

PS 3000: Introduction to Political Research

University of Missouri

Fall 2020

M W, 12:00 - 12:50 PM, Ellis Library, Gallery 4

Laron K. Williams, Ph.D.

Office location: Professional Building #209

Phone: 573-882-2820

Email: williamslaro@missouri.edu

Office hours: M W 1:00 - 2:00 PM over Zoom (Meeting ID: 938 1058 8488; Passcode: 644658)

Wednesday or Friday Lab

Discussion section (for remote participators):

Monday: Meeting ID: 975 8859 3247; Passcode: 3000

Wednesday: Meeting ID: 919 9558 3385; Passcode: 3000

Information for labs:

A (F 9-9:50am, Middlebush Hall 8); Zoom Meeting ID: 873 7711 1307; Passcode: 1qCaxm

B (F 10-10:50am, Middlebush Hall 8); Zoom Meeting ID: 997 1289 9023; Passcode: 526666

C (W 1-1:50pm, Middlebush Hall 8); Zoom Meeting ID: 981 3517 7869; Passcode: 30002

D (F 12-12:50pm, Middlebush Hall 7); Zoom Meeting ID: 981 3517 7869; Passcode: 30002

General: This course introduces students to the practice of political science research. There are several learning objectives for the course:

- Students will be able to analyze and evaluate empirical claims about political processes, both within the media and political science literature.
- Students will be able to succinctly and effectively summarize their empirical findings in an easy-to-understand way.
- Students will be able to develop theories of political processes, design appropriate empirical tests, and interpret the findings.

For illustrative purposes, the class provides substantive examples from several fields of political science (American politics, international relations, comparative politics, and public policy). The goals of the course are to prepare political science majors for the more analytical upper-level political science courses, to improve their research skills, and to increase their ability to make valid causal statements about political events and behaviors.

This is a writing intensive course. Effective writing is encouraged through several writing assignments that require you to think clearly and express your thoughts concisely.

There are a number of ways how students can receive assistance or feedback or contact me in case of emergency:

- Call me at 573-882-2820
- Email me at williamslaro@missouri.edu or the teaching assistants (information below)
- Attend my weekly office hours via Zoom (information above)
- Post a question on the “Ask Your Instructor” discussion thread on Canvas.

Semester Plan: We are a “hybrid” class, which means that we will use a mixture of both in-person and online lectures and activities. All lectures will be available online through Canvas. Each student is also signed up for an in-person lab on either Wednesday or Friday. In addition to the labs, on Monday and Wednesday during class time (12-12:50) in Ellis Library Gallery 4, we will have in-person activities, discussions, etc. These are intended to clarify, extend and deepen our understanding of the online lectures. Students will only attend one of these two in-person sessions, which is determined by the lab that you are signed up for. For example, all of those students registered for A (Friday 9-9:50) and B (Friday 10-10:50) labs will attend the Monday discussion from 12-12:50. All those students registered for C (Wednesday 1-1:50) and D (Friday 12-12:50) will attend the Wednesday discussion from 12-12:50. To summarize, each student will have in-person activities twice per week: once either M or W 12-12:50 and once in their registered lab. Students who are unable to participate in-person are expected to participate synchronously over Zoom.

The weekly lab session (on Wednesday or Friday) will include exercises to help you learn the material and improve skills. Some of these exercises will emphasize writing and clear communication. Topics, for instance, include designing a research proposal, conducting original research and creating a report of research results.

Grades: Course grades will be based on:

- written assignments (45% total; more on this below and in class)
- Group project (25%)
- periodic quizzes, homeworks and assignments (30% total)

Final class grades will be assigned with the following grading scale:

A+ = 97.0 - 100
A = 90.0 - 96.99
B+ = 87.0 - 89.99
B = 80.0 - 86.99
C+ = 77.0 - 79.99
C = 70.0 - 76.99
D+ = 67.0 - 69.99
D = 60.0 - 66.99
F = 0 - 59.99

All submitted via Canvas at the required time on the assigned date. Late work will be deducted a letter grade for each calendar day late. **I strongly encourage you to turn in the assignments late rather than not at all. A grade of 0 can be fatal to your final grade.** During the semester, we will have several unannounced quizzes, assignments and short homeworks on the course materials.

