

Instructor: Anup Phayal
[Political Science Department](#)
1615 Patterson Office Tower
Lexington, KY

Office Hours
Tuesday 11am-1pm
Thursday 11am-1pm (or by appointment)

E-mail: anup.phayal@uky.edu
Web: anupphayal.weebly.com

Course Description and Goals

In this course, students learn to analyze political phenomena in a rigorous and scientific manner. You will train on topics such as formulating research questions, critical analysis of research works, building hypothesis based on prior studies, designing a research plan, determining what methodologies are appropriate, and performing specified analysis. This course also introduces students to the basic statistical techniques, as they are commonly used in political science to provide quantitative evidence in support of theories. While quantitative analysis is not the only method used in political science, it is the dominant approach in the discipline's top journals. Therefore, understanding quantitative research method is crucial for success in the field. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to develop a social science research design, critically analyze research works and understand basic quantitative approach to social science.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Recognize different research designs used in social science
2. Generate research question, operationalize concepts to generate hypothesis
3. Locate and summarize peer reviewed sources
4. Critically evaluate research works
5. Understand preliminary quantitative approach to testing hypothesis
6. Carry out univariate and bivariate analyses

Course Texts

Johnson, J.B., Reynolds, H.T. and Mycoff, J.D.. Political Science Research Methods. 8th Ed. CQ Press.
ISBN: 978-1-5063-0782-4

In addition to the above book chapters, there will be seven journal articles assigned for reading.

Earning Grades

Research design (30%)

Students will submit different sections of their research designs (see weekly calender below for due dates):

- Research question and annotated bibliography (5%)
- Introduction, literature review and theory (10%)

- Final research design (15%)

Detailed guideline and grading rubric for the research design will be provided.

Writing assignments (20%) (8+12)

There will be two writing assignments. Both assignments involve critically evaluating peer-reviewed journal articles (one per assignment). The two main aims of this assignment are: (1) gain ability to extract key information from peer-reviewed articles and (2) develop the skills to critically examine research works. At the end of this syllabus, you will find evaluation criteria for the writing assignments.

There are a total of four articles labeled as “writing assignment” on weeks 4 and 6. Students are to pick one article from each of these two weeks.

Quizzes (15%)

There will be 3 unannounced quizzes spread throughout the course. They will be short quizzes handed at the beginning of the class, primarily to evaluate student’s comprehension of the materials covered. Students who miss a quiz due to late arrival or unexcused absence will not receive extra time to retake it.

Quantitative assignments (15%)

During the third module of the course, students will learn introductory statistics and data analysis. Based on the classes, there will be assignments/group projects. Students will analyze survey data, make graphs, and test hypotheses using univariate and bivariate statistics.

Group led paper discussions (10%)

For this assignment, students will be divided into groups and each group will be assigned one article (after week 4). On the discussion day, the assigned group will lead the discussions on the article. The group distribution and article assignment will be discussed during the class and posted in Canvas thereafter.

Presentation: Groups will produce a conference style power point presentation to be submitted on Canvas. The presentation should be 10 minutes (+/-1) long, and groups are expected to provide a brief summary of the key sections (research question, main argument in the paper, literature review, theory and evidence to support the main argument). Finally, they should pose interesting questions to the class in order to generate critical discussion. Remember, the main emphasis of this exercise is to understand the contribution of the author(s): what is novel about the paper? What did we learn?

I will post the guideline on group presentation and evaluation form in the Canvas.

Note: All other students that are not presenting the articles must also read the assigned articles. They must come to class prepared to discuss them on the discussion day.

Participation (5%)

Participation grade will depend on individual contribution to classroom discussions. You are expected to do the readings (book chapters and assigned articles) before you come to class. If you come to class unprepared, you will lose participation grade.

Attendance (5%)

Attendance in this class is not mandatory, since you could get an “A” even if you did not attend every single class. However, the nature of the course is such that poor attendance will reflect poorly on your grade (you could lose participation grade, miss quizzes or classroom project assignments). I will take attendance in the class and students will lose 20% of the attendance grade for every unexcused absence. So, with 5 unexcused absences, you will get “0” in attendance. If you come to class late or leave early, without notification, then that too will cost you on your attendance points.

