

POS 6736: Conduct of Inquiry

(Class Number 19644)

Fall Semester, 2018

Class: Thurs. 3:00-6:00PM

Location: MAT 0003

Instructor: Dr. Chase B. Meyer
Email: chase.meyer@ufl.edu
Office: Anderson Hall 317
Office Hours: Wed. & Thurs. 11:00-1:00PM
Course Website: www.chasebmeyer.com
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Course Description: The goal of this course is for you understand how we study politics and to teach you how political scientists conduct original research. Essentially, the purpose of this course is to explain the “science” in political science. The course will provide you with a general understanding of what science is and a foundation in the logic and practice of systematic political inquiry. We will cover fundamental issues such as arriving at a research question, theory building, hypothesis development, variable measurement, identifying and dealing with confounding factors, and causality. The topics covered in this course are crucial to any research project, but this is only the first step towards you being able to conduct your own research.

Required Texts:

Philip H. Pollock III, *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. CQ Press.

Philip H. Pollock III, *A STATA Companion to Political Analysis*. CQ Press.

Readings: At the end of every class period I will assign the readings for the next week. These readings should be completed before the beginning of the next class period. The readings will include chapters from the required books as well as other reading materials that I will put on the course website. For the additional readings they will be posted on the day they are assigned, giving students a full week to read them.

Class Format: This course is 2 hours and 45 minutes in length, we will take two short breaks during the class period on non-exam days. During these breaks students are free to talk to classmates, be on their phone, or read on their laptops. However, outside of these two breaks students should not be on their cell-phones and while laptops are allowed for note taking purposes and for working with data, students will not be permitted to use their laptops for any other purpose during the class instruction time.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Class Attendance: Attendance is mandatory, and I will take attendance every day of the semester. I will give each student one unexcused absence. After the first unexcused absence I will begin taking off points for any unexcused absence afterwards. If you have an excused absence (illness, death in the family, etc.) please talk to me and give me proof of the excused absence (a doctor's note for example).

Participation: Participation is also mandatory. I expect students to participate in class discussions, to answer questions when asked, and to contribute whenever asked in class.

Research Paper: The most important part of this class will be the research paper. The goal of this class is for you to write your own original research paper (approximately 10 pages). This paper will be due at the end of the course in place of a final exam. This paper will require you to ask, and begin to answer your own research question empirically with real data and to correctly interpret the results. The topic of this paper is entirely your choice. You will not be expected to create full models and run regressions, but basic data analysis will be done in this paper, and the best papers will have some models and regressions. In this paper you will have a research question, an overview of the literature, a theory, a hypothesis, a plan to collect data or the beginnings of some data analysis. We will cover the paper more in-depth as the semester progresses.

Paper Presentation: In addition to your research paper, you will present a presentation of your research. This presentation will be presented to the class in the form of a conference presentation. Each presentation will be about 10-15 minutes and will include time for your fellow classmates to engage in a Q&A about your project. More information on the presentation will be given as the semester progresses.

Required Meetings: While I encourage all my students to attend office hours I will require that students attend office hours for this course TWICE this semester. These meetings are required to ensure that your research project is on the right track and you are considering a research question that can be answered. The first meeting is required to take place before the midterm and the second meeting is required to take place before the last week of class.

Exams: There will be one exam given this semester; a midterm in the middle of the semester. The exam will cover the topics and readings for the first half of class. There will be no make-up exam unless the student has a legitimate excuse or talks to me before the exam is given.

Homework: Over the course of the semester you will be assigned several homeworks, designed to aid you in completing your research paper and your poster presentation. These homeworks will be assigned at the end of one class period and will be due at the beginning of class that next week.

Miscellaneous: Extra credit opportunities will be assigned throughout the semester, if you want extra points or to do extra work, these will be your opportunities to do so. Do not come to me at the end of the semester and ask for more extra credit chances, by that time you will have missed your chance.

Participation/Attendance	20%
Homeworks	10%
Office Meeting #1	5%
Office Meeting #2	5%
Midterm Exam	15%
Paper Presentation	20%
Research Paper	25%
Total:	100%

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

Instructor Availability: I will hold office hours every week on Wednesday and Thursday from 11:00AM to 1:00PM in my office located in Anderson Hall, room 317. These office hours are subject to change and if any changes are made to my scheduled office hours I will inform the class. If you would like to meet with me outside of my normal office hours please email me at chase.meyer@ufl.edu.

Special Needs and Academic Honesty: The University of Florida is committed to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, a student should present his/her accommodation letter to me supporting a request for accommodations. The University encourages students with disabilities to follow these procedures as early as possible within the semester.

Academic honesty is of the utmost important in an academic setting like UF. You are welcome to study together but make sure the work you hand in is your own. I will not tolerate plagiarism or deception in any form. All work in this class is to be your own. Students who fail to abide by this policy, or who plagiarize, will receive a failing grade on the assignment.

Course Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1: Thurs. Aug. 23 – Introduction & The Science of Political Science

Week 2: Thurs. Aug. 30 – The Basics of Social Science Research

- Week 3:** Thurs. Sept. 6 – Theory, Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables
- Week 4:** Thurs. Sept. 13 – Operationalization and Measurement of Variables
- Week 5:** Thurs. Sept. 20 – Causality, Correlations, and Statistical Inference
- Week 6:** Thurs. Sept. 27 – Experiments
- Week 7:** Thurs. Oct. 4 – Sampling and Surveys
- Week 8:** Thurs. Oct. 11 – **Exam #1**
- Week 9:** Thurs. Oct. 18 – Spurious Relationships
- Week 10:** Thurs. Oct. 25 – Ordinary Least Squares Regression
- Week 11:** Thurs. Nov. 1 – Multiple Regression
- Week 12:** Thurs. Nov. 8 – Bias and Faulty Research
- Week 13:** Thurs. Nov. 15 – Research, Journal Submissions, and Dissertations
- Week 14:** Thurs. Nov. 22 – Thanksgiving, NO CLASS
- Week 15:** Thurs. Nov. 29 – Paper Presentations
- Week 16:** Thurs. Dec. 6 – Reading Day, NO CLASS

Final Paper Due: Dec. 13, at 12:30pm