



POLI 2900: METHODS OF POLITICAL RESEARCH

COURSE SYLLABUS – FALL 2016

When: Monday & Wednesday (5:00PM – 6:15PM)
Where: 317 Milneburg Hall (Computer Lab)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Scott N. Nolan
Office Location: 235 Milneburg Hall
Department of Political Science
The University of New Orleans
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday (2:00PM – 5:00PM)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the *science* in Political Science; it introduces students to terms, broad qualitative and quantitative concepts, and methods of conducting empirical political research. Students will develop testable theories and research questions; collect, analyze, and present conclusions by testing hypotheses using an original dataset. Advanced students, even with significant substantive political knowledge, may find this course tedious, boring, and/or difficult. Rest assured, as this course provides a methodological and mathematical foundation on which students build their political science degree. The key to passing this course is reading and interacting with the text, lectures, and assignments. There is no shortcut or easy way to learn methods; this course requires a significant amount of work and may be the most challenging one a student takes as an undergraduate. Fortunately, as a UNO student, you are up to the challenge!

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- develop an original testable research question about a political topic;
- write a literature review of scholarly work about their topic;
- formulate testable hypotheses;
- identify variables and create an original dataset for testing hypotheses;
- utilize statistical methods and software to generate quantitative evidence related to hypotheses;
- evaluate empirical findings and reach substantive conclusions;
- write an empirical research paper, detailing the objectives above, and present conclusions and avenues for further research; and
- learn to reflect critically on one's own closely held legal and political views.

GENERAL NOTES

This syllabus is the first place you should look if you have questions about your responsibilities or the structure of this course. If you do not find the information that you are looking for in this syllabus, please email me with any and all questions (snnolan1@uno.edu).

Information contained in the syllabus, especially regarding scheduling, is subject to change at my discretion during the semester. I will announce, in advance, any changes that are made via e-mail and/or announcements on the course website.

The best way to ensure that you are aware of any changes is to check your UNO e-mail and course website regularly. Students are required to check their UNO e-mail on a regular basis, as I may distribute important course information by e-mail and/or through the course website.

- **Your first [non-graded] assignment will be agreeing that you have read this syllabus in its entirety and understand its terms. If you do not complete the Syllabus Assignment as soon as you begin the course, then I cannot grade your subsequent coursework.**

ACCESS TO INSTRUCTOR

I try to be available for students Monday – Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and I generally respond to e-mails from students within one (1) business day. If you do not receive a reply within three (3) business days, please send me an e-mail reminder. I sometimes respond to e-mails from students during evenings and weekends, but I do not always do so. Keep this in mind, and don't wait until the last minute if you have a question or need help.

PARENTS AND PEERS

Due to privacy concerns, I do not take questions from, or take meetings with, any student's parent(s). Please do not have parents, classmates, friends, etc. contact me on your behalf; the sole exception is if you have been injured, hospitalized, or are otherwise physically unable to contact me – I will ask them for documentation, such as a doctor's note.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is UNO policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructor(s) to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. Students who qualify for services will receive all academic accommodations for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.uno.edu/>) each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance. Accommodations involving exams must be requested (via email) at least seven calendar days before a test or fourteen calendar days before a final exam.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. Students are required to adhere to the university's policies regarding academic dishonesty. These policies can be found online.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is unfortunately a common occurrence in college courses and instructors regard plagiarism as a serious offense, and will make every effort to impose the maximum penalty on any student who plagiarizes. An instructor may give an assignment a "0" if there is a clear indication of plagiarism. A "0" gives you no credit for the assignment and may lead to a failing grade in the course if the assignment is a substantial requirement. An instructor may also report you for violating the university Judicial Code, which could lead to being placed on probation, suspended, or even expelled. Do not plagiarize; cite all sources to work that is not your own. If you are confused about what, how, and when to cite, then please let me know and I will help you.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

This class occurs in a computer lab. Stay focused, do not use computers to distract yourself or your classmates, follow directions and ask questions! Further, discussions in this course will focus on how politics works and how politics should work. I may ask students for their opinions on various controversial social, political, and legal topics. As in political systems, classrooms work best when people participate. You are encouraged to express your thoughts, but you are expected to do so in a thoughtful and respectful manner. The political opinions of your classmates are based on their unique experiences, personalities, and backgrounds. Be mindful of your words. Any student who is exceedingly disruptive or disrespectful towards the instructor, guests, and/or other students may be asked to leave the classroom or withdraw from the course altogether.

USE OF ELECTRONICS

I strongly suggest that you take notes by hand (using a pen, paper and/or notebook). Note-taking on iPads and/or laptops is not forbidden, but they tend to distract you and your classmates. People abusing electronics may lose those privileges at my discretion.