Course grades are assigned according to the following criteria.

Grade	Percentage
A	90 or above
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
E	Below 60

Academic Accommodations

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Suite 407, Multidisciplinary Science Building, 725 Rose Street). If you are not registered with the DRC, you may contact David T. Beach (dtbeac1@uky.edu) or call DRC office @ (859) 257-2754. We can then collaborate on the best solution.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Students are advised to retain all notes and drafts for all work until after they receive their final grade. Students should also be aware that I take matters of plagiarism and cheating very seriously. If student are found to plagiarize, I will impose the most severe penalty allowed by university rules, which includes, but not limited to, issuing an automatic grade of 0 for the entire course. Plagiarism means taking the words and thoughts of others (their ideas, concepts, images, sentences, and so forth) and using them as if they were your own, without crediting the author or citing the source. All assignments, projects, and exercises completed by students for this class should be the product of personal efforts of the individual(s) whose name(s) appear on the corresponding assignment. Misrepresenting others work as ones own in the form of cheating or plagiarism is unethical and will lead to those penalties outlined in the University Senate Rules (6.3.1 & 6.3.2). The Ombud site also has information on plagiarism.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to maintain decorum that includes respect for other students and the professor, and to display an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the educational opportunity. All students are expected to be prepared to work and actively participate in class activities.

Cell phones and laptops: Students will silence or turn off their cell phones, and use laptops for note taking purpose only. I will provide you with the presentation slides at the end of each class.

Food: I do not mind you eating in class, but make sure not to disturb others.

If a student violates the rules for civil behavior, I will ask him/her to leave the class. The student will receive an unexcused absence for that class.

Late Assignments

Students will upload all major assignments from the Canvas. If papers are submitted late, students will lose 10 % of their assigned grade for each day after the due date and time.

Appealing Grades

If a student wishes to appeal a grade, they must first provide a written statement explaining why additional points should be given. This statement must be typed and does not mean a simple request for more points. The student must tell why s/he believes some specific aspect of his/her answer is correct or of more value. The instructor reserves the right to subtract points as well as to add points during the review process and to regrade the entire assignment, not just the portion under appeal.

Absences

An absence will be considered unexcused unless you give me documentation of the absence as defined by the University (Senate Rule 5.2.4.1 and 5.2.4.2).

- Students must notify me of their absence prior to the absence. If absent due to health reason, you must bring the doctor's note within 1 week after you join the class.
- Students must submit any written documentation supporting their excused absence within one week after the absence.
- Absences for major religious holidays require advance written notification. Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class.

Week 0: Course Intro (Jan 14)

Syllabus and course introduction

Module 1: Scientific Approach to Building Knowledge

Week 1: Scientific approach to political science

Jan 19 - Read book ch 1 (p. 46-71)

Reading assignment-1

Lupia, Arthur. 2000. "Evaluating political science research: information for buyers and sellers." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33(1): 7-13.

Jan 21- Research questions (Read book p. 74-82)

Week2

Jan 26- Literature review, locating research works (Read book p.84-101)

Jan 28- Discuss reading assignment 1; Writing research in political science; Discuss student research questions

Week3

Feb 2- Scientific Research Process: concepts and hypotheses (Read book p104-126)

Feb 4- Scientific Research Process (cont.)

**DUE Writing assignment for research paper-I: Research question and annotated bibliography
(4 related Peer-reviewed Academic journal articles/Books)**

Module 2: The Research Design

Week 4

Feb 9- Measurement (Read book ch 5, p128-162)

Feb 11- Measurement (cont.)

Writing Assignment 1 (Write for any one and be prepared to discuss both in class):

Arceneaux, Kevin (2012). Cognitive biases and the strength of political arguments. In *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 56(2):271-285

Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2001. "Do phone calls increase voter turnout?: A field experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly*: 75-85.

Week 5

Feb 16- Experimental research designs (Read book ch 6, p. 167-191)

Feb 18- Experimental research designs (cont.)

