

**PSC 701**  
**Research Methods in Political Science**  
**Fall 2005**

Instructor: Dr. David Damore  
Time: Th 5:30 – 8:20  
Room: WRI B224

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Scope and Purpose:**

This course provides students with the skills necessary to evaluate and conduct systematic research in political science. The course is divided into three parts. Part one familiarizes students with the sub-fields within the discipline and the questions and concerns central to each of these areas of study. In addition, the prospects of and limitations to a scientific study of politics and the ethics associated with the research process are addressed. Part two examines the research design process in detail (e.g., theory building, hypothesis formulation, measurement validity and reliability, data gathering, and empirical validation via qualitative and quantitative methods). An introduction to quantitative methods (e.g., statistics) used in political science research is the focus of part three (POS 702, offered in the spring, provides an in depth treatment of quantitative methods in political science research).

**Course Material:**

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Levin, Jack, and James Alan Fox. 2004. *Elementary Statistics in Social Research, The Essentials*. Boston: Pearson Education.

Monroe, Alan D. 2000. *Essentials of Political Research*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Course reader (available from the instructor).

A calculator will be useful for part three.

Texts are available at the bookstore (students also may buy online for lower prices)

**Requirements:**

1. Exams (40%) – Exam one is take home in format and covers parts one and two. Exam two occurs during finals week and covers part three. Exam one counts for 25% of your grade and exam two counts for 15% of your grade

2. Research Paper (40%) – Over the course of the semester students are required to develop a paper offering an original research design assessing a question of significance to the study of politics. Detailed information is forthcoming.
3. Homework (10%) – Seven homework assignments throughout the term, each of which is due by 2:00 p.m. the day of class. Late work is not accepted, e-mail submissions are.
4. Participation (10%) – Determined by students’ attendance, preparation, and willingness to enter into discussions as they arise.

**Policies and Miscellaneous:**

1. The honor code is strictly enforced. Any evidence of collaboration, plagiarism, or other violations of the honor code will be immediately referred for investigation.
2. Make-ups are granted for documented illnesses or deaths in the immediate family. If you need to miss class because of observance of a religious holiday or because you represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity you must notify me no later than week three of the semester.
3. UNLV requires all members of the university community to be familiar with the honor code and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. UNLV will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. To familiarize you with copyright and fair use policies, visit the University’s copyright web page (<http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright>).
4. While the amount of reading for this class is less than what is typically assigned in graduate courses, it is far more technical and dense than you may be accustomed to. As a consequence, it may take multiple readings to comprehend concepts presented in the readings. It is expected that reading assignments will be completed prior to the lectures for which they are assigned.
5. If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, you need to contact Disability Service (DS) for coordination in your academic accommodations (the DS is located within the Learning Enhancement Services office in the Reynolds Student Services Center, room 317, 895-0866, [www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les](http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les)).
6. Cut-offs for final grades are as follows:

A = 100–94.0	B = 86.9–84.0	C = 76.9–74.0	D = 66.9–64.0
A- = 93.9–90.0	B- = 83.9–80.0	C- = 73.9–70.0	D- = 63.9–60.0
B+ = 89.9–87.0	C+ = 79.9–77.0	D+ = 69.9– 67.0	F = 59.9-0

## **Course Organization and Reading Assignments**

### **Part I: Introduction**

#### **Week 1: September 1**

No class (Dr. Damore attending the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington D.C.)

#### **Week 2: September 8**

##### **The Nature of Scientific Inquiry and Overview of Political Science**

King, Keohane, and Verba: Preface and pages 3 – 11

Monroe: pages 1 – 8

Reader: “Why Bush Won,” “Small Inroads Make the Difference for Bush,” “Terrorism, Gay Marriage, and Incumbency: Explaining the Republican Victory in the 2004 Presidential Election,” “Political Science: The Discipline,” and “Do We Preach What We Practice? A Survey of Methods in Political Science Journals and Curricula”

Homework 1 assigned

#### **Week 3: September 15**

##### **Overview of the Research Process in Political Science**

King, Keohane, and Verba: pages 12 – 32

Monroe: pages 8 – 16

Paper assignment distributed

#### **Week 4: September 22**

##### **Ethical Considerations in Empirical Research**

Reader: “The Politics of Government Funded Research,” “Review of Medical Research Turns up Contradictory Results,” “Fingerprint Science on Trial,” “Official Played Down Emissions’ Link to Global Warming,” and “Former White House Official Takes Exxon Job”