As a courtesy to me and your classmates, please silence all electronics and do not text or take or make calls during class. If you absolutely must take a call, then quietly excuse yourself into the hall. Use good judgment.

The use of electronics of any kind during graded in-class assignments (quizzes, exams, etc.) is absolutely forbidden – is assumed to be cheating – and you will receive a grade of zero (0) for the assignment.

COURSE FORMAT

The goals of this course are: (1) that you complete and understand the course objectives listed above as they relate to the specific content of this course; and (2) that you proceed through your academic career learning and using skills that apply to the professional settings you will encounter after you graduate.

You will be treated as the young professional adults you are – this means that you are responsible for completing the assignments, following all instructions and rules laid out in class and this syllabus, and respecting deadlines for completing assignments. Unless otherwise noted, you are not to work with anyone else on any assignment, quiz, or exam; your work should be yours and yours alone.

I may require some assignments be submitted via email or online via the course website. It is your responsibility to ensure you have internet access, access to your UNO student email account, and access to the course website for the duration of the course. I recommend that you access the course webpage in an environment where internet service interruptions are at a minimum. “My internet was down” is never a valid reason for missing an assignment or deadline. The sole exception to this rule will be if natural events [like hurricanes] suspend access for all of us.

ASSIGNMENTS

For all written work you must turn in a hard (printed) copy and email me an electronic copy of your work. You must use one of the following file formats to ensure that I can review your work: Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx), Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), rich text (.rtf), Word Perfect (version 6.0 or newer, .wpd), Microsoft Works (Version 6.0 or newer, .wps), or plain text (.txt). Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat are the preferred formats, but they are not required. Similarly, please include the course number and name of the assignment you are turning in when e-mailing me - it will help me keep things organized and make sure you get your credit/grade.

If you have technical issues with the course website, email, attachments, etc., then please let me know as soon as possible. Please note that the university Computer / Technology Help Desk is the first place you should go with technical questions since they are the experts.

- **For all written work, use one inch (1”) margins; Calibri, Arial, or Times New Roman 12-point font; double-spaced lines; numbered pages; and fully-justified margins.**
- **Visit the Writing / Tutoring Center on campus for additional help.**

GRADING

Your final grade is assigned as follows:

100-90=A 89-80=B 79-70=C 69-60=D 59-0=F

EXTRA CREDIT

You may gain up to five points on your final grade by completing extra credit assignments. Extra credit assignments may be announced and offered periodically throughout the semester at my discretion and take the form of a written data-driven assignment. Extra credit is not guaranteed.

GRADING SYSTEM

Your final grade in this course is computed as follows:

Attendance (5% of Final Grade)

You will sign a daily roster that I pass around every class. You are given two (2) unexcused absences per semester. After that, your absences will count against you unless they are excused. Excused absences include but are not limited to personal emergencies and/or health-related illnesses with appropriate documentation. I do not excuse absences for extracurricular events without documentation from a faculty sponsor, coach, etc. Email me or come to office hours if you have a problem attending class.

Participation (5% of Final Grade)

Your participation grade depends on the frequency and quality of your participation in classroom discussion. Please read each reading assignment before class and come prepared to discuss the material. If the classroom discussion is routinely lethargic, then I may implement unannounced “pop” quizzes based on the assigned readings of the week.

Homework (30% of Final Grade; 6 Assignments x 5% Each)

You will have six (6) homework assignments based on the material we cover in the textbooks and in class. A detailed handout with each homework assignment will be given out in class on a Wednesday and is due on the following Monday at the beginning of class. Homework answers should be typed, similar to your empirical research paper, using the format found above in the “Assignments” section.

Empirical Research Paper (40% of Final Grade)

You will write a paper 12-15 pages in length, not including the cover and/or references section. A detailed handout will be distributed later in the semester. See the reading schedule below for the due date for each part of the paper. Since it is the most valuable assignment of the course, percentage-wise, students are expected to devote significant time to this project. Absolutely no late papers will be accepted.

Paper Presentation (5% of Final Grade)

You will present an overview of your empirical research paper during the last week of class. PowerPoint is the preferred format, but any slideshow is fine. A detailed handout will be distributed later in the semester. You will give a brief overview of your project, hypothesis, conclusions, and broader socio-political implication(s). The presentation should be 5 to 8 minutes long. I will provide snack food and drinks to students. ☺

**UNO
POLL**

Presidential Election Survey (15% of Final Grade)

UNO's Survey Research Center will be conducting a survey this semester for the Louisiana Senate election. The survey will be conducted from Saturday, October 15th through Saturday, October 22nd. Students taking this course will be required to be telephone interviewers for the poll. Each student will be required to do 3 sessions of interviewing. Each session is 3 hours long. Professor Chervenak will conduct training sessions during the semester. Participation in the poll is worth 15 percent of your grade. Important: You must complete all 3 sessions to receive credit. Please be aware that there is no partial credit. It's an all or nothing proposition.

