2435/fismanparkingtickets.pdf>
- Putnam, R.D., 1995. Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6, pp.65-78. [http://www.noi-orizonturi.ro/attachments/article/44/s/%20Declining%20Social%20Capital\\_Interview%20with%20Robert%20Putnam.pdf](http://www.noi-orizonturi.ro/attachments/article/44/s/%20Declining%20Social%20Capital_Interview%20with%20Robert%20Putnam.pdf)
- Start Research Projects
- *Research Question Exercise*

*Week 4: Feb 6*

- Theory Building
- Pugh, Jeff. 2005. "Democratic Peace Theory: A Review and Evaluation." <http://www.cemproc.org/democraticpeaceCWPS.pdf>
- Gurr, T.R., 1993. Why minorities rebel: A global analysis of communal mobilization and conflict since 1945. *International Political Science Review*, 14(2), pp.161-201. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019251219301400203>
- Ostrom, E., 1998. A behavioral approach to the rational choice theory of collective action: Presidential address, American Political Science Association, 1997. *American political science review*, 92(01), pp.1-22.
- *Hypothesis Exercise*

*Week 5: Feb 13*

- Theory Cont'd

- Davenport, C., 2007. State repression and political order. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 10, pp.1-23.
- Hudson, V.M., Caprioli, M., Ballif-Spanvill, B., McDermott, R. and Emmett, C.F., 2009. The heart of the matter: The security of women and the security of states. *International Security*, 33(3), pp.7-45.
- DeMeritt, J.H. and Young, J.K., 2013. A political economy of human rights: Oil, natural gas, and state incentives to repress. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 30(2), pp.99-120.

- Research Design

- *WORK ON RESEARCH PROJECT*

*Week 6: Feb 20*

- Geddes, Barbara. How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. <http://www.dobing.info/pdf/0002142211.pdf>
- *Draft of Paper DUE! Peer Review Workshop in class for grade.*
- Review for Exam

*Week 7: Feb 27*

- Midterm Exam

*Mar 6–NO CLASS–FALL BREAK*

*Week 8: Mar 13*

- Hello Data!
- SPSS
- *Revisions Due*

*Week 9: Mar 20*

- Data Analysis
- *Peer Review*

*Week 10: Mar 27*

- Probability
- *Exercises TBD*

*Week 11: Apr 3*

- Correlation and Linear Regression
- *Exercises TBD*

*Week 12: Apr 10*

- Survey Data
- Gibson, J.L., 2002. Truth, justice, and reconciliation: Judging the fairness of amnesty in South Africa. *American Journal of Political Science*, pp.540-556.
- *Exercises TBD*

*Week 13: Apr 17*

- Other examples in Political Science, Readings TBD
- *Peer Review in class*

*Week 14: Apr 24*

- *Review for Exam  
Extra Credit*

(II) *Final Exam: TBA*

This syllabus is a guideline and is subject to change at any time.