

Political Science 3379: Research and Writing in Political Science

Spring 2019

M/W/F 12:00PM – 12:50 PM

Dan Rather 301

(CHSS 495 after first session)

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Patane

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Office Hours: M/W 2:00pm-4:00pm or by appointment

Course Description

How do we properly perform social science research? How do we learn to speak the “language” of social scientific inquiry so that we can answer our questions about the world? This course is designed to introduce students to the basics of research. They will learn how to think scientifically about questions of social science, even if the behavior they’re interested in doesn’t appear so scientific. Later, students will learn about the components of a proper research project, and the basics of measurement. Throughout we will look to examples of literature to guide our writing, and students will begin to produce their own.

By the end of this course, you will all be able to pose research questions, seek out current research, understand what they are reading, and identify its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, they will be in a position to develop research and theories on their own and prepared to enter more advanced research methods courses.

IDEA Evaluations

Course expectations can always be vague. Since you will use these scores at the end of the semester to evaluate this course, looking at the learning objectives from the IDEA evaluations will give you a better picture of what this class will be like. The most important skills you will learn follow:

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).
2. Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth.
3. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

I will go over these during the introductory portions of the course.

Blackboard

All communication for this course will be conducted via the course’s Blackboard site and University email. Any supplementary material, assignments, or changes to the course structure will be made available on this site. Each student should ensure that they have access to these materials and are able to receive emails through their student account. Please note that I cannot accept or respond to student emails that come from a non-university address.

Course Material

There is no assigned text for this course. Instead, readings will be provided via pdf on the course Blackboard page. Each week, on the “Course Readings” page, students will find a folder corresponding to that week’s topic. Normally, it will contain one article or book selection focusing on that week’s topic and one literature review provided as an example of the kind of social science writing that you will be able to produce when the course concludes. It is necessary that you complete these readings before the first class of the week, as we will use them over the course of discussion.

Grading and Course Requirements

Assignment	Points
Literature Review Topic Proposal	10
Literature Review Draft 1	25
Literature Review Draft 2	75
Concept Exam	50
Concept Exam	50
Final Research Project Proposal	40
Total	200

Literature Review Topic Proposal: After being introduced to the ideas behind thinking scientifically about politics, students will propose a research question of their own and briefly describe it. A full outline will be posted on the course Blackboard and discussed in class later in the semester.

Literature Review Draft 1: After we go over the purpose and process behind producing a literature review, students will write their own. This will contain the literature relevant to the topic chosen during the proposal stage. I will then provide detailed feedback on this draft. A full outline will be posted on the course Blackboard and discussed in class later in the semester.

Literature Review Draft 2: This is simply a corrected and expanded version of the first draft. A full outline will be posted on the course Blackboard and discussed in class later in the semester.

Concept Exams: Because we will be talking about a lot of methodological ideas and ways of thinking, it is important to make sure you all have a baseline understanding while working on applying it. Two exams will be used to test how well you can place concepts with real research practice.

Final Research Project Proposal: This final project is designed to build the basic foundation for taking your literature review and turning it into a full research project. A full outline will be posted on the course Blackboard and discussed in class later in the semester.

Grading Scale

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: Below 60

Information and University Policies

Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain 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. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy:

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. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...” 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.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

Students with Disabilities Policy:

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 should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). 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 you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

Visitors in the Classroom:

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Copyright on Lecture and Course Materials

Copyright 2019 (Christopher Patane) as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course, students are prohibited from selling notes or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the instructor teaching this course.

Mental Health

Sometimes the study of Political Science involves dealing with difficult material. In some cases these may reflect or reference your own personal, family, or group experiences. Other times, life events may interfere with your ability to succeed in class. We do not want neglect our own health or well-being. If you need support, the Counseling Center can be reached at 936-294-1720. The [website](#) also contains self-help resources, and those services available in the Huntsville community.

As with all other parts of the course, students are welcome and encouraged to come talk to me to voice their concerns, seek support, or discuss accommodation for coursework after a crisis. There is nearly always a way to adjust the demands of the course to events that take place in a student's life.

Class Outline

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and on the course Blackboard site. It is the responsibility of the student to take note of any changes.

For all readings, see the respective Blackboard folder.

Week 1: January 16-18 Course Introduction

Friday, January 18: **No class**, SPSA 2019 Annual Meeting.
Introduction/Interests due on Blackboard.

Week 2: January 21-25 Thinking about Politics Scientifically

Monday, January 21: **No class**, Martin Luther King Day

Week 3: January 28-February 1 Thinking about Politics Scientifically II

Wednesday, January 30: Research Question Group Project
Friday, February 1: Proposal Due

Week 4: February 4-8 Reviewing Literature

Monday, February 4: Library Orientation and Finding Sources
Wednesday, February 6: Translating an article.
Friday, February 8: Reviewing an article Group Project

Week 5: February 11-15 Building a Literature Review

Friday, February 15, Building a Review Group Project

Week 6: February 18-22 Theory Building

Friday, February 22: Literature Review Draft 1 Writing Workshop

Week 7: February 25-March 1 Operationalization

Friday, March 1: Literature Review Draft 1 Due, Operationalization Group Project

Week 8: March 4-8
Research Design

Friday, March 8: Concept Exam 1

Week 9: March 11-15
No Class, Spring Break

Week 10: March 18-22
Measurement & Errors

Week 11: March 25-29
Qualitative Research

Friday, March 29: Reviewing qualitative literature Group Project

Week 12: April 1-5
Qualitative Research II

Friday, April 5, Literature Review Draft 2 Writing Workshop

Week 13: April 8-12
Ethics in Research

Friday April 12, Literature Review Draft 2 Due & Research Project Proposal introduction

Week 14: April 15-19
Quantitative Research I

Wednesday, April 17: Reviewing Quantitative Research Group Project

Friday, April 19: **No Class, Good Friday Holiday**

Week 15: April 22-26
Quantitative Research II

Week 16: April 29-May 3
Course Wrap-Up

Wednesday, May 1: Research Project Proposal Writing Workshop

Friday, May 3: Exam 2 Review

Week 17: May 6-9
Finals Week

Monday, May 6, 10:30am-12:30pm: Concept Exam 2

Thursday, May 9, Research Project Proposal Due