Almost everyone, from casual observers to think-tank pundits, hold opinions about the processes and causes and effects that shape our political world. While opinions may or may not be valid, it is the job of political scientists to answer questions about politics in a systematic way using carefully developed research designs and analyses. The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of the methodologies and analyses that political scientists use to test hypotheses and theories and make predictions.

Readings

The course calendar below lists the readings that are required to be completed before for each seminar meeting. For the class, there will be a required book with additional readings posted on Moodle.

Required book:

*Political Science Research Methods* (7th ed.) by Janet Buttolph Johnson & H. T. Reynolds (CQ Press)

Requirement

*Course readings and attendance.* The class meets twice week on Tuesdays and Thursdays and students should complete the assigned readings before each lecture and be prepared to participate in class. Lectures are designed to supplement the course readings not replace them and exams will cover both readings and lectures. Students absent from class due to religious holidays, travel with a university-affiliated team or group, or because of unavoidable circumstances should talk with the professor as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

*Examinations.* Two exams will be administered. Both exams will be closed book exams, which will cover the required readings and lectures. Exam dates are **March 6, 2012** for the mid-term and **May 7, 2012** for the final exam.

*Research Design Proposal.* Students are required to write 8 to 10 page research design proposal that focuses on an area of politics that is of particular interest to them. The specific requirements
of the proposal will be discussed in class. Writing the proposal will require students to read, evaluate, and integrate articles from academic journals, books, and news sources beyond the readings required for the course. To make sure that the students are on the right track for their proposal, a prospectus (1-2 pages) needs to be turned in on February 16, 2012 at the beginning of class. Final papers are due on April 26, 2012 at the beginning of class.

Grading

Final course grades will be calculated based on 1) exam scores (20% for mid-term and 25% for final exam), 2) final paper (45%), and 4) attendance and class participation (10%). LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE GRADED AND MISSED EXAMS WILL RECEIVE A ZERO.

- Grade grievances on exam. Grade grievances on exams are welcome and a clear mistake or error in grading as a result of computation of scores (i.e. mathematical errors or clearly marked errors on multiple choice answers) will be quickly amended. Any grade grievance based on substantive answers that may have been misinterpreted by the professor will require a complete re-grade of the entire exam - meaning that, in the end, you may lose points instead of gaining points.
- Make-up exams. The mid-term and final exam dates are outlined on this syllabus and therefore are not subject to make-up exams – there will be no make-up exams. Any foreseeable problems should be immediately discussed with the professor.
- Extensions on final paper. Paper deadlines will not be extended. Any paper received after the stated deadline will not be accepted.
- Academic misconduct: Please do not plagiarize, cheat, ect. Please familiarize yourself LSU Code of Student Conduct
- Recording of lectures. Students are not allowed to audio or video record lectures.

Course Calendar

1. January 17 (Tuesday): Course introduction

2. January 19 (Thursday): Politics and science

   Readings:
   PSRM, Chapter 1

3. January 24 (Tuesday): Overview of social scientific research 1

   Readings:
   PSRM, Chapter 2
4. January 26 (Thursday): Overview of social scientific research

*Readings*

5. January 31 (Tuesday): Research topics, research questions, and building on past work

*Readings*
- *PSRM*, Chapter 3

6. February 2 (Thursday): Conceptualization, hypotheses, and theories

*Readings*
- *PSRM*, Chapter 4

7. February 7 (Tuesday): Integrating theories: Case study – Agenda Setting, Priming and Framing

*Readings*

8. February 9 (Thursday): Operationalization and measurement

*Readings*

9. February 14 (Tuesday): Reliability and validity

*Readings*
- *PSRM*, Chapter 5

10. February 16 (Thursday): Causation – **PROSPECTUS DUE**

*Readings*
- *PSRM*, Chapter 6

11. February 23 (Thursday): Experimental Designs

*Readings*
12. February 28 (Tuesday): Sampling

Readings:
PSRM, Chapter 7

13. March 1 (Thursday): Mid-term review

No Readings Assigned

14. March 6 (Tuesday): MID-TERM EXAM

15. March 8 (Thursday): Observations and data

Readings:
PSRM, Chapter 8

16. March 12 (Tuesday): Content analyses

Readings:
PSRM, Chapter 9

17. March 14 (Thursday): Survey Research 1

Readings:
PSRM, Chapter 10

18. March 20 (Tuesday): Survey Research 2

Readings:

19. March 22 (Thursday): Survey Research 3

Readings:
20. March 27 (Tuesday): Data 1

*Readings:*
*PSRM*, Chapter 11

21. March 29 (Thursday): Data 2

*Readings:*
Edward Tufte:

22. April 3 (Tuesday): Data 3

*No readings assigned*
Review Ipoll and other data sources

23. April 5 (Thursday): Statistical inference

*Readings:*
*PSRM*, Chapter 11

24. April 17 (Tuesday): Quantitative data analysis 1

*Readings:*
*PSRM*, Chapter 13

25. April 19 (Thursday): Quantitative data analysis 2

*Readings:*
*PSRM*, Chapter 14

26. April 24 (Tuesday): Quantitative data analysis 3

27. April 26 (Thursday): **FINAL PAPER DUE**

28. May 1 (Tuesday): Quantitative data analysis 4

29. May 3 (Thursday): Course wrap-up and final exam review