

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO READ THIS ENTIRE SYLLABUS

Course Number: POL 379 **Course Title:** Research and Writing in Political Science.

Credit Hours: 3 **Semester, Year:** Fall 2009

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 06:00 pm – 08:50 am, The University Center.

Professor: R. M. Bittick, M.P.A., Ph.D. **Office:** CHSS Bldg, Room 483

Contact Information: **Email:** rmb004@shsu.edu. **Phone:** 936-294-4105.

Office Hours: M-W-F, 11:00 am–12:00 pm, CHSS Room 483; walk-in only; no appointments during this hour. I am willing to meet with students by appointment at other mutually agreeable times.

Class Website: Go to Blackboard < <https://blackboard.shsu.edu/webapps/login/> >. Students are required to access this website before each class.

Course Description: the following is from the SHSU University Catalog:

POL 379 Research and Writing in Political Science. This course has two primary objectives. First, students will gain knowledge of basic research methods and design in the social sciences. Particular attention will be given to survey research. Second, students will learn research and writing skills including: how to locate, evaluate, and cite electronic and printed sources; how to conduct a literature review; how to write proposals, reports, and research papers; and how to edit proposals, reports, and papers.

Prerequisite: POL 261. Credit 3.

Welcome to POL 379! This course is designed for students to learn about research and writing in the discipline of political science. Through class lectures and discussions, along with the assignments, we will study the basic steps of social science research, including examining other select methods of research used in political science. We will also examine different types of writing required in the discipline, and how to reflect these competencies in one's resume/curriculum vitae and job interview. Finally, we will explore how to integrate statistical tools into the research design.

Course Goals: With the above in mind, students must achieve three goals:

1. Learn basic research methodologies and approaches applicable to political science.
2. Master the basic terminology involved with social science research.
3. Be able to write up a basic research project proposal.

Course Objectives: to achieve the above goals, students are required to complete the following objectives:

Knowledge: at the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Name and explain the steps of the social scientific research process in order.
- Explain measurement concepts.
- Describe basic sampling procedures.
- Distinguish between cause and effect in a given research project.
- Explain the difference between an experimental and quasi-experimental research design.

- Identify and describe various research design methods, and understand the characteristics of the appropriate situations for their proper usage.
- Describe basic survey research methods.
- Explain uses of aggregate data in social science research.
- Identify the structure of a research report.

Assessment: Mid-Term & Final Exams, Class Papers, and Exercises.

Competencies & Related Skills: at the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Draft a proposed research project using the steps of the social scientific research process.
- Conduct a Literature Review.
- Identify measurement problems in a research proposal.
- Identify appropriate sampling technique for a research proposal.
- Formulate and explain a research hypothesis on a given topic.
- Create a schematic model of a research hypothesis, and explain the conceptual and operational definitions of the dependent and independent variables in the model.
- Distinguish between the appropriate situations for each research design method.
- Identify the appropriate statistical tool for the research design.
- Draft a resume / curriculum vitae and prepare for a job interview.

Assessment: Mid-Term & Final Exams, Class Papers, and Exercises.

Values:

- Understand ethical limitations and considerations of various research designs;
- Distinguish between an objective conclusion from a research project and personal, cultural, or organizational norms and ethical values.

Assessment: In-class discussions.

Required Textbooks:

- Johnson, Janet Buttolph & H T Reynolds. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*, 6th edition. CQ Press.
 - Other material will be assigned throughout the semester that will be linked on the course website in Blackboard, put on reserve in the library, or handed out in class.

Recommended Text:

- Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*, Fourth Edition. Bedford/St. Martin's.

Required Activities of Students:

- **Class Attendance:** *Class attendance is mandatory.* If you are not able to attend class on a regular basis, you must drop the course and re-take it in a future semester.
- One (1) unexcused absences are allowed without penalty. You must submit documentation to me to have an absence excused (e.g. doctor's notice, etc.).
 - **NOTE: leaving class early counts as an absence.** 35 points may be deducted from that student's final grade at the professor's discretion if the student has more than three unexcused absences during the term.
- **Assigned Readings.** These are listed on the schedule. You must plan ahead and schedule your reading time appropriately.

