

# POLI 7964: Publishing Empirical Research

Spring 2016  
Room: Stubbs 210  
Th 9:00-11:50

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## Course Description

This course is an advanced research workshop that will aid senior graduate students in polishing a preexisting piece of original empirical research and preparing it for publication in one of the discipline's peer-reviewed journals. The peer review research process will be discussed at length and students will be trained in various related tasks such as drafting conference presentations, producing replication data sets, and reviewing the work of other students in the course. There is no substantive focus for the course and students from all empirical subfields are welcome to enroll. The workload for the course will be relatively heavy and involves substantial amounts of collaboration between the instructor and students.

## Course Prerequisites

There are a number of prerequisites for enrollment in this course.

- (1) You should have previously completed the department's baseline empirical research training sequence, which includes POLI 7961, POLI 7962, and POLI 7963.
- (2) In addition, you should have completed at least one of the following recent methods courses: Time Series Analysis (with Hitt), Categorical Analysis (with Garand or Henderson), Text Analysis (with Dunaway), or Experimental Methods (with Mann).
- (3) Most importantly, you should have already in hand a fully-drafted research manuscript complete with introductory, theory, and data sections, as well as a roughly executed analytical section and preliminary set of results.

## Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are threefold.

- (1) Practicing the drafting and redrafting of manuscripts multiple times while accounting for comments and criticisms from your peers, professors, reviewers, and editors.
- (2) Learning how to successfully navigate the peer review process, which includes selecting an appropriate journal, writing memos to reviewers, organizing replication data, and correctly formatting your manuscripts.
- (3) Developing ready facility with a number of important tasks that support the peer review process, such as presenting at conferences, building rapport with colleagues in your field, and writing about your work to promote its findings to the general public.

## Course Policies

Academic integrity is of paramount importance and evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in

## Requirements and Evaluation

### Participation 20 points

It takes a village, as they say. Our scholastic work is only as good as the people that surround us and thus it is vital that you take the time to carefully evaluate your peers' work, come to class prepared to discuss, and remain focused during our meetings. As the instructor, I will be working to build a comfortable and collegial environment in the classroom. The ultimate aim is not only an excellent paper for each student by the end of the semester, but the creation of a long-term network of colleagues that you can rely upon for future work as well.

### Entry Paper Draft 10 points

### Second Paper Draft 10 points

### Third Paper Draft 10 points

### Exit Paper Draft 10 points

There is nothing more central to this course than the four drafts of your paper (entry and exit drafts, as well as two intermediate drafts). You must take these written assignments seriously and the succession of drafts must exhibit a positive trajectory of improvement. Each draft is a complete attempt at the full research manuscript there are no partial or preliminary drafts for this course.

### Peer Review Memos 10 points

You will review the work of your peers on at least three occasions in this class. This process will include both written (out-of-class) and discussion-based (in-class) components. You will also submit memos in response to reviewer comments each time you submit a new draft.

### Data Replication 10 points

Analytical transparency is on the rise and many journals are adopting policies that require the full disclosure of all data and code at the point of publication. You will draft a replication data set for your project and you will also be asked to use another student's replication data set to reproduce the results of her project.

### Mock Blog Post 5 points

Political scientists are becoming more conscientious about disseminating their findings to a broader readership through blogs such as the MonkeyCage, FiveThirtyEight, and Vox. These blogs are also excellent examples of mainstream data journalism that relies on accessible discussion, innovative graphics, and analysis of current events. You are required to follow these blogs during the semester and you will practice writing a blog post based on your research paper.

### Conference Presentation 10 points

It is also important that you are able to convey the results of your research to a much different audience – namely, the academic community. This is primarily accomplished through short, 10-minute conference presentations, which we will practice and workshop in class.

### Coffee with a Professor 5 points

Finally, writing good research also requires that you are able to make contact with and solicit comments from senior colleagues. The course's final requirement is that you at some point take one of the professors in our department out for a cup of coffee (having given them a copy of your paper ahead of time) to discuss your project for the semester. This will require about \$10 on your part, but this is a small sum considering the fact that you did not have to purchase books for the course!

## Important Documents on Moodle

Course syllabus

Typesetting and bibliography management lab files

Manuscript outline and formatting criteria

DropBox protocol and submission process

Literature on journal rankings and choosing a journal outlet

Three full examples of Potter's rough drafts, redrafts, reviewer memos, and submissions

Guidelines on writing a review of a manuscript

Guidelines on writing a memo to reviewers

Outline of conference style presentation and LaTeX slide template

Guidelines for writing a cover letter to a journal

Guidelines for replication data set submission





## Week 7 / Feb 25 / Peer Review Day #2

Assignment: peer reviews uploaded to DropBox before class

In-class workshop of student papers

Peers and Potter provide critiques

Sign-up sheet for co ee with a professor assignment

## Week 8 / Mar 3 / Circle the Wagons

Assignment: prepare brief presentation about response to reviewers

Assignment: mock blog post for MonkeyCage, FiveThirtyEight, or Vox

Individual work updates

Lecture on cover letter to journals

Lecture on selecting reviewer recommendations

Lecture on your manuscript's electronic footprint

Lecture on using LaTeX and Beamer to draft presentation slides

## Week 9 / Mar 10 / Draft Day #3

Assignment: **Third Draft Due**, uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: memo to reviewers uploaded to DropBox before class

Sign-up sheet for conference presentations

Assignment of papers for review

## Week 10 / Mar 31 / Peer Review Day #3

Assignment: peer reviews uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: present results of co ee with a professor discussion

Peers and Potter provide critiques

Developing detailed plans for nal journal submission

## Week 11 / Apr 14 / Presentations

Assignment: select journal and write cover letter

Individual work updates

## Week 12 / Apr 21 / Presentations

Assignment: completed replication data sets and codebook

Individual work updates

Assignment of peer replication projects

## Week 13 / Apr 28 / Presentations

Assignment: summary of peer replication attempts

Individual work updates

## Week 14 / May 5 / Final Journal Submission

Assignment: **Exit Draft Due**, uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: submit proof of journal submission