

## **POLS 2300: Methods of Research & Inquiry in Political Science**

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**Professor:** Marcus E. Green

**Office:** Towers 216

**Office Hours:** TR 11:00-11:50, W 5:00-5:50  
or by appointment

**Phone:** (614) 823-1106

**Email:** mgreen@otterbein.edu

**Quarter:** Fall 2011 | Aug 29-Dec 15

**Section #:** 01

**Schedule #:** 40842

**Class Time:** TR 12:00-1:45 pm

**Location:** Towers 114

**Website:** access through Blackboard

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### **Course Description**

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This course provides an introduction to the methods and analytic approaches employed in the study of political science. The course provides students with tools for understanding political analysis and to pursue research on their own questions. An emphasis will be placed on helping students to design scientific research, and expectations for ethical research and intellectual property law will be explored. In short, this class teaches students how to know rather than what to know.

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### **Course Objectives**

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1. To provide students with an understanding of different quantitative and qualitative approaches in political science.
  2. To provide students with an understanding of the theoretical assumptions of various analytical approaches in the study of politics.
  3. To explore the practice of primary research, secondary data gathering, and analysis.
  4. To better understand the practice of academic research.
  5. To prepare a research design paper.
  6. To acquire new conceptual perspectives to analyze political issues.
  7. To assist students in the development of their analytical, critical thinking, writing, and communicative skills.
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### **Required Texts**

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1. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.) *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Third Edition). Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. ISBN: 9780230576278
  2. Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. ISBN: 9780333750032
  3. Diane E. Schmidt, *Writing in Political Science: A Practical Guide* (4th Edition). Pearson/Longman, 2010. ISBN: 9780205617364
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### **Recommended**

1. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, Second Edition. (W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

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## Assignments & the Determination of Final Grade

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Assignments	Date	Percent of Final Grade	Points
Exam 1	Tue, Sept 27	20%	.8
Exam 2	Tue, Nov 8	20%	.8
Topic & Research Question	Thu, Nov 17	5%	.2
Thesis & Outline	Tue, Nov 29	5%	.2
Research Essay	TBA	30%	1.2
Class Participation	n/a	20%	.8
<b>Total Possible Points</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>
- points for absences			
+/- class participation			
<b>Final Grade</b>			

- 0.1 for each unexcused absence after 4<sup>th</sup> absence  
 +/- 0.1 for consistently active or disruptive participation

### Calculation of Final Grade

The calculation of the final grade for the course is determined by the weighted total of the two exams, the research essay, its graded components, and class participation. The final grade recorded for the course follows the grade scale below. The final grade average must meet the minimum threshold of the grade scale for each corresponding grade. For example, to receive an A- in the course, a student's final grade average must be 3.7 or above. In the case of a marginal final grade within .05 of a point, I will round up. For instance, if a student's final grade average is 3.66, I will record the final grade as an A-, but a final grade average of 3.60 will be recorded as a B+.

### Grade Scale

The grading system for this course follows Otterbein University's four-point grade scale found in the Catalog (<http://catalog.otterbein.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=463#Grading>).

Grade Scale	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Description
3.85 – 4.00	A	4.0	Exceptional
3.7 – 3.84	A-	3.7	Excellent
3.3 – 3.69	B+	3.3	Above Average
3.0 – 3.29	B	3.0	Above Average
2.7 – 2.99	B-	2.7	Above Average
2.3 – 2.69	C+	2.3	Average
2.0 – 2.29	C	2.0	Average
1.7 – 1.99	C-	1.7	Below Average
1.3 – 1.69	D+	1.3	Below Average
1.0 – 1.29	D	1.0	Below Average
0.0 – 0.99	F	0.0	Failure

Grades for all assignments and the final grade will follow the Grade Scale in first column. This Grade Scale will be used to determine the final Letter Grade.

### Exams

The course includes two exams. Exam dates are noted above and in the reading schedule. Each exam consists of questions drawn from the readings and lectures.

### Make-up Exam Policy

There are no make-up exams.

## Research Essay

Students are expected to write one research essay that employs the methods examined in the course. The assignment will include several components that will be announced over the course of the semester.

## Participation Grade

Students are graded on class participation. In addition to the formal essay requirements, successful achievement of course objectives requires active class participation, which is an important and valuable aspect of the learning experience. Therefore, 20% of the final course grade is determined by class participation. This means that I expect you to contribute and participate in class discussions. You will only receive an acceptable grade for class participation if you attend class and participate in discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss particular issues, topics, and readings.