- **Two Exams.** A (1) Mid-Term and a (1) Final Exam are required for this class. **NOTE:** the dates for the quizzes are set at the times specified in order for you to gain the maximum learning benefit. **No make-up exams are allowed.**
- **Exercises.** Seven (7) exercises are required for this class. These will be linked to the class website in Blackboard. **No late assignments are accepted for credit.**
- **Papers.** Two (2) paper are required for this class. Instructions will be provided. **NOTE: failure to properly document a class paper will result in a significant reduction in the assigned grade.** See *Academic Honesty*, below.
 - **Late Assignments:** the due date for the class paper is set so you can gain the maximum learning benefit. **If you are unable to complete the class paper at the specified time, you must contact me in advance and explain your reason.** With my approval, the due date for a paper can be rescheduled. Papers are subject to being assigned a lower grade if turned in late.

Grading Plan - the following coursework is required to complete this course:

<u>Required Assignments</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>
Mid-Term:	100
Seven Written Exercises:	100
Research Proposal Paper:	100
Statistics Paper	50
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>100</u>
Total:	450

All university rules and procedures apply to this class.

Students must download and read the document, *Student Guidelines*, found at: http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007_2008.pdf.

Academic Honesty: Students are required to read *Academic Policy Statement 810213, "Procedures in Cases of Academic Dishonesty."* found at http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/810213.pdf. All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

The Instructor reserves the right to require any or all students to submit written work on electronic media (e.g. Word or Word Perfect) so it may be checked using a plagiarism software program.

Americans with Disabilities Act: See *Academic Policy Statement 811006* at http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/811006.pdf. It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: See *Academic Policy Statement 861001* at http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf. Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom: Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Instructor Evaluations: students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Classroom Rules of Conduct: The *Code of Student Conduct and Discipline* is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. Students shall turn off or silence their cell phones once class begins. Students shall

not engage in phone conversations or text messaging during class. Students shall not engage in side conversations during class.

Schedule: The professor reserves the right to change the schedule. Changes will be highlighted in yellow and linked to the class website in Blackboard in the *Course Information* folder.

Week	Dates	Dates - Topics – Readings – Assignments
1	Wednesday Aug 26	Topic: Syllabus & Course Introduction. Required Reading: Syllabus.
		Topic: Course Overview. Required Reading: Handout, & Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 1.
		Topic: Introduction Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 1, continued.
2	Wednesday Sep 02	Topic: Studying Politics Scientifically Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 2.
		Topic: Research Idea & Research Proposal Required Reading: Handout. Assignment: Class Paper – Research Proposal Instructions, & Exercise #1 Instructions.
3	Wednesday Sep 09	12th Class Day. Topic: Literature Review Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 6. Assignment: Exercise #2 Instructions.
4	Wednesday Sep 16	Topic: Literature Review Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 6, continued.
		Topic: Research Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 3. Assignment: Exercise #3.
5	Wednesday Sep 23	Topic: Research Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 3, continued.
		Topic: Measurement Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 4. Assignment: Exercise #4.
6	Wednesday Sep 30	Topic: Measurement Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 4, continued.

Week	Dates	Dates - Topics – Readings – Assignments
7	Wednesday Oct 07	Topic: Research Designs Required Reading: Handout. Assignment: Exercise #5.
8	Wednesday Oct 14	Topic: Research Design Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 5, continued.
9	Wednesday Oct 21	Mid-Term Exam Required Reading: all readings, handouts, and lectures to date.
		Topic: Sampling Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 7.
10	Wednesday Oct 28	Topic: Data and Data Collection Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 8. Assignment: Exercise #6.
11	Wednesday Nov 04	Topic: Document Analysis Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 9, continued.
		Topic: Survey Research and Interviewing Required Reading: Johnson & Reynolds, ch. 10.
12	Wednesday Nov 11	Topic: Other Approaches to Political Science Research. Required Reading: Lecture Notes. Assignment: Class Paper – Research Proposal Due.
		Topic: Integrating Statistics. Required Reading: Handouts. Assignment: Statistics Paper Instructions.
13	Wednesday Nov 18	Topic: Integrating Statistics, continued. Required Reading: Handouts.

14	Wednesday Nov 25 thru Friday Nov 27	Holiday – Thanksgiving – No Class!
15	Wednesday Dec 02	Topic: Types of Writing in Political Science. Required Reading: TBD. Assignment: Statistics Paper Due.
		Topic: Jobs for Political Scientists. Required Reading: Handout.
		Topic: Resume – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. Required Reading: Handouts.
16	Wednesday Dec 09	Topic: Resume – Curriculum Vitae formats. Required Reading: Handout.
		Topic: Job Interview. Required Reading: TBD.
		Final Exam. Required Reading: cover all material since mid-term exam.
17 Finals Week	Day TBD	Meeting time: TBD. Attendance is Mandatory.