

POS 3703.001

Spring 2019, 3 credit hours

Meeting Time: T,R 11:00am–12:20pm

Meeting Place: BU 401

Personal website: <http://angeladnichols.weebly.com/>**Professor: Angela D. Nichols**

Office: SO 384D

Office Hours: M 10:00am–12:00pm

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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 is one book required for this class:

Pollock III, P.H., 2016. The Essentials of Political Analysis. Cq Press.

Most other 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. 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

Midterm Exam: Twenty-five percent of your grade will be determined by an exam. The exam will be a combination of short answer, multiple choice, and essay and take place about half-way through the semester. The Midterm 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.

Literature Review Assignment: The purpose of this assignment is to facilitate your abilities to research a topic of study so you can learn to (1) identify and formulate a subject of inquiry that defines what you'd like to learn, (2) know how to search and locate academic literature; (3) analyze information found in political science journal articles, and (4) synthesize new knowledge into a written literature review and (5) establish context for your inquiries. More information regarding this assignment is posted on the my website. The Literature Review Assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Survey Assignment: The goal for this assignment is to give you the opportunity to design a survey of what FAU students think about some topic related to political science. Quantitative survey methods are designed to allow you to ask the same questions of a large number of people in such a way that people's responses can be compared with one another. More information regarding this assignment is posted on the my website. The Survey Assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Mini Case Study: You must complete a mini case study for this course. You will select one case that you will use to test a hypothesis that you develop. More information regarding this assignment will be distributed throughout the course. The final version of this assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Homework Assignments: All other assignments will makeup your homework grade. These assignments are due at the beginning of class and are designed to help you learn and demonstrate your competence in applying statistics to political science. Most of these assignments will be started during 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 15% 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:

90 - 100% = A	86 - 89% = B+	76 - 79% = C+	66 - 69% = D+	below 60% = F
	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.

Code of Academic Integrity

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 University Regulation 4.001 or 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) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices

across three of FAU's campuses, Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter, however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

University Attendance Policy

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.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services, individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>.

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.

Tuesday, January 8: Introduction

- Introduction, no required reading

Thursday, January 10: Logic

- Silver Blaze

- Logic Homework Assigned

Tuesday, January 15: Overview of Research in Political Science

- Enterline's Guide

- Pollock Ch 10

- Logic Homework Due

- Research Question Exercise Assigned

Thursday, January 17: Puzzles, Questions, & Inquiry

- *Research Question Exercise due*

- 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.

- Literature Review Assigned

Tuesday, January 22: Literature Review

- Pugh, Jeff. 2005. "Democratic Peace Theory: A Review and Evaluation." <http://www.cemproc.org/democraticpeaceCWPS.pdf>
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science Politics* 39.1 (2006): 127-132.

Thursday, January 24: Theory Building

- Fisman, Ray, and Edward Miguel. "Cultures of Corruption: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets."
- Pollock Ch 3-4

Tuesday, January 29: Theory Building Cont'd

- Putnam, R.D., 1995. Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6, pp.65-78.

Thursday, January 31: Peer Review

- Literature Review Due
- Peer review, bring two copies of LR to class

Tuesday, February 5: Theory Cont'd

- Revised Literature Review Due
- Pollock Ch 1

Thursday, February 7: Research Design and Measurement

- Pollock Ch 2

Tuesday, February 12: Midterm Review

- Midterm Review (created during class)

Thursday, February 14: Midterm

- Midterm Exam

Tuesday, February 19: Case Selection and Surveys

- Geddes, Barbara. How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics. <http://www.dobing.info/pdf/0002142211.pdf>
- SPOTs UP article
- Measurement Homework Due
- Survey Assignment Assigned

Thursday, February 21: Surveys

- Verba, Sidney. 1996. The Citizen as Respondent: Sample Surveys and American Democracy Presidential Address, American Political Science Association 1995, The American Political Science Review, 90(1), pp. 1-7.
- Pollock Ch 4, pp123–133.

Tuesday, February 26: Case Studies

- Briggs, R.C., 2017. Explaining case selection in African politics research. Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 35(4), pp.565-572.
- Survey Assignment Due

Thursday, February 28: Case Studies

- Bennett, A. and Elman, C., 2006. Qualitative Research: Recent developments in case study methods. Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci., 9, pp.455-476.
- Mini Case Study Assigned

Tuesday, March 12: Summary Stats

- Pollock Ch 4, Review Ch 1–3
- SPSS Assignment 1

Thursday, March 14: Measurement

- Pollock Ch 1–2

- SPSS Assignment 2

Tuesday, March 19: Probability

- Pollock Ch 5–6
- Probability Homework Assigned

Thursday, March 21: Linear Regression

- Pollock Ch 8
- SPSS Assignment 4
- Probability Homework Due

Tuesday, March 26: Case Study Peer Review

- Mini Case Study Due
- Peer Review, bring 2 copies to class and turn in on canvas
- Sign up for presentation date

Thursday, March 28: Guest Lecture

- no assigned reading

Tuesday, April 2: Quiz and Catch-up Day

- No assigned reading

Thursday, April 4: Case Studies

- work on presentations and final draft of case study

Tuesday, April 9: Case Study Presentations

- no assigned reading

Thursday, April 11: Case Study Presentations

- no assigned reading

Tuesday, April 16: Case Study Presentations

- no assigned reading

Thursday, April 18: Last Class

- FINAL DRAFT OF MINI CASE STUDY DUE IN CLASS (print hard copy and upload file to canvas)

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