

POL 360: Research Methods

T/R: 11:00 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

Faculty Hall 404, Spring 2019

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Office Hours: M/W/F (9-11am),

T (Virtual Office Hours via Email 12:30pm-2:30pm),

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Department of Political Science & Sociology

Credit Hours: 3

I. RESEARCH METHODS

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITE(S):

This course introduces students to social science research methods. Emphasis will be placed on the scientific method, research design, the various methods of data collection commonly used in political science, and data analysis

Prerequisite(s): STAT 135 or PSY 300 and POL 359, or permission of instructor.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the semester, the student should be able to do the following

- A. Develop a social science research question;
- B. Make valid causal hypotheses about the political/social world;
- C. Understand the basics of data collection;
- D. Use quantitative methods to empirically test your research hypothesis.

IV. CONTENT OUTLINE:

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of the “science” within social science. POL/SOC 359 helped students better digest social science research and this course furthers students’ abilities to develop causal theory, understand the logic of quantitative methodology, and discuss competently results of statistical analysis. Students will use existing data sets to conduct their own analysis based on existing theories. Moreover, the information in this course will help students in their upper-level political science and sociology courses, improve their research and writing skills, and learn how to make valid causal statements about the social world.

Effective writing should be used throughout this course and its assignments. Students should use formal writing, meaning that they express their thoughts concisely, clearly, and in a grammatically correct manner. As such, students are expected to come prepared with the material learned in

POL/SOC 359 (Writing and Social Inquiry in the Social Sciences). I strongly encourage students to review this material prior to our first course meeting.

This course also includes a lab component. A significant portion of students' final grades will be based on performance on exercises related to conducting statistical analysis, either by hand or using SPSS. These labs are also used to complete final papers. Students will have to perform basic mathematical calculations based on statistical formulae discussed in class and in the text. A calculator is recommended for all class sessions. In addition, because we are unable to save our data on the lab computers, a flashdrive is also required to save your work.

V. FIELD, CLINICAL, AND/OR LABORATORY EXPERIENCES: None

VI. TEXT(S) AND RESOURCES:

In this course, there is one required text. Please be sure to get this textbook as soon as possible.

❖ Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press.

❖ A flashdrive to save your work in labs.

VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

Students' grades are comprised of four parts. The first part is made up of two exams—a midterm and a final—with each exam worth 20% of the student's final grade. The exams are not cumulative, but keep in mind that there are some foundational items that will be emphasized in the first part of the course which will be utilized throughout the semester, and it is the student's responsibility to know these items.

The second part of students' grades is a final paper. This paper will account for 35% of final grades. More details on this assignment is provided in a specific guide given later in the semester.

The third portion is lab assignments, which accounts for 15%. To familiarize students with the concepts and SPSS statistical software, I assign labs and assignments throughout the semester. The purpose of these is to ensure that students fully grasp the concepts of the course and are able to practice with these ideas prior to exams and the final paper. Also, several of these labs will utilize your final paper's topic, and in many ways, your final paper is an amalgamation of these labs.

The final part of grades is attendance, which will account for 10%. This course requires student attendance each and every class period. As such, I will take attendance every class period. You will be granted two unexcused absences for the semester after which you will see a deduction in this portion of your grade for each class that you miss. If you show up to class later than 15 minutes from the start of class, I will also mark you as absent. Furthermore, students are to keep up with the readings and reviewing lecture material outside of class. To ensure this is happening, there will also be pop quizzes to test students' retention of the material and to use as a review guide before exams.

If you miss class because of illness or a University-sanctioned event, you must provide written documentation within one week of the missed class. Excused absences will not count against your two free absences.

