

Political Science 3379-02: Research and Writing in Political Science

Spring 2023

Online

CRN: 21612

Credit Hours 3

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Patane (he/him)

Email: c.patane@shsu.edu

Campus Address: CHSS 470

Campus Phone: (936) 294-4679

Office Hours: Every MWF, 12:00pm- 1:00pm. Or by appointment, in person and/or Zoom.

Note on political events/changes or personal crises: With events over the last few months, such as the attacks against the rights of LGBT people and pregnant individuals, and the increasingly public and violent expressions of racism and bigotry by individuals and governments, I understand that many of you may be under significantly higher amounts of stress/fear than during a normal semester. I also understand that you might need breaks from class to take care of your own mental health, family members, friends, or community.

Students are always welcome to get in touch with me if they want to talk or want assistance accessing support resources. I promise a safe, judgement free, and confidential environment. I am also happy to provide personal contact mechanisms if students want further privacy or the situation warrants that level of privacy. This extends to adjustments. I will work with anyone as much as I can to make sure you have a safe semester, feel heard, and be able to succeed during the semester.

Please note that as faculty, I am a mandatory Title IX reporter so if you reach out to me with experiences of harassment (sexual, racial, religious, etc) I will need to give your name and student email address to the Title IX office. They are also bound by confidentiality, and simply reach out to ask whether they can provide additional support.

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.

This course is entirely online, so it will rely more heavily on written responses on Blackboard and feedback from me rather than in person discussions like we would normally use in an in person version of a class like this.

Learning Objectives

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 in more detail 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.

I usually respond to emails within 24 hours of receipt, earlier if they are sent during typical business hours (9am-5/6pm). Please do not send a second email until the 24-hour waiting period is up. If there is an emergency, please take care of that first. I am always happy to work around personal emergencies when it comes to the completion of coursework.

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.

Grading and Course Requirements

Assignment	Points
Weekly Discussion Board Posts	1 each, 15 total
Research Topic Proposal	5
Literature Review Draft 1	5
Literature Review Draft 2	10
Research Design	5

Weekly Discussion Board Posts: Because this is a class about learning how to write, and building a research project bit by bit over the course of the semester, you will be responding to weekly prompts from me on the discussion board. These will involve practicing components of the research project so that they all “build up” into a part of your drafts or research design. These will be available to be seen by all other students so you can see what others have done, exchange ideas, and see all my feedback like you would with an in person version of this class.

All discussion posts are due at 11:59pm on the Sunday of the week they are assigned.

Research 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.

Research Design Outline: 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

Academic Dishonesty

Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Please be aware that plagiarized work and any form of academic dishonesty will result in an “F” on the assignment. SHSU [Academic Policy Statement 810213](#) outlines the definition of academic honesty and the related disciplinary procedures.

You should also familiarize yourself of [Academic Policy Statement 900823](#), which outlines the procedures for students to file an academic grievance should you wish to appeal your grade for reasons other than academic dishonesty. Please read over these policies. 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>

Copyright on Lecture and Course Materials

Copyright 2023 (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.

Emergencies, Crises, and 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. If you can, please let me know if you are falling behind or need additional help. I'm always happy to work with students to find ways to help them through the course as the rest of life goes on around them.

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.

Week 1: 1/17-1/20

Course Introduction

Week 2: 1/23-1/27

Thinking Scientifically

Week 3: 1/30-2/3

Finding a Question

Proposal due Sunday, February 5 at 11:59pm

Week 4: 2/6-2/10

Finding and Evaluating Sources

Week 5: 2/13-2/17

Organizing a Literature Review

Week 6: 2/20-2/24

Building your own Theory

Week 7: 2/27-3/3

Operationalization and Hypotheses

Week 8: 3/6-3/10

Building a Research Design

Literature Review Draft 1 due Sunday March 12 at 11:59pm

Week 9: 3/13-3/17

No Class, Spring Break

Week 10: 3/20-3/24

Using Evidence, I: Qualitative

Week 11: 3/27-3/31

Using Evidence II: Quantitative

Week 12: 4/3-4/7

Detecting Bad Research

Week 13: 4/10-4/14

Countering Bad Research

Week 14: 4/17-4/21

Catch-up/Writing Week

Week 15: 4/24-4/28

Catch-up/Writing Week

Week 16: 5/1-5/5

Catch-up/Writing Week

May 5, Study Day

Week 17: 5/8-5/11

Finals Week

The **second draft of the literature review** and the **research design** are due at 11:59pm on Thursday, May 11.