

University of West Georgia

Spring 2018

Political Science Methods

POLS 2601 – 01

Meets: TR 11:00 am–12:15 pm in Library Main Floor Classroom

FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students are introduced to various quantitative and qualitative research methods used in the social sciences, especially Political Science. They learn how to find, evaluate, and ethically use appropriate information to conduct political science research. They construct research questions and write research papers using case studies, comparative methods, and statistics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed to conduct research by developing a clear and appropriately narrow research focus that is in accordance with the requirements of the assignments.
- Student will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.
- Student will create and carry out a formal research design that is: consistent with generally recognized standards in political science, and effectively integrate specific information from the materials they have located.
- Student will cite sources correctly using the APSA format.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: Common Language for Course Syllabi

<https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the UWG Bookstore:

- Fraser, Gregory, and Chad Davidson. 2012. *Analyze Anything: A Guide to Critical Reading and Writing*. New York: Continuum.
- Other required readings will be available online through the library's databases (JSTOR, etc.), or the course website in CourseDen.

Exams

There will be no exams for this class, but there will be other assessments.

Attendance

You cannot participate, contribute, and learn if you are not in class. Therefore, attendance is a requirement of this course. Students are allowed 4 absences. **Students who miss more than 4 lectures will incur a penalty worth 10% of their Final Grade.** Please be aware that I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

Participation

The structure of weekly class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, discussions, individual and small group activities, and library research labs. So please come to class prepared and ready to participate in whatever activities are planned for the session. Participation entails attending class, joining in-class debates, being prepared with questions and comments about the readings, and completing in-class activities.

Research Project

You are required to develop a research project for this course, and it will be **worth 60% of the Final Grade.** To ease anxiety over completion of this requirement, it is divided into 5 steps: (1) Research Question Proposal, (2) Annotated Bibliography; (3) Literature Review; (4) First draft; and (5) Final Draft with all components integrated and organized coherently into a whole. That is, you will ask a relevant question; summarize, evaluate, and synthesize the scholarly literature on that question; define concepts and how they are to be measured; discuss and justify your case selection; discuss data or evidence needed and how to gather it; and justify the most appropriate methodology to analyze the evidence.

Table 1. Grade Calculation

Requirement	Page Count	Due Date	% Value
In-class activities		See schedule	26
1st half of class (before Spring Break)			
Annotated Bibliography		Mon., Feb. 13	5
Literature Review Draft		Mon., Feb. 20	5
Literature Review		Mon., Feb. 27	10
Presentation 1 & Script		Wed., Mar. 06	8 (4 each)
2nd half of class (after Spring Break)			
Annotated Bibliography 2		Mon., Apr. 10	10
Literature Review Draft 2		Mon., Apr. 17	10
Literature Review 2		Wed., Apr. 26	10
Research Design		Wed., Apr. 26	6
Presentation 2 & Script		TBD	10 (5 each)

Please note that **NO curves** or adjustment of scores will be made. Extra credit will be awarded for attendance to special events such as lectures, films, or extra writing assignments. Additional information about the assignments will be discussed as the semester progresses.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

1. Please arrive on time.
2. Please turn off all electronic devices (cell phone, iPods, etc.) prior to entering class.
3. Please do not text or work on material for other courses during class.
4. Since we will deal with controversial issues, and since it is vital to the success of this class to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect, personal attacks will not be tolerated.

COMMUNICATION

Email

All e-mail communication will proceed through official UWG channels (i.e. CourseDen, official UWG Gmail accounts). **I prefer that you contact me directly at: jperalta@westga.edu**

Discussion board

There is a discussion board called “Ask the Instructor a General Question.” Please ask general information or assignment questions there so that everyone may see the answers. If you need to contact me on a different matter, please contact me through the e-mail tab of the course website. For this class to work effectively, and for you to remain informed of course developments and latest updates, please login to the course website approximately every 48 hours.

Response Time and Netiquette

We will adhere to the following protocols: (1) If you ask me direct questions in CourseDen via e-mail or the discussion areas, I will generally reply within two working days or 24-48 hours (weekend and holidays are not working days).

(2) Communicating in an online environment takes special consideration and care, so please abide by basic Internet etiquette or [netiquette](#) when communicating online. For example, e-mails must be properly addressed and use appropriate language, tone, and grammar; avoid using acronyms (text message abbreviations); please do not shout (i.e. write using ALL CAPS or large fonts); and keep in mind that your posts are public and cannot be retracted or deleted.

DISCLAIMERS

No student can claim any rights based upon any omission, ambiguity, vagueness, or incompleteness contained in this syllabus. The instructor retains the right to amend this syllabus without prior notice.

Fair Use:

All “Website” content and “Course Materials” for this course are intended for the sole use of the enrolled members only; for the purposes associated with it; and may not be retained, altered, shared, or further disseminated without explicit authorization from the copyright holder.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:

Module 1 – Introduction

The central objective of this module is to introduce students to the class and each other, and to begin exploring the historical and intellectual roots of the Political Science discipline. More detailed information about daily in-class activities are outlined in CourseDen under Discussions, and we will discuss them as the semester progresses.

Recommended Readings:

Weber, Max. “Politics as a Vocation.”

Keohane, Robert. 2009. “Political Science as a Vocation.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42(2): 359-363.

Jan. 08 – 12: Introduction to the class and each other.

In-class exercise

Module 2 – Reading and Rhetoric Workshop

- Student will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.

Jan. 15 – 19:

In-class exercise

Jan. 22 – 26:

In-class exercise

Module 3 – Research Design 1

- Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed to conduct research by developing a clear and appropriately narrow research focus that is in accordance with the requirements of the assignments.
- Student will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.
- Student will cite sources correctly using the APSA format.

Fraser, Gregory, and Chad Davidson. 2012. Analyze Anything: A Guide to Critical Reading and Writing. New York: Continuum, Chapter 1-3.

Jan. 29 – Feb. 02:

In-class exercise

Feb. 05 – 09:

In-class exercise

Feb. 12 – 16:

In-class exercise

Annotated Bibliography 1 due Tuesday, 13 February 2018

Feb. 19 – 23:

In-class exercise

Literature Review 1 Draft due Tuesday, 20 February 2018

Feb. 26 – Mar. 02:

In-class exercise

Literature Review 1 due Tuesday, 27 February 2018

Mar. 05 – 09:

In-class exercise

Presentation 1 due Tuesday, 06 March 2018

Mar. 12 – 16:

In-class exercise

Mar. 19 – 23: Spring recess (no classes)

Module 4 – Research Design 2

- Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed to conduct research by developing a clear and appropriately narrow research focus that is in accordance with the requirements of the assignments.
- Student will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.
- Student will create and carry out a formal research design that is: consistent with generally recognized standards in political science, and effectively integrate specific information from the materials they have located.
- Student will cite sources correctly using the APSA format.

Required Reading:

Fraser, Gregory, and Chad Davidson. 2012. *Analyze Anything: A Guide to Critical Reading and Writing*. New York: Continuum, Chapter 4-6.

Mar. 26 – 30:

In-class exercise

Apr. 02 – 06:

In-class exercise

Apr. 09 – 13:

Annotated Bibliography 2 due Tuesday, 11 April 2018

Apr. 16 – 20:

In-class exercise

Literature Review 2 Draft due Tuesday, 17 April 2018

Apr. 23 – 27:

In-class exercise

Literature Review 2 & Research Design due Thursday, 26 April 2018

Apr. 30 – May. 08: Final [Exams Week](#)

Presentation 2 (& Script) due TBD, 11:00 am-1:00 pm