Grades are calculated based on the following weights:

❖ Midterm	20%
❖ Final Exam	20%
❖ Final Paper	35%
❖ Lab Assignments	15%
❖ Attendance and Quizzes	10%

No curve will be given in this course, and I do not round grades; the grade you earn is the grade you receive. I will use the following grading scale in this course:

A (Excellent): 90-100%

B (Good): 80-89%

C (Satisfactory): 70-79%

D (Poor): 60-69%

E (Failure): 0-59%

VIII. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Due to the nature of this course, it is important to attend every lecture. This course progresses rather quickly at points, and as it is a cumulative subject, students must attend all lectures for subsequent material to make sense. Therefore, I will be keeping attendance for every class period. **Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences throughout the semester.** After those, I will begin to deduct points from the attendance portion of your grade. Excused absences for illness or University-sanctioned events must include written documentation within one week of the absence. Excused absences will not count against your two free absences. If students are also not reviewing the material and completing the readings, I will also give random pop quizzes to ensure that students are keeping up with the material outside of lecture. To ensure that you are prepared, it is important to always come to class prepared for a quiz of your knowledge. If you are coming to class, but ill-prepared, this will hurt your overall grade.

Make-up Exams: Unforeseen emergencies do occur, however only University-approved absences will be accepted for an excused absence or an alternative exam date. All approved absences require written documentation within **one week of the exam date. No exceptions!** Without appropriate documentation in the stated time frame, the student will receive a zero for the exam or a deduction of your attendance grade. Keep in mind that alternative/make-up exams may be of a different format than the original exam provided on test day.

IX. CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Students are to be respectful of both other students and the instructor. This means refraining from talking or whispering during class, using electronic devices, or otherwise being disruptive. Any inappropriate or disruptive behavior by a student may result in the student being asked to leave the classroom. Be respectful of one another and each other's ideas.

Electronics Policy: Studies have found that handwritten notetaking is better for the retention of information than taking notes on a computer or other electronic device. Further, these devices are a great disturbance to other students and, at times, the instructor. **Therefore, students will not be allowed to use electronic devices in this course, including laptops, tablets, or phones.** This

decision is to ensure that all students have access to lecture material without interruption or disturbance from other students. Please ensure that your phones are placed on silent before class starts, and all other electronics are turned off. If you are seen using any of these devices, you will automatically lose points on your overall grade, regardless of current performance in the course. If you have an extenuating circumstance or need some accommodation for the usage of an electronic device, please see me before or after class so we can make alternative arrangements.

Emails: Do not expect to receive any correspondence from me between the hours of 6pm and 8am on any day, including the night before an exam. Do not email me to ask questions about grades, as I am not allowed to discuss those over email per FERPA regulations. For these questions, come to my office hours or set up an appointment. You must email me from your Murray State account. I will not respond to any other email addresses. **Do not email me any questions about the course without first consulting the syllabus.**

X. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

Murray State University takes seriously its moral and educational obligation to maintain high standards of academic honesty and ethical behavior. Instructors are expected to evaluate students' academic achievements accurately, as well as ascertain that work submitted by students is authentic and the result of their own efforts, and consistent with established academic standards. Students are obligated to respect and abide by the basic standards of personal and professional integrity.

Violations of Academic Honesty include:

Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized information such as books, notes, study aids, or other electronic, online, or digital devices in any academic exercise; as well as unauthorized communication of information by any means to or from others during any academic exercise.

Fabrication and Falsification - Intentional alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves changing information whereas fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information.

Multiple Submission - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work, including oral reports, for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor.

Plagiarism - Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, creative work, or data of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise, without due and proper acknowledgement.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the accuracy of your material, please see me immediately! It is best to have a conversation with me before an assignment is due, than to wait until afterwards and risk disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Requiring the student(s) to repeat the exercise or do additional related exercise(s).
- 2) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) on the particular exercise(s) involved.
- 3) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) in the course.

If the disciplinary action results in the awarding of a grade of *E* in the course, the student(s) may not drop the course.

Faculty reserve the right to invalidate any exercise or other evaluative measures if substantial evidence exists that the integrity of the exercise has been compromised. Faculty also reserve the right to document in the course syllabi further academic honesty policy elements related to the individual disciplines.

A student may appeal the decision of the faculty member with the department chair in writing within five working days. Note: If, at any point in this process, the student alleges that actions have taken place that may be in violation of the Murray State University Non-Discrimination Statement, this process must be suspended and the matter be directed to the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Access. Any appeal will be forwarded to the appropriate university committee as determined by the Provost.