Readings: There will not always be perfect unity between the course lectures and assigned readings. Thus it will be necessary to read the assigned materials and go through the Canvas modules in the correct order.

There is one required textbook for this course. All other readings are either available online or will be provided on Canvas.

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

Class Requirements

As this is a writing intensive course, writing assignments account for a substantial component of the course grade. Moreover, the writing assignments are intended to be vehicles for learning the material covered in the course. There will be a variety of short (approximately four to six pages) papers, each to be revised and resubmitted. For each of the papers, a student makes an initial submission, receives comments on the paper, and submits a subsequent and final revision. There will also be weekly exercises in labs, some of which will have a writing component. You are expected to attend discussion and labs (if possible), and complete all of the steps in each online module. There may also be group projects, peer-review assignments and presentations. More information on specific writing assignments will be provided in future modules.

You must type and double-space all written assignments. I am not picky about formatting as long as you use citations for all ideas, work, intuition, quotes, etc, that is not your own. Make sure that you cite any and all appropriate sources whenever you use someone else's ideas. What I am picky about is proof-reading. You must proof-read each written assignment that you turn in for this class. Ideally, you would follow the following steps: 1) Run a spell check. 2) Read the document aloud to yourself or to someone else to make sure that it flows. 3) Read the document at least one time eliminating any words that are unnecessary. 4) Put the document down for at least 24 hours and then read it again.

Canvas: We will be using Canvas (canvas.missouri.edu) to house online lectures, provide discussion opportunities, competence checks and quizzes, display grades, post additional readings, and for announcements.

Decreasing the Risk of COVID-19 in Classrooms and Labs

MU cares about the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff. To provide safe, high-quality education amid COVID-19, we will follow several specific campus policies in accordance with the advice of the Center for Disease Control and Boone County health authorities. This statement will be updated as information changes.

- If you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, or are otherwise feeling unwell, do not attend in-person classes and contact your health care provider and/or student health immediately. COVID symptoms include: fever greater than 100.4 or chills; cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; unexplained muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.
- We will all wear face coverings while in the classroom, unless you have a documented exemption due to a disability or medical condition.
- We will maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times (except in specific lab/studio courses with other specific guidelines for social distancing).

- We will enter the classroom and fill the room starting at the front, filing all the way across a row. When class ends, we will exit the row nearest to the door first; the instructor or TA will give the signal for the next row to exit, in the same manner.
- In any small section or lab class that requires them, additional measures will be listed in the syllabus and be mandatory for class participation.
- Online office hours will be available for all students.
- This course may be recorded by the instructor for the sole purpose of sharing the recording with students who can't attend class. The instructor will take care not to disclose personally identifiable information from the student education records during the recorded lesson.

Compliance with these guidelines is required for all; anyone who fails to comply will be subject to the accountability process, as stated in the University's Collected Rules and Regulations, Chapter 200 Student Code of Conduct.

If an instructor has concerns about how a student is following COVID-19 policies and protocols, please report those concerns to the Office of the Dean of Students. You can fill out a COVID Safety Measures Reporting Form here:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofMissouriSystem&layout_id=38

By taking the above measures, we are supporting your health and that of the whole Mizzou community. Thank you in advance for joining me and your peers in adhering to these safety measures.

Other Considerations

- Out of respect for fellow students, each person will refrain from talking, whispering, eating, making offensive remarks, newspaper reading, and other disruptive behavior during lecture. Cell phones and laptops must be turned off and may not be used during class time. Inappropriate classroom behavior may result in the student being requested to leave the classroom. **I will discuss my electronics policy in-depth the first day of class.**
- The University of Missouri is committed to supporting student well-being through an integrated network of care, with a wide range of services to help students succeed. The MU Counseling Center offers professional mental health care, and can help you find the best approach to treatment based on your needs. Call to make an appointment at 573-882-6601. Any student in crisis may call or go to the MU Counseling Center between 8:00 – 5:00 M-F. After hours phone support is available at 573-882-6601.

Visit our website at <https://wellbeing.missouri.edu> to take an online mental health screening, find out about workshops and resources that can help you thrive, or learn how to support a friend. Download Sanvello, a phone app that teaches skills and strategies to help you maintain good mental health. Log in with your Mizzou e-mail to unlock all the tools available through Sanvello at no cost to you.

- Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration,

or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student plagiarizing (or cheating on tests) will receive an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment.

- Teaching Assistant: The role of the Teaching Assistant is to serve as an assistant to me. When a student needs help or clarification, the first step is to consult their lecture notes or readings. If that doesn't clear up the misunderstanding, then the student should contact the TA.
- The Writing Center, normally located in the Student Success Center, will still offer writing support to all students at the University of Missouri during fall 2020. With socially-distant class space at a premium, we have moved all of our tutoring services online, both via synchronous Zoom sessions and the ever-present Online Writery for asynchronous submissions. Our tutors come from all majors and are familiar with a variety of writing styles and formats. Although tutors are not editors and therefore will not "fix" a student's writing, they will provide detailed feedback and revision options for any writing project at any stage of the writing process, including initial brainstorming, early drafting, major (and minor) structural revisions, and/or finishing touches on a final draft. To make an appointment, submit your work to the Online Writery, or learn what else the Writing Center has to offer, visit their website at writingcenter.missouri.edu.

Though there may be specific times where we will request that a student meets with a Writing Center tutor before submitting an assignment, we encourage all students to use this excellent resource.

- If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the MU Disability Center, S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

- The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the Office of Academic Integrity; the MU Equity Office, or equity@missouri.edu. All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.
- University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Late Assignments/Missed Class

If you miss class or turn in an assignment late because of illness, send me an email. Stay home if you're not feeling well. It is preferable if students who are sick stay home and that students not take unnecessary visits to a health care provider just to get documentation for missing class.

Teaching Assistants

The labs (on Wednesday or Friday) are a critical part of this class, and much of the material in the lectures and in the textbook leads toward the discussion and hands-on training that occurs in the labs. There are three excellent TAs for the course.

William Acosta

Lab: A

Email: wacosta@mail.missouri.edu

Office Hours (via Zoom): TRF (10-11): Meeting ID: 851 0674 9299, Passcode: ku9DBk

Donatien Adou

Labs: C & D

Email: dka3k7@mail.missouri.edu

Office Hours (via Zoom): M (3-4), T (1-2), R (1-2): Meeting ID: 925 6387 2406, Passcode: 3000

Heather Kopp

Lab: B

Email: hmk439@mail.missouri.edu

Office Hours (via Zoom): TW (9-10), R (10-11): Meeting ID: 916 6200 6726, Passcode: 690197

Course Schedule

Class Schedule: We will spend as much time as necessary on each topic for this course. Because I am unable to predict in advance how long each topic will take, the schedule below is only a rough guideline. *I expect that you will have read the assigned readings **before** the class period for which they are assigned. I will announce additional required readings during class meetings.*

August 24-28: Course Overview & Scientific Study of Politics I

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 1

August 31-September 4: Scientific Study of Politics II

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapters 2-3

September 7-11: Scientific Study of Politics III

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 4
- **Literature Review Assignment (Rough Draft) is due by 5:00pm on Friday**

September 14-18: Measurement

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 5

September 21-25: Descriptive Statistics

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 6
- **Literature Review Assignment (Revised Draft) is due by 5:00pm on Friday**

September 28-October 2: Survey Methods

- No readings

October 5-9: Logic of Statistical Hypothesis Testing

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 8
- **Operationalization Assignment is due by 5:00pm on Friday**

October 12-16: Bivariate Hypothesis Testing

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 8
- **Survey Evaluation Assignment is due by 5:00pm on Friday**

October 19-23: Bivariate Regression

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 9

October 26-30: Group Project Presentations

- Presentations
- **Group Project Assignment is due by 5:00pm on Friday**

November 2-6: Bivariate Regression

- No readings

November 9-13: Multivariate Regression

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapters 10-11
- **Bivariate Interpretation Assignment is due by 5:00pm on Friday**

November 16-20: Formal Theories of Politics

- Kellstedt and Whitten, pages 42-55
- Dubner, Stephen J. and Steven D. Levitt. Nov. 6, 2005. "Why Vote?", *New York Times Magazine*.

November 23-27: Thanksgiving Break

November 30-December 4: Formal Theories of Politics

- No readings

December 7-11: Clean Up

- No lab

December 15

- **Regression Interpretation Assignment (Revised Draft) due at 5:00pm**