

POLI 250-001
Research Design and Quantitative Methods in Political Science
Fall 2017

Instructor: Dr. Rachel Navarre
Office: Dr. Guy Clifford House, 102
Office Hours: MW 1:30-3 or by
appointment

Email: RNavarre@bridgew.edu
Class Time: 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm, TTH
Class Location: DMF124

Course Description: Why do nations go to war? Why do some democracies have multiple parties and others just two? What determines election outcomes? Why do some people vote while others do not? Why do some countries have more generous welfare systems than others? What causes some nations to democratize while others do not? Does public opinion influence public policy? What drives elected officials' behavior?

Unlike many other political sciences courses you have taken, this class will not delve into these issues or discuss other themes in politics. What this class will do is help you answer (or judge how well other researchers have answered) these questions. This is a class that will teach you to think systematically about politics. The first section of this course will focus on the foundations of social scientific research and research design. This includes how to formulate a research question and hypothesis, the difference between correlation and causation, and the steps of the scientific method. The second half of the course will provide students with the means to answer research questions and test hypotheses quantitatively. Here we will cover basic statistical analysis and students will learn how to use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) a statistical software package.

The ultimate goal of this class is not to make you into political science researcher, but an informed consumer or critic of political research. At the end of this class, you will understand what separates political science from political punditry. You will have the skills to create empirical arguments about politics, empirically test these arguments, and be able to assess political research for strengths and weaknesses.

Course Requirements: Students are required to attend each lecture and complete the assigned readings before each meeting of the class. The readings are meant to provide you with the necessary background information to participate in class discussions which is required. You are expected to complete all assignments and turn them in at the beginning of class on the due date listed in the syllabus and to take the exams at the assigned time.

Required Text & Materials

1. Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H.T. Reynolds and Jason D. Mykoff. 2015. *Political Science Research Methods, 8th ed.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
2. Pollock III, Philip H. 2015. *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis, 5th ed.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press

3. Albertson, Bethany, and Shana Kushner Gadarian. 2015. *Anxious politics: democratic citizenship in a threatening world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Class Communication:

In this class, I will use Blackboard (a web-based course management system). The syllabus, additional readings, and announcements will be posted there. Students are expected to check Blackboard on a regular basis. Please refer to http://blackboard.bridgew.edu/student_help/ or itsupport@bridgew.edu if you need help in using Blackboard. Important announcements may also be made during class without other notice.

Class Email Policy:

Before contacting the instructor about questions regarding class policies, please re-check the syllabus. I will only answer emails during my normal business hours, typically Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. Please be aware that depending on the time you send me an email and the time I check my email, you may receive an answer the following **business** day.

Email will be used to communicate class changes through Blackboard. All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to check their BSU e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications. The complete text of this policy may be found here:

<https://my.bridgew.edu/departments/it/Shared%20Documents/Policies/EmailCommPolicy.pdf>

Scholastic Dishonesty

According to the University, "Academic dishonesty is an attempt to misrepresent one's efforts on any academic assignment or exercise submitted for evaluation" (Academic Integrity Policy). This includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, falsification, submission of ghost written work and multiple submissions of the same work. For more information on academic dishonesty and how to prevent it, please see <https://www.bridgew.edu/academic-integrity/students/how-to-avoid-violations>.

By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to avoid academic and scholastic dishonesty as outlined BSU's Academic Integrity policy. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on this policy, please visit this website:

<http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=970>

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Disability Resources Office at 508-531-2194 or disability_resources@bridgew.edu. The Disability Resources Office is located on the ground floor of the Maxwell Library within

the Academic Achievement Center.

If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your accommodation letter to me early in the semester so we can work out arrangements. It is also the student's responsibility to schedule exams with DRO.

Other Resources for Students

At BSU, there are many resources for students dealing with academic or personal concerns. For academic support, see the Academic Achievement Center (<http://www.bridgew.edu/academics/academic-achievement>) on the ground floor of Maxwell Library. You can also find links to many personal support services here <http://mybsu.bridgew.edu>, including (but not limited to) Veterans, GLBTA, Title IX Issues, Diversity services and Counseling. These services are meant to be used by students, and I encourage you to use them as needed.

The CARE (Crisis) Team number is 508.531.1276.

Religious Holy Days

By BSU policy, if you must miss a class or an examination in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. However, you must let me know **beforehand via email** that you will be missing class so arrangements can be made.

Grading: This course will use plus/minus grades. Scores of 0.50 and higher will be rounded up, and scores that are 0.49 or lower will be rounded down.

Your final grade will be made up of the following:

Midterm (20%)	Book Review (10%)
Final Exam (20%)	Participation (10%)
Assignments (40%)	

Your final grade will be calculated and converted into a letter grade using the following percentages:

A >93	B- 80-82	D+ 67-69
A- 90-92	C+ 77-79	D 63-66
B+ 87-89	C 73-76	D- 60-62
B 83-86	C- 70-72	F <60

Exams: There will be two exams each with multiple choice and short answer questions.

Assignments: There are 8 take home assignments you must complete for this class each comprising 40% of your grade in the class. Emailed assignments *will not* be accepted.