To facilitate discussion, I will distribute discussion questions based upon the readings. Students are expected to answer particular questions in class – one participation point for each question successfully answered. I will also give students credit for participation when they provide significant contributions to class discussions that either enhance or provide greater meaning to the discussion. Your participation grade will be determined by the quality and quantity of your participation performance.

## Participation Grade Breakdown

Participation Points	Grade
12	4.0
11	3.8
10	3.7
9	3.3
8	3.0
7	2.7
6	2.3
5	2.0
4	1.7
3	1.3
2	1.0
1	0.7
0	0.0

Participation grades will be determined by the quality and quantity of student performance. This course will meet for 15 weeks, and I will grade participation on a scale of 0-to-12. At the end of the term, I will calculate students' participation grades based upon their total participation points following the scale to the left. For instance, a student with 11 participation points, will receive a grade of 3.8 for participation.

Class attendance does not constitute participation. You will receive credit for participation when you provide significant contributions to class discussions that either enhance or provide greater meaning to the discussion.

## Attendance

Attendance is required but not graded. Students are permitted 4 unexcused absences without penalty. After your fourth unexcused absence, I will deduct .1 of a point from your final grade average for each additional absence. For example, 5 absences = -0.1 point; 6 absences = -0.2 point, etc. If you need to miss more than four classes for university approved reasons, please see me to make arrangements. Sickness short of hospitalization or incapacitation does not constitute grounds for an excused absence. I may make exceptions for truly unusual and unanticipated events, but such arrangements must be discussed with me. Colds, flus, hangovers, broken bones, dental work, doctor appointments, changes in work schedules, etc. do not count as either unusual or unanticipated. You are permitted four unexcused absences to deal with such events.

## **Tardiness**

If you are regularly late to class, I reserve the right to reduce your final grade average by .1 point for each instance of tardiness.

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## **Course Policies**

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### **Course Format**

Class meetings will be divided between lectures and directed class discussions. The lectures are designed to provide students with a framework of meaning through which they are better able to understand and discuss the texts. Class discussions will be based upon readings from the required texts. The discussions shall provide students with a forum in which they can discuss and debate the key concepts of the texts under review with their classmates and the instructor.

### **Lectures and Readings**

Students are responsible for knowing the material covered in the assigned readings and the material covered in lectures. Lectures will address information found in the readings as well as information not found in the readings. I do not distribute my lecture notes to students. Therefore, students are encouraged to attend class and to take notes.

### **Classroom Environment**

This course is designed to challenge your written and verbal communicative skills, which are, in my view, not only necessary to the learning process but vital to the development of democratic culture and citizenship. Just like writing, the public exchange of ideas requires skill. It requires a level of confidence to speak in front of others and a level of maturity and respect to listen to others. It can be said that this course is Socratic in the sense that our discussions are similar to workshops in which we workout different thoughts and ideas in coordination with one another. Because of this, I will work to make the classroom environment respectful and comfortable for all, and I expect you to do the same.

### **Blackboard**

I will distribute course materials, including notes and outlines, on Blackboard. Therefore, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard and to login periodically for course updates.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

Otterbein policies regarding academic integrity will be strictly enforced. All submitted work must be your own – *including presentations* – and it is the responsibility of all students to understand the methods of proper citation and to apply those methods in all written assignments. I will investigate indications of copied or plagiarized work, and I reserve the right to administer an oral exam and to question the student, if I suspect a student has submitted work that may be plagiarized.

According to the Otterbein Campus Life Handbook, “any use of the words or ideas of someone else as though they were the student’s own words, constitutes plagiarism. This definition applies to the use of both printed and unprinted sources, including the work of other students or faculty.” (See: [http://www.otterbein.edu/CLH/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_policies.asp#sec\\_4](http://www.otterbein.edu/CLH/code_of_conduct_policies.asp#sec_4) ). In other words, plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of someone else’s words or ideas presented as your own.

Plagiarism occurs when a writer reproduces the words of another author without acknowledgment or when a writer paraphrases the ideas or arguments of another author in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that the ideas or arguments originated with the writer. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional. According to Andrea A. Lunsford in *The Everyday Writer* (4<sup>th</sup> ed): “If your paraphrase is too close to the wording or sentence structure of a source (even if you identify the source); if you do not identify the source of a quotation (even if you include the quotation marks); or if you fail to indicate clearly the source of an idea that you obviously did not come up with on your own, you may be accused of plagiarism even if your intent was not to plagiarize” (p. 191).

I will report violations of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. According to Otterbein policy, students who violate standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, which include the “failure on the given assignment or a failing grade for the course.”

### **Disability Accommodation**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Disability Services Coordinator for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Disability Services Coordinator (x1618 or [LMonaghan@otterbein.edu](mailto:LMonaghan@otterbein.edu)), I encourage you to do so.

