

## Political Science 209-509: Introduction to Political Science Research Spring 2005

**Instructor:** Dr. Guy D. Whitten (Associate Professor)  
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**Class Meetings:** TR 10:20-11:35 in ALLN 1005  
**Office Hours:** 1:30pm-2:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment

This course introduces students to the philosophy and practice of political science research. There are two major goals of this course. The first is to have students become critical consumers of current political science literature. The second (more ambitious) goal is for students in this course to develop theories of politics, empirically test them, and eloquently discuss the results of their analyses.

### Grades

Course grades will be based on performances on three in class tests (worth 15% each), four written assignments (worth a total of 40%), and periodic quizzes and short homework assignments (15%). You will need a blue book for each of the tests.

Written assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the assigned date.

During the semester we will have several unannounced quizzes and short homework assignments on the course materials.

### Readings

There will not always be perfect unity between the course lectures and assigned readings. Thus it will be necessary to attend all lectures and to read the assigned materials in order to be exposed to all of the material that you are responsible for in this course. There are three required books for this course:

Kahane, Leo H. (2001). *Regression Basics*. Sage Publications.

Putnam, Robert (1993). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.

Shively, W. Phillips (2005). *The Craft of Political Research*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Prentice-Hall.

In addition to these books, additional required reading will be announced later in the semester.

### Students With Disabilities

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 contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Cain Hall Room B-118, or call 845-1637.

### Course Materials/Copyright and Plagiarism Statements; Academic Dishonesty

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By "handouts," I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the Aggie Honor System

Office website (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>) or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

**Weekly Schedule and Readings (additional readings may be assigned)**

January 18	Course Overview
January 20	The Scientific Study of Politics I Shively Chapter 1
January 25	The Scientific Study of Politics II Shively Chapter 2
January 27	The Scientific Study of Politics III
February 1	The Scientific Study of Politics IV Kahane Chapter 1
February 3	Putnam I Putnam Chapters 1&2
February 8	Measurement I Shively Chapters 4&5 <b>Written Assignment #1 is due</b>
February 10	Measurement II Shively Chapter 6
February 15	Putnam II Putnam Chapters 3&4
February 17	<b>Test #1</b>
February 22	Statistical Hypothesis Testing I Kahane Chapters 2&3 Shively Chapter 7&8
February 24	Statistical Hypothesis Testing II Kahane Chapter 4 Shively Chapter 9&10
March 1	Putnam III Putnam Chapters 5&6
March 3	Statistical Hypothesis Testing III Kahane Chapter 5 <b>Written Assignment #2 is due</b>
March 8	Statistical Hypothesis Testing IV Kahane Chapter 6
March 10	Statistical Hypothesis Testing V

March 14-18 Spring Break

March 22 Statistical Hypothesis Testing VI  
Kahane Chapter 7

March 24 **Test #2**

March 29 Rational Choice/Formal Theory

March 31 Experimental Political Science I  
**Written Assignment #3 is due**

April 5 Experimental Political Science II

April 7 Midwest Political Science Association Meetings

April 12 Survey Research I

April 14 Survey Research II

April 19 Lab Day

April 21 Lab Day

April 26 Lab Day

April 28 Test #3

May 6 **Written Assignment #4 due by 5pm**

## PS 209: Written Assignments

In General: All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced. I am not picky about formatting as long as you use citations for all work that is not your own. What I am picky about is proof-reading. You must proof-read each written assignment that you turn in for this class. Ideally you would follow the following steps:

- 1) Run a spell check.
- 2) Read the document aloud to yourself or to someone else to make sure that it flows.
- 3) Read the document at least one time eliminating any words that are unnecessary.
- 4) Put the document down for at least 24 hours and then read it again.

### **Assignment #1:**

Formulate a theory about a particular political phenomenon that interests you by going through the steps of theory building that we have discussed. For the empirical steps, instead of actually collecting data and testing your hypothesis, think about how you would proceed. Write about this in a paper.

This assignment should not exceed two pages. You should write in full paragraphs that communicate your ideas. In other words, do not write in numbered sections.

**This assignment is due on February 8<sup>th</sup> and counts as 5% of your final grade.**

### **Assignment #2:**

Redo assignment #1 with a new theory (you must change either your independent variable or your dependent variable, or both). You can not use turnout or the outcome of US Presidential Elections as your dependent variable for this assignment.

This assignment should not exceed two pages.

**This assignment is due on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and counts as 5% of your final grade.**

### **Assignment #3: Paper Proposal**

On one page discuss the theories that your paper will test, the data that you will make use of, and what you expect to find. You can not use turnout or the outcome of US Presidential Elections as your dependent variable for this assignment.

**This assignment is due on March 31<sup>st</sup> and counts as 5% of your final grade.**

### **Assignment #4: Research Paper**

Throughout this class we will discuss the expectations for this assignment in greater detail. There are no specific length requirements but you must propose and test multiple theories with a single regression model. You can not use turnout or the outcome of US Presidential Elections as your dependent variable for this assignment.

**This assignment is due May 6<sup>th</sup> and counts as 25% of your final grade.**