

Department of Political Science
Political Science 3000: Introduction to Political Research

Instructor: Professor Jennifer Selin

Overview

This course offers an introduction to the scientific study of politics. We will develop a systematic way to think about politics, clarify what it means to study politics scientifically, and learn how to produce effective research. Throughout the course, we will illustrate various social scientific principles using scholarship that explores policymaking in the American executive branch of government. Among the topics we will discuss are theory building, evaluating causal relationships, research design, data measurement, and statistical inference.

This course has one primary aim. The course is designed to introduce the goals and standards of political science research to help students understand current political science scholarship. A large percentage of work in the field uses the scientific method to examine causal relationships in politics. It is difficult to learn such a method through independent study and thus, this course is designed to provide guidance that will prove useful when students encounter political science scholarship and when students conduct their own political analysis. It is my hope that, by the end of the course, students will feel confident in their ability to conduct their own research.

Books

The required text is as follows and can be purchased at the Missouri Bookstore:

Kellstedt, Paul M and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Assessment

Student assessment is targeted to help provide students with a background in how to conduct social scientific research. Students will be assessed according to their knowledge of course material and their ability to analyze, explain, and apply that knowledge. Students are expected to do more than just regurgitate or summarize assigned readings – the most successful students will be able to synthesize material from lectures and readings and apply those concepts to analyze political issues.

This is a demanding course that will require students to dedicate an appropriate amount of time to understanding covered material. I value student participation in lecture. Students must be regularly prepared for class in order to participate meaningfully in class discussion.

Student assessment will be as follows:

Exam: 15%

Take Home Assignments: 30%

Take Home Assignment 1 (Synthesizing Literature Exercise): 10%

Take Home Assignment 2 (Data Coding Exercise): 5%

Take Home Assignment 3 (Reflection Paper): 15%

Paper: 45%

Political Event Analysis: 5%
Literature Review Outline: 10%
First Draft: 10%
Final Draft: 20%

Participation and Section Attendance: 10%

I do accept late assignments, but only after assessing a penalty of *one third of a letter grade for each day of lateness*. The penalty is in fairness to all students who submit their assignments on time. That said, I recognize that serious illnesses and emergencies do occasionally arise. If you find yourself in such a situation, please notify me as soon as possible and stay in touch during your absence. In the interest of fairness, the opportunity to turn in an assignment late or take a make-up exam will be limited to students who experience serious illnesses or family emergencies.

Grading Scale

The following scale will be used to convert numeric course grades into letter grades:

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
0- 59	60- 62	63- 66	67- 69	70- 72	73- 76	77- 79	80- 82	83- 86	87- 89	90- 92	93- 96	97- 100

Take Home Assignments

In order to provide students with incremental practice using the skills required to conduct good political science research, students will complete a series of take home assignments. While I will provide guidance regarding my expectations with each assignment, the following principles will apply throughout the semester.

The assignments are designed to give students the opportunity to apply the skills acquired from attending class and reading assigned material. These assignments require students to illustrate mastery of course material and grades will reflect this requirement. Assignments in the A range will comprise work which goes well beyond class materials and discussions to demonstrate original thinking and thoughtful arguments that are expressed in clear, persuasive writing. Assignments in the B range will exhibit mastery of course materials expressed in clear, error-free writing. Assignments in the C range will demonstrate inadequate understanding of the course materials. Assignments that score lower than a C will demonstrate an obvious lack of preparation and/or comprehension of class material.

Paper

While more guidance will be provided later in the semester, each student is required to submit an original research design paper on a topic of his or her choosing. The purpose of the paper is to help develop students' skills at political analysis. Students will be expected to work on these papers throughout the semester and there will be three assignments designed to help students incrementally develop their papers. In addition, section meetings will assist students in organizing, researching, and writing their papers.

Note that these papers are not an opportunity to summarize political science research. Papers in the A range will be original, involve thoughtful proposals for analysis of data, and incorporate political science scholarship in creative ways. Only papers that go beyond class

materials and discussions in both thought and research will be considered for an A grade. Papers in the B range will exhibit mastery of course materials, propose analysis of data, and include thoughtful analysis of political science scholarship. Papers in the C range will exhibit inadequate understanding of course materials and/or deficient, error-plagued writing. Papers which earn lower than a C will exhibit wholly inadequate understanding of the course materials combined with a clear lack of effort or preparation.

Participation and Section Attendance

Each student's participation and section attendance grade will have two components: lecture participation and section participation and attendance. Put simply, students are expected to attend and participate regularly in both lecture and section. First, assessment regarding a student's participation will reflect preparation for class and thoughtful contributions to class discussion. While I do not take attendance at lectures, *students can only participate if they actually attend class*. As such, it is in each student's best interest to attend class. It is my experience that students who are prepared for class and actively participate in class discussion also earn higher grades on their assessments.