### **Email**

Outside of my office hours, I can be reached via email, and I will usually respond within 24 hours. Note: In the subject, include the course number (POLS 2300), and in the body of the message, please include your first and last name.

### **Electronic Devices**

Recording Lectures: In accordance with federal regulations, students may not make audio recordings of class lectures without the prior written consent of the instructor. Students who have registered and documented disabilities may make audio recordings with the consent of the instructor.

Cell Phones & iPods: Please turn off cell phone ringers during class, no texting, and no iPod listening in class.

### **Drop Dates & Withdrawal Policy**

Students who wish to drop the course may do so using the regular procedures. It is not the responsibility of the professor to drop students from the course.

- Last day to add class: September 6
- Last day to drop classes with no grade recorded on transcript: September 30
- Last day to drop with “W” on transcript: October 28

**Class Schedule and Readings.** This is a tentative schedule and may change with notice.

Week	Date	Reading & Topics	Important Dates
Week 1	Tue Aug 30	Introduction to the course	
	Thu Sep 1	<b>Political Science or Political Analysis?</b> · Marsh & Stoker, Intro, pp. 1-12 · Schmidt, Ch. 1 Political Inquiry · Schmidt, Ch. 2 Critical Thinking About Politics	
Week 2	Tue Sep 6	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 9 A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology & Epistemology in Political Science, D. Marsh and P. Furlong	
	Thu Sep 8	· Hay, Ch. 2 What's Political about Political Science?	
Week 3	Tue Sep 13	<b>Themes and Issues of Political Analysis</b> · Hay, Ch. 1 Analytical Perspectives, Analytical Controversies	
	Thu Sep 15	· Hay, Ch. 3 Beyond Structure versus Agency	
Week 4	Tue Sep 20	· Hay, Ch. 4 Continuity & Discontinuity in the Analysis of Political Change	
	Thu Sep 22	· Hay, Ch. 5 Divided by a Common Language? Conceptualizing Power	
Week 5	Tue Sep 27	<b>Exam 1</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>
	Thu Sep 29	<b>Analytical Approaches to the Study of Politics</b> · Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 1 Behavioural Analysis, D.Sanders	
Week 6	Tue Oct 4	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 2 Rational Choice, A.Hindmoor	
	Thu Oct 6	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 3 The Institutional Approach, V.Lowndes	
Week 7	Tue Oct 11	<i>Fall Student/Faculty Break Oct 8-12</i>	<b>No Class</b>
	Thu Oct 13	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 4 Constructivism and Interpretive Theory, C.Parsons	
Week 8	Tue Oct 18	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 5 Political Psychology, Paul 't Hart	
	Thu Oct 20	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 6 Feminism, V.Randall	
Week 9	Tue Oct 25	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 7 Marxism, D.Macguire	
	Thu Oct 27	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 8 Normative Theory, S.Buckler	
Week 10	Tue Nov 1	· Hay, Ch. 6 The Discursive and the Ideational in Contemporary Political Analysis: Beyond Materialism and Idealism	
	Thu Nov 3	· Hay, Ch. 7 The Challenge of Postmodernism · Hay, Conclusion Critical-Political-Analytical	
Week 11	Tue Nov 8	<b>Exam 2</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
	Thu Nov 10	<b>Research Design</b> · Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 11 The Challenge of Research Design, B.Hancke · Schmidt, Ch. 3 Topic Selection · Schmidt, Ch. 11 Format and Examples of Conventional Research Papers	
Week 12	Tue Nov 15	· Schmidt, Ch. 4 Locating Research Materials Using Indexes, Databases, and the Internet · Schmidt, Ch. 8 Manuscript Format and Referencing Styles	
	Thu Nov 17	· Library Visit	<b>Topic Due</b>
Week 13	Tue Nov 22	· Schmidt, Ch. 6 Properties of Essays and Research Papers	
	Thu Nov 24	<i>Thanksgiving Break Nov 23-27</i>	<b>No Class</b>
Week 14	Tue Nov 29	<b>Methods</b> · Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 12 Debating Methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approaches	<b>Thesis &amp; Outline Due</b>
	Thu Dec 1	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 13 Quantitative Methods · Schmidt, Ch. 5 Creating Evidence with Primary and Secondary Data	
Week 15	Tue Dec 6	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 14 The Comparative Method · Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 15 The Experimental Method: Prospects for Laboratory and Field Studies, G.Stoker and H.Margetts	
	Thu Dec 8	· Marsh & Stoker, Ch. 16 The Relevance of Political Science, G.Peters, J.Pierre and G.Stoker	
Week 16		Final Paper Due	<b>Final Paper Due</b>