Book Review: You will be required to read *Anxious Politics*. After you do so you will be required to write a review of at least 4 pages (Double Spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman Font) addressing the following issues: Identify one of the major research

questions the authors were seeking to address. What types of research designs and methods were employed to answer these questions? Identify multiple hypotheses being tested in the study specifying the independent and dependent variables. What were the main findings of the study? How would you assess the overall quality of study? Identify specific strengths and weaknesses. The book review is worth 100 points or 10% of your overall grade. Reviews will be evaluated on the following criteria: (1) overall quality of the writing, (2) strength of analysis, (3) whether all aspects of the assignment were fully addressed and (4) the degree to which the review integrates material from the course lectures, discussions and readings.

Class Participation: Student participation in class discussions is essential for the class to function effectively. Remaining quiet for the entire semester is not a viable option. If you are shy and have trouble communicating your thoughts in front of others you will need to overcome this tendency to succeed in this class. Overall, class participation accounts for 10% of your grade.

Late Policy: Assignments will be considered late if they are not handed in at the start of class. Any paper that is not turned in at that point will be docked 5 points. For each day after that, it will be docked a letter grade. For example, if the paper is due Tuesday and you turn it in Wednesday, the highest grade you can earn will be a B. After 5 days, late papers/assignments will not be accepted.

Grading Appeals/Questions

After I have returned or made the grades available to the class on Blackboard, you have one week from that day to question the grade. If you wish to appeal the grading on a question you must submit an appeal **in writing via email** that outlines your concerns, and why you think re-grading is required. Grades are confidential. If you wish to discuss your grades, please contact me to schedule an appointment or visit me during my office hours.

Absences/Makeup Exam Policies

You are required to attend exams. Unexcused absences from examinations will result in a score of zero for that exam. Make-ups will only be allowed under extreme emergencies (accident, illness, or university or legal obligation per the University Handbook). You must present prior documentation, such as a letter from your doctor, or a letter from the appropriate university authority for university events if you need to take the make-up exam.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor about a missed exam. With the exception of documented hospitalization or other extreme circumstances, students are required to contact the instructor before the missed exam. In case of unexpected emergencies, the student must contact the instructor within three (3) days of missing the scheduled exam. If the student fails to do so, they will be assigned a zero for that exam. The instructor reserves the right to change the format of the exam for any exam given outside of normally scheduled exam times. The instructor will inform the student of the time and date of makeups.

Political Science Department Learning Outcomes

Analysis of Political Processes, Institutions, & Practices: Students will identify and assess the systematic factors that underlie political processes, systems, and practices in the United States and abroad as they exist today and have existed in the past.

Effective Written Communication: Students will effectively communicate about political systems, processes, and theories in a rigorous manner by developing cogent, logical arguments that properly employ and make use of relevant evidence.

Application of Quantitative &/or Qualitative Skills: Students will analyze a problem and draw correct inferences using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Class Calendar and Reading Assignments

I reserve the right to adjust the schedule as needed. Each date list the topic of class, the readings you should complete before that class starts. If an assignment is due, it will be noted after the class topic.

Week 1

9/7 Introduction to the Course and Review of the Syllabus

Week 2

9/12- What is the Scientific Study of Politics?

Read: Johnson and Reynolds Chapters 1-2

9/14 Hypotheses, Concepts and Variables

Read: Johnson, Reynolds and Myckoff Chapter 4

Week 3

9/19 Hypotheses, Concepts and Variables (continued)

Assignment # 1 Due

9/21 Measurement

Read: Johnson and Reynolds, Myckoff Chapter 5

Week 4

9/26 Research Design: Making Causal Inferences

Read: Johnson, Reynolds and Myckoff Chapter 6

9/28 Types of Research Designs (continued)

Assignment # 2 Due

Week 5

10/3: Sampling and Case Selection

Read: Johnson, Reynolds and Myckoff Chapter 12

10/5: Making Direct Observations

Read: Johnson, Reynolds and Myckoff Chapter 8

Week 6

10/10 Document Analysis

Read: Johnson, Reynolds and Myckoff Chapter 9

10/12: Survey Research

Read: Johnson, Reynolds and Myckoff Chapter 10

Week 7

10/17 Survey Research (continued)

Assignment # 3 Due

10/19 : Book Review Discussion:

Read:

Book Review Due

Week 8

10/24 Midterm Exam Review

10/26 Midterm Exam

Week 9

10/31 Introduction to SPSS

Read: Pollock Chapter 1

11/2: Descriptive Statistics

Read: Johnson and Reynolds Chapter 11; Pollock Chapter 2

Assignment # 4 Due

Week 10

11/7 Making Comparisons

Read: Pollock Chapter 4

Assignment # 5 Due

11/9 Making Controlled

Read: Pollock Chapter 5

Week 11

11/14 Making Inferences about Sample Means

Read: Pollock Chapter 6

11/16: Making Inferences about Sample Means (continued)

Week 12

11/21 Chi-Square and Measures of Association

Read: Pollock Chapter 7

11/23 NO CLASS

Week 13

11/28 Chi-Square and Measures of Association (continued)

Assignment # 7 Due

11/30 Correlation and Linear Regression

Read: Pollock Chapter 8

Week 14

12/5: Correlation and Linear Regression (continued)

12/7: Correlation and Linear Regression (continued)

Assignment # 8 Due

Week 15

12/12 Final Exam Review

Final Exam:

Tuesday, Dec. 19 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM