

Political Science 3001
"Approaches to the Study of Politics"

Instructor: Leonard Ray
Office: Stubbs 208 C
Office Hours: M, F 9:00-10:40; T, TH 9:00-10:15
or by appointment.

Semester: Fall 2015
Time: T, TH 10:30-11:50
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Catalog Description:

Survey of ways political scientists try to generate knowledge about the political world.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the methods and processes of conducting research in political science. The course surveys the variety of research approaches employed in Political Science before settling into a focus on empirical work. We will explore the elements of research design including hypothesis formation, measurement, sampling, and causal inference. We will also learn about the various methods of data collection, including experimentation, survey research, field research, and the use of available data. Reading knowledge of elementary data analysis techniques and a discussion of research ethics conclude the course. This course prepares you to more fully understand material presented in senior level courses. More importantly, the course should also help you to analyze public policy choices we are confronted with as citizens of a democracy.

Course Objectives:

Students in this course learn to:

- x Understand social science research.
- x Make and evaluate claims
- x Interpret texts
- x Think theoretically about social and political events and forces

Textbooks:

Johnson and Reynolds, Political Science Research Methods, 7th ed., CQ Press 2011 (PSRM)
Theodoulou and O'Brien Methods for Political Inquiry: The Discipline, Philosophy and Analysis of Politics, Pearson 1998 ISBN: 9780136755623 (MPI)
Other readings will be posted online via Moodle.

Graded work:

5 Short writing assignments: 10% each

Attendance and participation 10%

Mid Term Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scale:

A+	98 >	A	92 >	A-	90	
90 >	B+	88 >	B	82 >	B-	80
80 >	C+	78 >	C	72 >	C-	70
70 >	D+	68 >	D	62 >	D-	60
60 >	F					

Writing Assignments

Political Theory/ Textual Interpretation paper

Literature review paper

Observational Research Report

Archival Research Report

Statistical Research Report

Credit hours:

This is a three credit hour course. Per university policy, each of the three weekly hours of classroom time, students should expect to spend at least two hours outside of class reading course material, and completing writing assignments

Course Schedule and Topics:

Aug 25, 27 Introduction to Political Science Research

MPI Ch 1 and 2 PSRM Ch., 2, 15

Sept 1, 3: Types of political research

MPI Ch 5, 9, 10 PSRM Ch. 2

Sept 8, 10: The research process, asking questions and prior literature

PSRM Ch.; MPI Ch. 11, 14

Sept 15, 17: Interpretation and close reading

MPI Ch. 6; Leopold and Stearns Political Theory: Methods and Approaches. 37

Sept 22, 24 Formal and Game Theory

Fiorina "Formal Models in Political Science" in MPI

Is Nuclear Deterrence Rational? Steven J. Brams; D. Marc Kilgour PS Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer, 1986),
pp. 645-651

Sept 29, Oct 1: Concept formation and measurement

PSRM Ch. 4 and Ch. 5

Richard Fenno. 1977. "US House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration" American Political