

POLS 3100 Scope & Methods in Political Science SYLLABUS

Instructor:

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Description:

This course introduces the foundations of politics as a science by exploring what political scientists do and study. Additionally, the course examines the basic concepts and approaches to understanding the political world, from analyzing a public policy to examining electoral behavior by focusing on foundations of quantitative analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics, and probability as examples. The course is designed to introduce you to (a) political science research, (b) evaluating research critically and (c) interpreting social scientific research. According to Kenneth Meier (2009), statistics enhances the accuracy of data used in case studies and practical applications. Furthermore, statistics eliminates your “guess work” and “guts feeling” when analyzing processes or phenomena.

Class Schedule:

Class meets each Tuesday, from 5:30 PM to 10:15 PM, during the 8-week term—March 11 – April 29, 2008.

Required Texts:

Meier, Kenneth J., Brudney, Jeffery L., and Brohite, J. (2009). *Applied Statistics for Public & Nonprofit Administration* (7th ed). United States: Thomson / Wadsworth. ISBN: 0-495-50110-7

LeRoy, Michael, K. (2009). *Research Methods in Political Science: An Introduction Using MicroCase* (7th ed). Boston, MA: Thomson/Wadsworth. ISBN: 0-495-50283-9

Course Objectives / Desired Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss and investigate the foundations of quantitative statistics, descriptive and inferential statistics, probability, and regression analysis in providing the requisite skills to initiate and conduct research.
2. Recognize, analyze, and resolve substantive problems encountered by practicing administrators.
3. Describe systematically a body of information or data in identifying main tendencies in a sample population or the population as a whole.
4. Process a subset or sample of data, from its whole, then formulate an accurate inference to the full population.
5. Apply critical thinking techniques to practical administrative policies and research.

Students achieving these objectives will not only enhance their inclination toward direct or indirect participation in our political system, but also strengthen their academic and personal development.

Course Requirements:

Each student will:

1. Prepare for every class
2. Actively (and respectfully) participate in class discussions, presentations, assignments, and projects
3. Complete all class assignments on-time
4. Have an active e-mail account for corresponding with the instructor and for completing on-line exercises
5. Have computer skills sufficient to navigate the Internet, e-mail attachments, communicate via e-mail, and manipulate Microsoft Office and MicroCase applications

Course Grading:

90% and over = A
 80 - 89% = B
 70 - 79% = C
 65 - 69% = D
 64% and below = F

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS / ACTIVITIES

<i>Applied Statistics for Public & Nonprofit Administration</i> <i>Assignments & Assessments</i>			
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Discussed & Presented</i>	<i>Chapter Assessment</i>	<i>Chapter Review Questions</i>
1 & 2	Week 2	Week 3	As Assigned
3	Week 3	Week 4	As Assigned
4	Week 4	Week 5	As Assigned
5	Week 5	Week 6	As Assigned
6	Week 6	Week 7	As Assigned
7 & 8	Week 7	Week 8	As Assigned

<i>Research Methods in Political Science</i> <i>Work Sheet Assignments</i>	
<i>Worksheets for Chapter</i>	<i>Discussed & Submitted</i>
1	Week 2
2 & 3	Week 3
4	Week 4
6	Week 5
7	Week 6
8	Week 7

Prior to First Class Session:

E-mail me at faubhaus@valdosta.edu identifying your preferred e-mail address for class communications.

GRADING:

Chapter Exercises	30%
MicroCase Worksheets	30%
Chapter Assessments	30%
Attendance	10%

ACADEMIC POLICIES:**Attendance Policy:**

PARTICIPATION is the **KEY** to your success in this class and participation is impossible if you are not present. Students should attend every class and submit work when it is due. It is VSU's policy that if you miss more than two classes - excused or not, you will receive a "W" or "I" grade in the class! Do not let this happen to you!

Absences:

1. Contact me in advance (minimum of 24 hours) of any absence. Make-up work will be given only if the absence is excused (copy of military orders or command memo, written memo from superior, or a signed doctor's note).

2. Failure to discuss your absence, with me in advance (of the absence), or as soon as possible thereafter, and failure to provide me with written documentation of the excuse, will result in (a) an “unexcused absence” (b) losing a chance to make-up work, and (c) losing class attendance points. Furthermore, class work will not be accepted, if you are unexcused, on the day, class work is due.
3. Your absence, on the day of your respective chapter presentation or topic debate, will result in an “F” for that assignment.

Tardy and Leaving Early:

1. You are expected to arrive on time and attend the class (for the entire period). Failure to do so will be counted as an absence at the discretion of the instructor.
2. Emergencies are the exception provided the instructor receives an explanation as soon as possible.
3. Leaving early, without a justifiable reason or without being excused by the instructor, constitutes an unexcused absence or a reduced class participation grade or both. I am a proponent of class participation and active learning and neither can take place if you leave early or decide not to attend.

Late Work:

All assignments are due as designated and at the beginning of class. If you are absent (presuming absence is excused), you are expected to make every reasonable effort to provide the assignment to me at the time that it was due, but in no case more than one-week.

Emergencies (medical et cetera) and official military duty are exceptions (with proper documentation).

The penalties for late work:

One-day late:	One letter-grade reduction
Two-days late:	Two-letter-grade reductions
Three or more-days late:	No credit for assignment(s)

Classroom Accommodations/ Modifications:

Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you believe you are covered under this Act, and if you have need for special arrangements to allow you to meet the requirements of this course, please contact personnel at the VSU Center at the Naval Submarine Base. The office will put you in contact with VSU’s Special Services Office. Furthermore, please discuss this situation with me at the first class meeting.

Classroom Behavior:

Eating and drinking in class is permitted if you (a) do not disturb the other students, and (b) deposit all your trash in the proper trash receptacles upon exiting the class.

Please observe the smoking areas (if available) and parking areas, and comply with all rules of SUBASE, the building, and VSU.

Using **cellular phones** (including text messaging) and **wearing hats in class** is **prohibited**. I suggest placing cellular phones on vibrate during class time and if you receive a call take it outside the classroom. You will be asked to leave the class if you cannot adhere to these requests.

You will receive a minimum of a **10-point deduction** in your weekly participation grade (considerate/respectful to others) with a maximum of class withdrawal for causing classroom disruption / disturbance. Furthermore, before you are allowed to return to class (if you were asked to leave because you caused any disruption / disturbance), you will need a signed letter from the VSU Director or Assistant Director verifying that the disturbance(s) will not continue.