But is it true?

--Aaron Wildavsky

Method without substance may be sterile, but substance without method is only fortuitously substantial.

--V.O. Key (1958 APSA Presidential Address)

Course Description

Political observers, scholars, and the mass public raise a wide range of questions about politics, public policy, and political processes. But how do we develop the answers to these questions, and how do we know whether our answers are reasonable? Many people have (informed and uninformed) opinions about these questions, but the task of political scientists is to conduct research that permits us to answer these questions in a systematic, definitive way. Answers to political questions do not magically appear—rather, they are developed through careful study and analysis, through the use of carefully crafted rules of evidence.

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of research methodology and empirical analysis in political science. This course is not about what we know about politics, but rather how we “know” about politics. Put another way, how do we design research projects about the political world so that we can be confident in the answers that we get at the end of the research process?

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Each student will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

- Research design paper: 40%
- Midterm examination: 30%
- Final examination: 30%

1. Research Design Paper. A major research design paper will be required of all students. This paper will involve the design of an original empirical research project on a topic of each student's own choosing that addresses a research question of interest to political scientists. Each student will be
expected to design a research project that could be used to evaluate the empirical validity of a single testable hypothesis or set of testable hypotheses pertaining to the political phenomenon under study.

Each student should begin to consider possible research topics as soon as possible, and should consult with the instructor about potential topics and relevant literature. Each student is expected to obtain approval of the selected topic from the instructor before beginning work, and should be prepared to work closely with the instructor in fine-tuning the proposed research.

All research design papers are due on Friday, December 4, 2009 Late papers will be marked down the equivalent of a full letter grade (i.e., 10 points) for the first 0-24 hours the paper is late, as well as an additional letter grade for each subsequent 24 hours the paper is late. All papers should be (1) typed (double spaced), (2) written in accordance with the APSR style manual, (3) proofread for mistakes, and (4) neat and professionally presented.

In order to facilitate the completion of papers by the end of the semester, the following suggested timeline for various components of the paper should be met:

- September 25: Selection of paper topic
- October 23: Draft of introduction and literature review completed
- November 13: Draft of theory and research design sections
- December 4: Final paper completed

Detailed information pertaining to the research design paper will be provided in a separate handout.

2. **Midterm Examination.** A comprehensive midterm examination covering all material from the first half of the course will be required for all students. Information pertaining to the format of the midterm examination will be provided to all students prior to the exam.

3. **Final Examination.** A comprehensive final examination covering all material from the second half of the course will be required for all students. Information pertaining to the format of the final examination will be provided to all students prior to the exam.

The midterm and final exams are mandatory, and make-up exams will be given only under special circumstances. Students who have a serious pre-arranged conflict with an exam are expected to contact the instructor in writing no later than three days prior to the exam. Students who are ill on exam day or who have a family or personal emergency are expected to contact the instructor in writing no later than 24 hours after the exam period to be permitted to take a make-up exam. All makeup exams will be administered during the week of final exams.

**Required Reading**

The following book has been ordered and is available at the University bookstore:


In addition to this book, there are additional readings that will be required for the course. All additional readings will be made available to students via email. Each student is expected to complete readings prior to the class for which they are assigned.
Graduate Assistant

Caroline Payne
310 Stubbs Hall
Email: cpayne4@tigers.lsu.edu

Office Hours

Garand: Wednesday afternoon, 1:00 to 3:00
Other hours by appointment

Payne: Tuesday morning, 8:00 to 9:00, 10:30 to 11:30
Thursday morning, 8:00 to 9:00, 10:30 to 11:30
Other hours by appointment

Academic Misconduct Statement

Academic misconduct is defined by the Code of Student Conduct. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the LSU policy on academic misconduct, particularly regarding plagiarism. The LSU Code of Student Conduct can be found on the web site for the LSU Dean of Students:

http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/index

Academic misconduct is a serious violation of university policy, but more importantly it is a significant scholarly violation for political scientists. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. Charges of academic misconduct will be turned over to the Dean of Students for appropriate disciplinary action.

Classroom Conduct

The rules relating to classroom conduct are based on the principle that students should not disrupt the learning opportunities of other students. Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. This includes disruptive behavior such as arriving late, leaving early, and conversing privately during class. Students are prohibited from engaging in any forms of distraction. Students engaging in inappropriate behavior in the classroom will be required to leave class.

Regarding electronic equipment, cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off and put away before the class begins. In addition, laptop computers may not be used in class.

Finally, please note: Students may not film or record this class without permission.
About the Instructor

James C. Garand (Ph.D., University of Kentucky, 1984) is the Emogene Pliner Distinguished Professor of Political Science and the R. Downs Poindexter Professor of Political Science at Louisiana State University. In additional to holding named professorships in the Department of Political Science, he serves on the faculty of the Manshp School of Mass Communication and is a Senior Fellow at the Reilly Center for Media and Public Affairs.


Professor Garand received the 2006 LSU Distinguished Research Master Award in recognition of outstanding faculty accomplishments in research and scholarship. He was President of the Southern Political Science Association in 2004, and he is also former president of the State Politics Section of the American Political Science Association. He served as Vice-President and Program Chair in 2001 for the Southern Political Science Association. Professor Garand is former editor of the *American Politics Quarterly*, one of the leading subfield journals in American politics. He currently serves on the editorial boards of the *American Politics Research*, *Journal of Political Marketing*, and *Ralph Bunche Journal of Public Affairs*, and he is a former member of the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *State Politics and Policy*, and *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. His current research agenda includes numerous projects relating to the study of American politics.

Professor Garand has received numerous faculty awards. In 1997 Professor Garand received the LSU Alumni Association Distinguished Faculty Award in recognition of sustained excellence in teaching, research, and service. In 2001 he received the LSU Foundation Distinguished Faculty Award in recognition of his excellence in graduate teaching, and in 1990 he received the university-wide Student Government Association Teaching Excellence Award for undergraduate teaching. He is also a recipient of the Alpha Lambda Delta Freshman Honor Society certificate of recognition for superior instruction of freshman students during the Fall 2000 semester.

Recent publications (since 2000):


Recent publications (since 2000) (continued):

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>History and overview of Political Science</td>
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<td>August 27</td>
<td>History and overview of Political Science (continued)</td>
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<td>September 3</td>
<td>What is politics? What is science? Can we study politics scientifically? (continued)</td>
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<td>September 8</td>
<td>Scientific explanation, causation, and prediction</td>
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Course Outline (continued)

September 22  Theory and model development


September 24  Theory and model development (continued)

September 29  Operationalizing concepts: indicators and measurement

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 7

October 1  Fall Holiday

October 6  Research design: general considerations


October 8  Research designs: experimental designs


October 13  Research designs: quasi-experimental designs

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 6
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<td>October 22</td>
<td>Strategies for data collection (continued)</td>
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<td>October 27</td>
<td>Strategies for data collection (continued)</td>
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| November 5 | Ethics and political research              | Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 4.  
<p>| November 10 | Ethics and political research (continued)  |                                                                                       |</p>
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<td>Quantitative data analysis (continued)</td>
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<td>December 3</td>
<td>Quantitative data analysis (continued)</td>
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<td><strong>TBA</strong></td>
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27 class meetings