POLS 2014
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
Fall 2016
Monday and Thursday, 10:05-11:25 am
1119 Waleed

Mazen Hassan

Department of Political Science
American University in Cairo
mazen.a.hassan@aucegypt.edu
Office hours: Mondays, 11:30-12:30; Thursdays 11:30-12:00
Office: 2014 HUSS
I- Course Description:

The course is an introductory course intended for students seeking a career in political science-related fields. The key purpose of the course is to introduce students to the main methods of the scientific political enquiry. Using existing data sources, qualitative and quantitative research methods are the main topics to be covered in this course. Throughout the course, you will develop your own research projects which you will then submit in the form of a term paper.

II- Course Objectives:

- Introducing students to the main methodologies and tools used for collecting data in political science research.
- Understanding the most important methodological problems with regard to political science research, and methods used to deal with them.
- Understanding and applying statistical methods to address questions problems in political science and public policy.
- Enhancing students’ abilities with regard to academic writing.
- Exploring the most important ethical issues in political science research.

III- Requirements:

There are three different types of requirements. In addition to the attendance of and participation in class, these are:
1. Regular assignments (see list of assignments in Table 2 below)
2. Class presentations (on a regular basis but also at the end of the term when you present your own term paper).
3. Mid-term exam.
4. Terms paper.

I will use the following grading system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Cut-off Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Cut-off Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 65</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### IV- Course Content:
The course is divided over around 24 classes as follows

#### Table 2: Overview of Course Topics and Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments (due the following class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Scientific Study of Political Phenomena.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research Designs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 1: How to write a paper?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments (due the following class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Research question.</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Produce your own “Research Question”. Length: 300-900 words. Choose one you like because I would expect you to work on it for the course of the term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Research question; presentations.</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Produce your own “Literature Review”. Length: 600-1,200 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Literature review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Literature review; presentations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Theoretical Framework; presentations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 2: How to collect and analyse data?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments (due the following class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Interviews and focus groups.</td>
<td>Assignment 4: Produce your own “List of Interview Questions and Possible Interviewees” 5 possible interviewees and 20 questions (applies only for those who see interviews suitable to their research question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Interviews; speaker.</td>
<td>Assignment 5: Produce your own “List of Survey Questions” (applies only for those who see interviews suitable to their research question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Surveys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Surveys; discussing your own questionnaire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Experiments.</td>
<td>Assignment 6: Produce your own “Experiment Design”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Based on the estimate that a single page (font size 12, Times New Roman) has around 300 words.
2 Regarding the presentation of assignments, each student should present at least once during the term, in addition to the presentation of the term paper.
V- Course policy

- Cheating and plagiarism: I do not accept plagiarism. Submitting work that you already submitted for other courses constitutes self-plagiarism. I will submit all written material to originality checks. If I detect plagiarism in your work, you will fail the class and be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee. Both steps are automatic and non-negotiable.

- Class Attendance and Absence:
  1. I take attendance in the first 15 minutes of each session.
  2. Whoever misses more than six class sessions (excluding the first week) fails.

VI- Detailed Course Outline

1. Introduction: What we are going to study, your expectations and mine.

2. Scientific Study of Political Phenomena:
   Readings:

Additional Readings:

3. Research Designs in Political Science Research:

Additional Readings:

4. Research Question:

5. Research Question – Presentations:
Some of you will be asked to present their assignments and get feedback (perhaps, not all by this class, but by all means each one is expected to present at least once during the term).

6. Literature Review:
7. Literature Review - Presentations:
Some of you will be asked to present their assignments and get feedback.

8. Theoretical Framework:

Additional Readings:

9. Theoretical Framework - Presentations:
Some of you will be asked to present their assignments and get feedback.

10. Interviews and Focus Groups:

11. Interviews – Speaker (TBC).

12. Surveys:

Additional Readings:

12. **Surveys – discussing your own questionnaire.**

14. **Midterm Exam.**

15. **Experiments:**

*Additional Readings:*
Druckman, James et al. (eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

16. **Experiments - discussing your own experiment design.**

17. **Participant Observation:**

18. **Participant observation – speaker (TBC).**

19. **Quantitative Analysis I:**

Additional Readings:

20. Quantitative Analysis II (training on STATA in the lab).

21. Referencing and citations.

22. Ethics of social science research, where to get possible funding and publishing venues:
Welland, Trevor and Lesley Pugsley (eds.) (2002), Ethical Dilemmas in Qualitative Research. Cardiff: Ashgate.

23. Presentations of term Papers I.

23. Presentations of term Papers II.