Recording Lectures and Selling Notes: In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation through Disability Services. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to disciplinary action.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to others without the express written permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

If it is brought to my attention that you have been selling notes, study guides, exams, etc. on any site such as Flashnotes, Studyblue, etc. you will be treated as if you have openly cheated and will suffer the same consequences of academic dishonesty outlined in this syllabus.

XI. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Policy Statement

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, or disability in employment or application for employment, admissions, or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities.

In particular and without limiting the preceding and pursuant to and consistent with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its regulations 34 CFR 100 et seq.; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its regulations 34 CFR 104; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 USC 1681 et seq., and its regulations 34 CFR 106 et seq; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and its regulations 34 CFR 110, Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its educational programs and activities. This non-discrimination in education programs and activities extends to employment and admissions and to recruitment, financial aid, academic programs, student services, athletics, and housing. Murray State is required by Title IX and 34 CFR part 106 not to discriminate on the basis of sex and the prohibition against sex discrimination specifically includes a prohibition of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

For information regarding nondiscrimination policies contact the Executive Director of IDEA/Title IX Coordinator, Camisha Duffy, Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Access, 103 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071. Telephone: 270-809-3155 (Voice) 270-809- 3361 (TDD).

Students with Disabilities

Students requiring special assistance due to a disability (temporary or permanent) should visit the Office of Student Disability Services immediately for assistance with accommodations. For more information, students with disabilities should contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Ken Ashlock, 423 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071. Telephone: 270-809-2018 (Voice) 270-809-5889 (TDD).

I am a member of the Safe Zone Project and I am available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone participant, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation and gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus. For more information, visit the Office of LGBT Programming at 243 Blackburn Science Building or online at www.murraystate.edu/lgbt.

Weekly Schedule:

We will spend as much time as needed on each topic. Because of this, some topics might take longer than others and this schedule should be taken as a rough guideline and not an absolute. *I expect that you have read the assigned readings **before** the class period for which they are assigned. I will announce additional required readings during class meetings.*

KW = Kellstedt and Whitten textbook

<i>Tentative Weekly Schedule</i>	<i>Content</i>
Week 1 (Jan 15, 17) Introduction to Course Scientific Study of Politics	Reading: KW, Chapter 1
Week 2 (Jan 22, 24) Scientific Study of Politics	No Class, Monday, January 21 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Reading: KW, Review Chapter 2 (pgs. 25-30), Chapter 3 (pgs. 56-68)
Week 3 (Jan 29, 31) Experimental Research Design	Reading: KW, Chapter 4
Week 4 (Feb 5, 7) Measurement and Validity	Reading: KW, Chapter 5 (pgs. 111-122), Chapter 6

Week 5 (Feb 12, 14) Descriptive Statistics	Reading: KW, Chapter 6
Week 6 (Feb 19, 21) Logic of Statistical Hypothesis Testing	Reading: KW, Chapter 7
Week 7 (Feb 26, 28) Review and Midterm	Tuesday: Review Thursday: Midterm Examination
Week 8 (Mar 5, 7) Bivariate Hypothesis Testing	Reading: KW, Chapter 8
Week 9 (Mar 12, 14) Bivariate Hypothesis Testing (con't)	Reading: KW, Chapter 8
Week 10 (Mar 19, 21) Spring Break	No Classes: Spring Break
Week 11 (Mar 26, 28) Two-Variable Regression Models	No Class: March 28 (TH) – International Studies Association Conference Reading: KW, Chapter 9
Week 12 (Apr 2, 4) Two-Variable Regression Models (con't)	Reading: KW, Chapter 9
Week 13 (Apr 9, 11) Multivariate Regression: The Basics	Reading: KW, Chapter 10
Week 14 (Apr 16, 18) Multivariate Regression: Model Specification	Reading: KW, Chapter 11
Week 15 (Apr 23, 25) Limited Dependent Variable and Clean Up	Reading: KW, Chapter 12
Week 16 (Apr 30, May 2) Clean Up	Final Papers due via <i>Canvas</i> on Friday, May 3 by 5:00 P.M.
Final Exam	Monday, May 6, 2019 at 10:30 A.M. in normal lecture room