Political Science 15: Introduction to Research in Political Science

Winter 2014

Garrett Glasgow
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am-12pm or by appointment.
email: glasgow@polsci.ucsb.edu
http://www.polsci.ucsb.edu/faculty/glasgow/ps15/ps15.html
Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:45pm in Phelps 1260

Teaching Assistants:

Rhoanne Esteban
Sections: Wednesday 12pm, Wednesday 1pm, Wednesday 3pm
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9am-12pm in Ellison 2808
email: rjesteban@umail.ucsb.edu

Sarah Oliver
Section: Thursday 11am, Thursday 12pm, Thursday 2pm
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm and Thursdays 10-11am in Ellison 2829
email: saraholiver@umail.ucsb.edu

1 Course Description

This course introduces students to the basic research methods and approaches used in political science. We will consider questions of logic and research design, the measurement of social and political data, and how this data is used to test hypotheses and answer questions about how the world works. By the end of the course you should be comfortable reading and critiquing arguments about social and political problems and conducting your own basic research into social problems – skills that will be useful not only in your other upper division political science courses, but also throughout any career in business, law, public policy, or the social sciences.
2 Course Requirements

Grades will be based on four components:

- **Five Homework Assignments (8% each, for a total of 40%):** I will post homework assignments to my website (and announce them in class) approximately every other week. These assignments will generally involve reading and critiquing political science research as well as some hands-on examination of one or more political science research problems. Homework assignments will usually be due one week after they are assigned (I’ll announce the due date for each homework when I post it). Homeworks must be turned in either in lecture or in your TA’s mailbox (in the Political Science mail room) by 5pm of the day they are due. Late homeworks will be marked down one letter grade per day. Due to the large enrollment in our class (about 90 students), we will not accept homeworks by email.

- **A midterm examination (20%):** The midterm will be held in class Thursday, February 13th (Thursday of 6th week). **Note:** I will not be offering a makeup midterm exam. If you have an excused absence for the midterm examination date, your final examination will be worth 50% of your grade.

- **A final examination (30%):** The final will be held on Thursday, March 20th, 4-7pm in our usual room. It will be comprehensive. **Note:** Makeup final exams will only be offered in the case of a documented emergency. Minor illnesses and scheduling conflicts do not count as emergencies.

- **Lab Participation (10%):** These sections will begin meeting in the second week of classes (the week of January 13th). Attending and participating in lab meetings is an important way to learn about the topics covered in lecture through hands-on experience with political science research problems. All sections this quarter will meet in the computer labs, not the rooms assigned on GOLD. All sections will either meet in one of the campus computer labs. Unfortunately the labs were very busy this quarter, so the meeting location for each sections will change several times through the quarter. Section meeting locations are:

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Note that while lecture attendance is not mandatory, you should do the readings before each class and participate actively during the lecture in order to get the most of the class. Readings will
be assigned for most class meetings and posted in advance on the class website – be sure to check in often for updates to the reading list.

The midterm and the final will be blind-graded (your TA will not know your identity when grading), and graded by question rather than by student (each TA will grade a portion of your exam). We will not negotiate over grades, but we will make corrections if there has been an error in grading (something was marked as incorrect when it was in fact correct). If you feel you have spotted an error in grading, you should (1) type up a memo explaining why your answer is actually correct, and (2) bring it, along with the homework or test, to your TA.

All the usual warnings about plagiarism and cheating apply – don’t do it. Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic F in the class and disciplinary action by the Dean of Students. My policy is to always request the maximum punishment for anyone caught cheating (usually a two-quarter suspension). If you are having trouble with the class don’t do anything desperate or dishonest – please ask us for help.

3 Required Course Materials


- I will be posting readings to our class website on a regular basis for you to download.