Writing 1 DUE before the class today

Discuss articles assigned for writing 1

Week 6

Feb 23- Observational studies

Small 'n' & Large 'n' (Read book p. 191-196)

Writing assignment 2:

Gerring, John. 2008. "The mechanistic worldview: Thinking inside the box." *British Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 161-179.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2001. "Ethnic conflict and civil society." *World Politics* 53(3): 362-398

Feb 25- Observation and document analysis (Read book p. 244-248; p. 268-274)

Week 7

Mar 1- Discuss articles in writing 2

Writing 2 DUE before the class

Survey research intro (Read book p. 294-336)

Reading assignments 2:

Peffley, Mark, and Robert Rohrschneider. 2003. "Democratization and political tolerance in seventeen countries: A multi-level model of democratic learning." *Political Research Quarterly* 56(3): 243-257.

Valentino, Nicholas A., et al. 2011. "Election nights alright for fighting: The role of emotions in political participation." *The Journal of Politics* 73(1): 156-170.

Mar 3- Survey research (cont.) ; Sampling intro (Read book p. 212-228)

Module 3: Evidence With Data

Week 8

Mar 8- Discuss reading 2

Intro to quantitative research (Large 'n' study)

Mar 10- Making sense of the data (Read book p. 348-354)

DUE Research paper II: Introduction, literature review and theory
(Spring break Mar 14- 19)

Week 9

Mar 22- Univariate statistics (Descriptive stats) (Read book p. 355-375)

Central tendency, graphical representation of data, frequency distribution

Mar 24- Statistical inference

Normal distribution, hypothesis testing

Week 10

Mar 29-Computer Lab session

Introduction to SPSS, basic operations, visualizing data

Mar 31- Computer lab session (Data visualization project assignment using SPSS)

Week 11

Apr 5- Hypothesis testing (t-test) (Read book p. 388-409)

Apr 7-Bivariate analysis (t-test, ANOVA)

Week 12

Apr 12- Computer lab session (Bivariate analyses using SPSS) (LAB 625, Nursing Building)

Apr 14-Bivariate analysis; Presentation on other data analysis tools in political science (STATA and R)

Week 13

Apr 19- Computer lab session (Group project: Analyze survey data and test hypotheses using SPSS)

Apr 21- Introduction to multivariate models

Reading assignments 3:

Thyne, C.L., 2006. ABC's, 123's, and the Golden Rule: The Pacifying Effect of Education on Civil War, 1980-1999. *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(4):733-754.

Week 14

Apr 26- Discuss reading 3;

Intro to multivariate models (cont.)

Apr 28- Final research design

DUE Final research design: APR 28 10:45 am

Week 15-Finals week

Disclaimer

As the class proceeds, I reserve the right to adjust/modify the syllabus if I see fit to better accommodate the course. I will communicate the modifications in class and also via e-mail.

Annex A

Writing Assignment Guideline

(1) Demonstrate understanding of the research work (about 60% of your writing)

After carefully reading the article you are to summarize it. Be sure to state:

- theory, hypotheses and the findings
- contributions (why is the study important?)
- dependent variable and the independent variable(s) and how they are measured;
- Unit of analysis
- Specifics of the research design and
- Does the research design provide evidence for the author(s)s claim?

(2) Critical evaluation (about 40%)

Upon summarizing the article, you should then proceed to critically evaluate the research. Here, you are free to choose the criteria for critical evaluation, but some good candidates are measurement and the criteria for demonstrating causality.

Constructive criticism: Best critiques are those that provide suggestions on how to improve (and not just point at what may be wrong).

(3) Miscellaneous

Many of these articles (if not all) will involve the use of statistics. We will cover some basic statistics in the last few weeks of this course. I do not expect you to evaluate the research work in this respect (but you can if you wish). However, you should have the understanding of the main findings that are generally laid out in the introduction, analysis of the finding and conclusion portion.

I expect each assignment to be approximately 2-3 double-spaced pages (1000-1500 words) in length. Organization and writing style count!