Phone interviews will be scheduled on weeknights, including Friday; from 6pm to 9pm. Sessions on Saturdays will be held from 1pm to 4pm and on Sundays there will be two sessions from 2:30 to 5:30 and from 6pm to 9pm.

TEXTBOOKS

There are two required textbooks, available at the campus bookstore:

1. Baglione, Lisa. 2016. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science. Third Edition.* Sage / CQ Press.
ISBN: 9781483376165
2. Donovan, Todd and Kenneth Hoover. 2014. *The Elements of Social Science Thinking. Eleventh Edition.* Cengage Learning.
ISBN: 9781133607670

Please be sure to get the correct edition. Any additional required reading materials will be distributed in class, via e-mail and/or the course website.

- **Your second [non-graded] assignment will be agreeing that you have purchased and obtained these books. If you do not confirm that you have purchased and obtained the textbook as soon as you begin the course, then I cannot grade your subsequent coursework.**

**FINAL
THOUGHTS**

We are all human and we all have unavoidable and unexpected events we must deal with. Perhaps you have a demanding job, or small children, or unforeseen changes in your life while you are a student here. I understand this and may have unavoidable unexpected things come up as well. I am always available to help when you have a problem.

The bottom line is this: Do the reading, do your best to engage in classroom discussions, and complete the exams and final paper on time. If and when you encounter a problem or have a question let me know and I will do my best to address the issue. Every student is capable of passing this course.

Now let's get to work!

WEEK / DATES	LECTURE TOPIC	READ <u>BEFORE</u> CLASS
Wk. 0: 08-17-16	Syllabus Overview	Lecture Only
THE SCIENCE SECTION		
Wk. 1: 08-22-16	Social-Scientific Thinking	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 1: #1-11
Wk. 1: 08-24-16	Concepts, Variables, and Validity	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 2: #12-26
Wk. 2: 08-29-16	Theories and Testable Hypotheses	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 2: #26-37
	• Homework 1 Due (Monday) 08-29-16	
Wk. 2: 08-31-16	Operationalization and Analysis	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 3: #39-49
Wk. 3: 09-05-16	No Class (Labor Day Holiday)	No Reading
Wk. 3: 09-07-16	Analyzing and Interpreting Results	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 3: #49-57
	• Homework 2 Due (Wednesday) 09-07-16	
Wk. 4: 09-12-16	Secondary and Intervening Variables	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 4: #60-69
	• Homework 3 Due (Monday) 09-12-16	
Wk. 4: 09-14-16	Relationships Between Variables	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 4: #69-78
Wk. 5: 09-19-16	Measuring Variables	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 5: #80-94
	• Homework 4 Due (Monday) 09-19-16	
Wk. 5: 09-21-16	Measuring Empirical Relationships	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 5: #94-103
Wk. 6: 09-26-16	Understanding Regressions	<i>D & H</i> : Chapter 5: #103-117
	• Homework 5 Due (Monday) 09-26-16	
Wk. 6: 09-28-16	Q&A / Political Examples from 2016	No Reading; Prepare to Talk!
A CRASH COURSE IN STATISTICAL SOFTWARE (SPSS)		
Wk. 7: 10-03-16	Introduction to SPSS	No Reading; Take Notes!
	• Homework 6 Due (Monday) 10-03-16	
Wk. 7: 10-05-16	Using SPSS for your Specific Project	No Reading; Take Notes!
THE WRITING / EMPIRICAL PAPER SECTION		
Wk. 8: 10-10-16	Two Sample Papers	Handouts via Email / on Moodle
Wk. 8: 10-12-16	Writing an Empirical Research Paper	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 1: #1-12
Wk. 9: 10-17-16	Finding a Broad Topic / Puzzle	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 2: #15-26
Wk. 9: 10-19-16	Finding a Specific Question	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 2: #26-38
	• Research Question Due by (Friday) 10-21-16 (Via Email)	

Wk. 10: 10-24-16	Doing Research and Finding Sources	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 3: #41-55
Wk. 10: 10-26-16	Writing an Annotated Bibliography	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 3: #55-69
	• Annotated Bibliography Due by (Friday) 10-28-16 (Via Email)	
Wk. 11: 10-31-16	Writing a (Short!) Literature Review	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 4: #75-88
Wk. 11: 11-02-16	The Thesis, Models, and Hypotheses	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 5: #93-104
	• Lit. Review and Hypothesis Due by (Friday) 11-04-16 (Via Email)	
Wk. 12: 11-07-16	Research Design, Part 1	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 7: #121-134
Wk. 12: 11-09-16	Research Design, Part 2	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 7: #134-148
	• Research Design Due by (Friday) 11-11-16 (Via Email)	
Wk. 13: 11-14-16	Qualitative and Quantitative Writing	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 8: #155-170
Wk. 13: 11-16-16	Tiding Up: Intro. and Conclusion	<i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 9: #175-188
	• Rough Draft Due by (Friday) 11-18-16 (Via Email)	
Wk. 14: 11-21-16	Q & A / Lab Time with Rough Draft	No Reading; Bring in Questions!
Wk. 14: 11-23-16	No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday)	No Reading
Wk. 15: 11-28-16	Presentations	No Reading
Wk. 15: 11-30-16	Presentations	No Reading
	Final Paper Due (Wednesday) 11-30-16 (Via Email + Bring to Class)	



