

**Political Science**  
**(POS 3703) Research Methods in Political Science**  
**Spring 2020**

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Course Web Page: [www.stevendroper.com/POS3703.htm](http://www.stevendroper.com/POS3703.htm)

**Course Description:**

This is an introductory course to political science research covering the nature of the discipline, methodology, research design and writing. The course has four sections. First, we explore the historical development of American political science. We trace the disciplinary evolution of political science and discuss the issues that have shaped the discipline (*e.g.*, institutional versus behavioral approaches and quantitative versus qualitative research). Second, we discuss basic concepts and terminology necessary to conduct research. We analyze the development of theories and variables, levels of measurement, different forms of data and various testing techniques. Third, we examine different types of research designs, their proper use, strengths and weaknesses and apply them to political science research. Finally, we discuss the writing process including basic writing and citation techniques and the development of an abstract and literature review

**Classroom Requirements:**

- It is not appropriate to come to class late; however, if you come to class late, please find a seat near the door.
- If you need to leave early, please discuss this with me prior to the start of class.
- Any personal issues should be dealt with before class begins so that you do not leave and re-enter the room. It is disruptive and interferes with the classroom experience.
- I require that cell phones be turned-off, including no text messaging. I consider texting during class to be inappropriate and disrespectful.
- I will respond quickly to emails; however as a courtesy, I ask that you use a salutation. Proper salutations include “Dr. Roper” or “Professor Roper.” I will not respond to emails that do not address me respectfully.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

This course is designated as research intensive course. A research intensive course is expected to achieve the following six Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

SLO 1: Knowledge. Students are expected to demonstrate content knowledge, and knowledge of core principles and skills in political science. They should be familiar with language specific to the discipline, as well as scientific inquiry.

SLO 2: Formulate Questions. Students are required to formulate research questions, scholarly or creative problems in a manner appropriate to the planning discipline. Students will identify a research puzzle from which a series of research questions are identified. Further, students will examine one of the identified questions throughout the course.

SLO 3: Plan of Action. Students are expected to develop and implement a plan of action to address research and inquiry questions or scholarly problems.

SLO 4: Critical Thinking. Students are expected to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate information, their own work, and the work of others. Students will be required to complete assignments in logic and critical thinking. Students will also engage in self and peer review sessions.

SLO 5: Ethical Conduct. Students are expected to identify significant ethical issues in research and inquiry and/or address them in practice. Students will be asked to identify potential ethical issues associated with conducting research in the social sciences.

SLO 6: Communication. Students will convey all aspects of their research and inquiry (processes and/or products) in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes. Students will present during class, but are also encouraged to present at the OURI Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium [http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad\\_symposium.php](http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad_symposium.php).

### **Grading Requirements:**

First, there are two exams during the semester. The exams consist of short identifications and essay questions. Material for the examinations is drawn from both the lectures and the assigned readings. I provide a make-up examination only with a University-approved excuse (please see the FAU policy below). Grades for the examinations and the course are not curved or adjusted.

Second, students are required to complete five take home assignments. These assignments will be posted in Canvas. I will announce in class when the assignments are due. Assignments are to be turned-in via Canvas. Failure to turn-in the assignment at the scheduled time results in a zero for that assignment. I only accept late assignments if a student can provide official documentation for missing class.

### **Points:**

Examination 1	100 points
Examination 2	100 points
Assignment 1	15 points
Assignment 2	10 points
Assignment 3	10 points
Assignment 4	15 points
Assignment 5	20 points
Final Examination Assignment	30 points
<u>Total</u>	<u>300 points</u>

## Grades:

Final grades for the course will be based on the following:

A	93-100%	(279-300 points)	C+	78-79%	(234-239 points)
A-	90-92%	(270-278 points)	C	73-77%	(219-233 points)
B+	88-89%	(264-269 points)	C-	70-72%	(210-218 points)
B	83-87%	(249-263 points)	D+	68-69%	(204-209 points)
B-	80-82%	(240-248 points)	D	60-67%	(180-203 points)
			F	0-59%	(0-179 points)

## FAU Policies:

Disability Policy Statement: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses—Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter—however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at [www.fau.edu/sas](http://www.fau.edu/sas).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center: Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services—individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few—offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling>.

Code of Academic Integrity Policy Statement: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

Attendance Policy Statement: Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the

opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

### **Readings:**

The following required readings are available from the Library Reserve Desk:

James Farr, and Raymond Seidelman, eds. 1993. *Discipline and History: Political Science in the United States*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Janet Buttolph Johnson, and H.T. Reynolds. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Thomas S. Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 1970. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Karl Popper. 1965. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York: Harper.

Gregory M. Scott and Stephen M. Garrison. 2012. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

The following required readings are available on Canvas:

*Style Manual for Political Science*. 2018. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association.

John S. Dryzek. 2006. "Revolutions without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 100:4 (Nov):487-492.

### **Course Reading and Examination Outline:**

#### **Section I: Activism, Research and Methods in Political Science (14 January-12 February)**

Traditional Political Science: 1850-1950 (Farr, pp. 15-104)

Behavioral Political Science: 1945-1970 (Farr, pp. 201-228 & 249-265)

Post-Behavioral Political Science: 1970-to present (Dryzek)

Assignment 1: Journals and Research in Political Science (Date to be announced)

How Political Science is Researched in Other Countries

#### **Examination 1 (Friday, 14 February)**

#### **Section II: The Methods of Science and Social Inquiry (19 September-17 October)**

The Nature of Science (Kuhn pp. 23-42 and 52-76; Popper 4-65)

Hypotheses Variables and Theory-Building (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 60-87)

Assignment 2: Developing Hypotheses (Date to be announced)

Data and Levels of Analysis (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 88-121).

Assignment 3: Defining Levels of Measurement (Date to be announced)

Sampling Techniques (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 209-242)

Assignment 4: Evaluating Sampling Techniques (Date to be announced)

#### **Examination 2 (Wednesday, 25 March)**

**Section III: Research Designs (31 October-7 November)**

The Basics of Research Design (King, Keohane and Verba 12-28 and 118-124)

Ethical Concerns in Research

Experiments (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 123-146)

Nonexperimental Designs (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 155-181)

Case Studies (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 148-154;

<https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=60>)

Game Theory and Rational Choice

Assignment 5: Selecting Research Designs (Date to be announced)

**Section IV: Writing in Political Science (12-26 November)**

Selecting and Defining Political Science Topics (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 183-187 and Scott and Garrison, pp. 11-19)

The Art of Writing (Scott and Garrison, pp. 30-49)

Citations (Scott and Garrison, pp. 67-86)

Writing an Abstract (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 199-200; Scott and Garrison, pp. 60-61)

The Importance of the Literature Review (Johnson and Reynolds, pp. 182-198)

**Final Examination Assignment (Wednesday, 06 May 10:30)**