### **Part II: Research Design**

#### **Weeks 5 and 6: September 29 and October 6**

##### **Theory Building I, II, and III**

King, Keohane, and Verba: chapters two and three, pages 185 - 195

Monroe: chapter two

Reader: “Reading Journal Articles,” “War and the Fate of Regimes,” “Occam’s Razor and Parsimony”

Homework 2 assigned

Paper 1 due September 29

**Week 7: October 13  
Operationalization I and II**

Monroe: chapter four

Reader: “War and the Fate of Regimes,” “Presidential Campaigns and the Knowledge Gap,” and “The Multi-Layered Impact of Public Opinion”

Homework 3 assigned

Paper 2 due October 13

**Week 8: October 20  
Research Design I and II**

King, Keohane, and Verba: chapter four

Monroe: chapters three and five

Reader: “Online Polls Raising Concerns”

**Week 9: October 27  
Experimental, Qualitative, and Quantitative Approaches**

King, Keohane, and Verba: chapter six

Levin and Fox: chapter one

Reader: “Presidential Leverage over Social Movements: the Johnson White House and Civil Rights,” “War and the Fate of Regimes,” “A Spiral of Cynicism for Some: the Contingent Effects of Campaign News Frames on Participation and Confidence in Government:

Homework 4 assigned

Paper 3 due October 27

**Week 10: November 3  
Inferential Limitations**

King, Keohane, and Verba: pages 150 – 184, 196 – 207

Exam 1 distributed

**Week 11: November 10  
Descriptive Statistics**

Levin and Fox: chapters 2 – 4  
Monroe: chapter six and seven

Homework 5 assigned

**Week 12: November 17  
Statistical Significance**

Levin and Fox: chapters five and six

Homework 6 assigned

Paper 4 due November 17

**Week 13: November 24**

Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

**Weeks 14 and 15: December 1 and 8  
Inferential Statistics**

Levin and Fox: chapters ten through thirteen  
Monroe: chapters eight through ten

Homework 7 assigned

Paper 5 due December 8

**Finals Week: December 12 - 17**

Exam 2, Thursday December 15 at 6:00 p.m.

## PSC 701 Reader

### Resources and Commentaries:

American Political Science Association Committee on Publications. 2001. *Style Manual for Political Science*. Washington D.C.: American Political Science Association.

Bennett, Andrew, Aharon Barth, and Kenneth R. Rutherford. 2003. "Do We Preach What We Practice? A Survey of Methods in Political Science Journals and Curricula." *PS: Political Science and Politics* Vol. 46 No 3 (July):373-389.

Goodin, Robert E., and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. 1996. "Political Science: The Discipline," in *A New Handbook of Political Science*, eds. Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. New York: Oxford University Press.

Maisel, L. Sandy, and Walter J. Stone. 1998. "The Politics of Government Funded Research: Notes from the Experience of the Candidate Emergence Study." *PS: Politics and Political Science* Vol. 31 No. 4 (December):811-817.

### Newspaper Articles:

Associated Press. 2005. "Former White House Official Takes Exxon Job."

Botelho, Greg. 2004. "Small Inroads Make the Difference for Bush." CNN.com.

Gibson, Gail. 2002. "Fingerprint Science on Trial." *The Baltimore Sun*.

Luntz, Frank. 2004. "Why Bush Won." CBSnews.com.

Revkin, Andrew C. 2005. "Official Played Down Emissions' Link to Global Warming." *New York Times*.

Tanner, Lindsey. 2005. "Review of Medical Research Turns up Contradictory Results." Associated Press.

### Journal Articles:

Abramowitz, Alan. 2004. "Terrorism, Gay Marriage, and Incumbency: Explaining the Republican Victory in the 2004 Presidential Election." *The Forum* Vol. 2 No. 3, Article 3.

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce M., Randolph M. Siverson, and Gary Woller. 1992. "War and the Fate of Regimes." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 86 No. 3 (September):638-646.

- Holbrook, Thomas M. 2002. "Presidential Campaigns and the Knowledge Gap." *Political Communication* Vol. 19 No. 4 (October):437 – 454.
- Miroff, Bruce. 1981. "Presidential Leverage over Social Movements: the Johnson White House and Civil Rights." *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 43 No. 1 (February):2-23.
- Norrander, Barbara. 2000. "The Multi-Layered Impact of Public Opinion on Capital Punishment Implementation in the American States." *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 53 No 4. (December):771-793.
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Matthew N. Beckman, and Thomas A. Buhr. 2001. "A Spiral of Cynicism for Some: The Contingent Effects of Campaign News Frames on Participation and Confidence in Government." *Political Communication* Vol. 18 No. 4 (October):347-367.