Syllabus Attachment

Fall 2016

Fall Semester Important Dates*

Last day to adjust schedule w/out fee	08/16
Semester Classes Begin	08/17
Last day to adjust schedule w/fee, or withdraw with 100% refund	08/23
Last day to apply for December Commencement.....	10/12
Final day to drop a course or resign	10/12
Mid-semester examinations.....	10/03-07
Last Day of Classes	12/02
Final examinations	12/05-12/10
Commencement.....	12/16

Session "A" Important Dates*

Last day to adjust schedule w/out fee	08/16
Semester Classes Begin	08/17
Last day to adjust schedule w/fee, or withdraw with 100% refund	08/19
Last day to apply for December Commencement.....	10/12
Final day to drop a course or resign	09/14
Mid-semester examinations.....	09/08-09
Last Day of Classes	10/03
Final examinations	10/05-06
Commencement.....	12/16

Session "B" Important Dates*

Last day to apply for December Commencement.....	10/12
Last day to adjust schedule w/out fee	10/09
Semester Classes Begin	10/10
Last day to adjust schedule w/fee, or withdraw with 100% refund	10/11
Final day to drop a course or resign	11/08
Mid-semester examinations.....	11/03-04
Last Day of Classes	11/29
Final examinations	12/01-02
Commencement.....	12/16

*Note: check [Registrar's website](#) for items not listed here.

Fall Semester Holidays

Labor Day Holiday	09/05
Mid-semester Break	10/13-10/14
Thanksgiving Holidays	11/24-11/25

Withdrawal Policy – Undergraduate only

Students are responsible for initiating action to resign from the University (withdraw from all courses) or from a course on or before dates indicated in the current Important Dates calendar. Students who fail to resign by the published final date for such action will be retained on the class rolls even though they may be absent for the remainder of the semester and be graded as if they were in attendance. Failure to attend classes does not constitute a resignation. Check the dates and charges associated on the [Registrar's website](#).

Incomplete Policy – Undergraduate only

A grade of I is assigned when, due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control, students engaged in passing course work are unable to complete class assignments within the time frame of the course's session. Before agreeing to the use of an incomplete grade in any course, an Incomplete Grade Agreement Form must be completed. Details regarding deadlines for completing the I grade, when the incomplete converts to a grade

of F and a link to the form may be found on the [Academic Affairs](#) website.

Repeat Policy

When a student is permitted to repeat a course for credit, the last grade earned shall be the one which determines course acceptability for degree credit. A student who has earned a C or better in a course may not repeat that course unless, (1) the catalog description indicates that the course may be repeated for credit, or (2) the student's Dean gives prior approval for documented extenuating circumstances.

Graduate Policies

Graduate policies often vary from undergraduate policies. To view the applicable policies for graduate students, see the [Graduate Student Handbook](#)

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Safety Awareness Facts and Education

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

<http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs-enrollment-management/>

UNO Counseling Services and UNO Cares

UNO offers care and support for students in any type of distress. [Counseling Services](#) assist students in addressing mental health concerns through assessment, short-term counseling, and career testing and counseling. First-year students often have unique concerns, and UNO Cares is designed to address those students' needs. Contact [UNO Cares](#).

Emergency Procedures

Sign up for emergency notifications via text and/or email at [E2Campus Notification](#). All emergency and safety procedures are explained at the [Emergency Health and Safety Office](#).

Diversity at UNO

As the most diverse public university in the state, UNO maintains a Diversity Affairs division to support the university's efforts towards creating an environment of healthy respect, tolerance, and appreciation for the people from all walks of life, and the expression of intellectual point of view and personal lifestyle. The [Office of Diversity Affairs](#) promotes these values through a wide range of programming and activities.

Learning and Support Services

Help is within reach in the form of learning support services, including tutoring in writing and math and other supplemental instruction. Visit the [Learning Resource Center](#) in LA 334.

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity

UNO is an equal opportunity employer. The Human Resource Management department has more information on UNO's compliance with federal and state regulations regarding EEOC in its [Policies and Resources website](#).