I do not tolerate the use of cell phones in my classroom. Just as I respect my students enough not to text or use my phone during class, I expect the same respect from my students. **Any student caught using his/her phone during class will lose two percentage points on his/her final draft grade for each infraction.**

Second, assessment regarding a student's participation in section will reflect attendance, preparation for, and thoughtful contributions to section. In contrast to lectures, attendance will be taken at section.

Academic Integrity

University standards for academic integrity apply in this class. Put simply, **I do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism of any kind**. You are expected to know and understand the university's policies on this matter.

Disability Resources and Educational Services

To ensure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the first day of class, I ask that students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class contact me as soon as possible. To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities should both contact me and the Disability Center as soon as possible. To contact the Disability Center, you may call 573-882-4696, email disabilitycenter@missouri.edu, or visit the Center's website: <http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu>.

Class Schedule

The schedule for the course is provided below. Students are responsible for all readings listed prior to the class period in which they are discussed. Any reading not found in the required book is posted on Canvas in the "Files" section.

Organizing Ideas and Concepts

Selections from Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. 2018. *The Logic of American Politics*, 8th Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press (pg 1-31).

Selections from Shepsle, Kenneth A. and Mark S. Bonchek. 1997. *Analyzing Politics*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company (pg 5-35).

Selin, Jennifer L. and David E. Lewis. 2018. *Sourcebook of United States Executive Agencies*. Washington, DC: Administrative Conference of the United States.

Selections from Kerwin, Cornelius M. and Scott R. Furlong. 2011. *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy*, 4th Ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press (pg 1-38).

5 U.S.C. § 553 (2018).

5 U.S.C. § 554 (2018).

The Scientific Study of Politics

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 1 (pg 1-21).

Weingast, Barry R. 1984. "The Congressional-Bureaucratic System: A Principal Agent Perspective (With Applications to the SEC)." *Public Choice* 44(1):147-191.

Political Event Analysis Due

McCubbins, Mathew D. and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1):165-179.

McCubbins, Mathew D., Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. "Structure and Process, Politics and Policy: Administrative Arrangements and the Political Control of Agencies." *Virginia Law Review* 75(1):431-482.

Take Home Assignment 1 Due

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 2 (pg 24-47).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 3 (pg 51-66).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 4 (pg 69-88).

Clinton, Joshua D., David E. Lewis, and Jennifer L. Selin. 2014. "Influencing the Bureaucracy: The Irony of Congressional Oversight." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2):387-401.

Take Home Assignment 2 Due

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 5 (pg 92-126).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 6 (pg 129-143).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 7 (pg 145-167).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 8 (pg 171-195).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 9 (pg 197-218).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 10 (pg 220-245).

Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 12 (pg 273-293).

Exam

The Scientific Study of Regulation

Moe, Terry M. 1989. "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure." In John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson, eds., *Can the Government Govern?* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Literature Review Outline Due

Yackee, Jason Webb and Susan Webb Yackee. 2006. "A Bias Towards Business? Assessing Interest Group Influence on the U.S. Bureaucracy." *Journal of Politics* 68(1):128-139.

Selin, Jennifer L. 2015. "What Makes an Agency Independent?" *American Journal of Political Science* 59(4):971-987.

Balla, Steven J. 1998. "Administrative Procedures and Political Control of the Bureaucracy." *American Political Science Review* 92(2):663-673.

Yackee, Jason Webb and Susan Webb Yackee. 2010. "Administrative Procedures and Bureaucratic Performance: Is Federal Rule-making 'Ossified'?" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 20(2):261-282.

Wiseman, Alan E. 2009. "Delegation and Positive Sum Bureaucracies." *Journal of Politics* 71(3):998-1014.

First Draft of Paper Due

5 U.S.C. § 706 (2018).

Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc. v. Volpe, 401 U.S. 402 (1971).

Chevron, U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 467 U.S. 837 (1984).

The Scientific Study of Executive Politics

Bertelli, Anthony M. and Christian R. Grose. 2009. "Secretaries of Pork? Executive Ideology, Multiple Bureaucratic Principals, and Distributive Public Policy." *Journal of Politics* 71(3):926-945.

Kriner, Douglas L. and Andrew Reeves. 2012. "The Influence of Spending on Presidential Elections." *American Political Science Review* 106(2):348-366.

Gordon, Sanford C. and Catherine Hafer. 2005. "Flexing Muscle: Corporate Political Expenditures as Signals to the Bureaucracy." *American Political Science Review* 99(2):245-261.

Haeder, Simon F. and Susan Webb Yackee. 2015. "Influence and the Administrative Process: Lobbying the U.S. President's Office of Management and Budget." *American Political Science Review* 109(3):507-522.

Take Home Assignment 3 Due

McCarty, Nolan and Rose Razaghian. 1999. "Advice and Consent: Senate Response to Executive Branch Nominations, 1885-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(4):1122-1143.

Hollibaugh, Gary E. Jr., Gabriel Horton, and David E. Lewis. 2014. "Presidents and Patronage." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4):1024-1042.

Final Draft of Paper Due