Syllabus for Research Methods

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/richard_skinner/28/
POLITICAL SCIENCE 240: RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

This course differs from many others that you have taken at Rollins or other schools. While it will teach you some valuable skills, it is not predominately about communicating substantive knowledge. This course will examine how social science is done and how we can know what we know. In the first third of the class, we will examine the principles underlying political science. In the second, we will learn many of the basic tools of statistical analysis. Finally, we will study regression, perhaps the most common method used by social scientists to interpret data. While this class will draw heavily upon statistics, it is not predominately a mathematics course. The understanding of data analysis and social science research methods that you will develop will be useful for writing your senior project, pursuing graduate school, or simply better understanding arguments in the public arena.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Quizzes: There will be 2 in-class quizzes based on the material covered in class and the homework assignments.

Homework Assignments: Completing your homework assignments is the key to your success in this course. Homework assignments will be passed out on separate sheets in class with their due dates printed on them. In general, you will be given a homework assignment and have one week to complete it. There are three homework assignments total.

Final Exam: There will be one comprehensive exam in this course at the end of the semester. The exam will test your overall understanding of the course material and ability to synthesize course information. The exam will consist of a take-home component and also an in-class component.

GRADE CONSTRUCTION:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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PLEASE NOTE: The workload in this course is challenging; therefore, the actual schedule of topics covered may change depending on the rate of progress of the class.
Attentive attendance in the classroom is required and necessary for success in this course. The material is cumulative; absences and inattention can compound difficulty over time. If you are sick, please inform me and do not attend class.

Homework assignments are due in class on their due date. Late homework assignments are not accepted except in the case of serious illness or tragedy. Do not leave homework assignments under my door or in my mailbox.

Required Books:


January 12: Orientation

January 18: Introduction to the scientific method
    Johnson and Reynolds, chs. 1-2
    King, Keohane and Verba, ch. 1

January 20 – February 1: Developing a research question. Conducting a literature review.
    Johnson and Reynolds, chs. 3-5
    King, Keohane and Verba, chs. 2

February 3: Hypothesis and research design; experimental and non-experimental methods.
    King, Keohane and Verba, chs. 3-6

February 8: Data measurement and collection.
    Johnson and Reynolds, chs. 6-7 and 9
    Norusis, chs. 1-3

Homework 1 due February 10

February 10: Other research methods – interviewing, participant-observation, case studies.
Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 8 & 10

February 16-23: Descriptive Statistics
   Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 11
   Norusis, ch. 3-5

Quiz 1: February 23 (in class)

February 15-March 3: Comparing Groups and Distributions; Combinations of Variables
   Norusis, ch. 6-8
   Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 12 (p. 339-360)

Homework 2 due March 3

March 3-24: Sampling and Hypothesis Testing
   Norusis, ch. 9-14

Quiz 2: March 24

March 29-April 5 Difference of Means, Analysis of Variance
   Johnson and Reynolds, chs. 12 (p. 366-402) & 13
   Norusis, chs. 15-16

Homework 3 due April 5

April 7: Observed vs. Expected (Chi-square)
   Norusis, ch. 17-18

April 12: Measures of Association
   Norusis, ch. 19

April 14-21: Regression
   Norusis, chs. 20-21
   Lewis-Beck. Ch. 1

April 26: Residuals & Multiple Regression
   Norusis, chs. 22-24
   Lewis-Beck, chs. 2-3