Course: POLS 3213 Research Methods

Class: T & R 8:00–9:20, PY 209
Lab: PY 126

Lecturer: Steve Garrison, Ph.D.

Office: 201 O’Donohoe Hall
Phone: 397-6282
Email: steve.garrison@mwsu.edu
Office Hours: M & W 8-11:00, 1:30-2:30 and T & R 9:30-11:00
and by appointment

Research Methods POLS 3213: This course is designed to familiarize students with the research process in the field of political science. This course will explore the scientific foundations of the research process, construction of a research project, collection and analysis of data, and presentation of data analysis.

Course Objectives: This course is intended to further student development in the following departmental learning objectives.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of diverse research strategies to address various political questions.
- Describe and analyze the strengths and limitations of various research designs.
- Identify a research project’s contribution to the accumulation of political knowledge.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills towards political research concerning the strengths and weaknesses of various methods of inquiry.
• Demonstrate an ability to use computer databases in the political research process.

• Display an ability to employ statistical software in the analysis of quantitative data.


*STATA Applications:* Since the focus of this course is the application of statistical methods in the research process we will devote a portion of the class to learning the statistical program STATA. This will require spending some time in the social sciences computing lab in 126 PY. Given the importance of mastering these skills your participation is expected and students will be awarded participation points based on their attendance during lab sessions.

**Expectations, Examinations, and Grading:** Students are expected to attend class. Lectures will not reproduce the texts. During lectures, students are expected to behave in an adult fashion: i.e. no note passing, punching, kissing, kicking or other juvenile behavior. Disrespectful behavior towards other students or the teacher will not be tolerated and will result in your removal from the class. Also, please turn cellular phones off during class. Most importantly, there are absolutely no firearms in the classroom. Additionally students are bound by all policies detailed in the Student Handbook. There will be three examinations. The format of the first exam will be short essay and will be given as a take home exam. The second exam will include short answer questions and identification of key terms. The third exam will occur during the final examination period, but will be in the same format as the second exam. The highest grading scale will be 90 (A), 80 (B), 70 (C), and 60 (D). If for any reason you should have to miss a test please inform the instructor prior to the time of the test. Make up exams will only be given for valid excuses supported with the proper documentation. In addition to the exams periodic exercises will be given in order to prepare students for the exams. The privilege of additional work will not be granted. The percentage breakdown is as follows:

**Grading:**
Exam 1 10 points
Exam 2 20 points
Exam 3 30 points
Exercises 30 points
Participation 10 points

**Exercises:** Throughout the course a significant portion of what we will be covering is applied material. To ensure that students successfully master the material, students will be required to complete a series of six short exercises.

**Disability Policy:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may preclude demonstrating fully his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible. We will discuss the accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate education.

**Plagiarism:** I take plagiarism very seriously and will check your work. By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes. The University’s *minimum penalty* for cheating or plagiarism is a *failure of assignment*. Cheating or plagiarism can lead to expulsion from the university. If you have questions about original work, please consult the Student Handbook Code of Student Conduct section 10.

**Calendar**  The following calendar represents the schedule of readings and topics for the course. The reading assignments are located under the date and topic. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule. The following abbreviations will be used to denote the two textbooks. Pollock= *The Essentials of Political Analysis* and STATA= *A STATA Companion to Political Analysis*.

**Course Schedule**

**January 17: Introduction**

- Syllabus
Section I: Introduction to the Research Process

January 19: Planning a Class Research Enterprise

- 2010 Class Survey

January 24: Examples of Political Science Studies

- No Readings

January 26: General Theory of Science

- Pollock Introduction

January 31: Research Questions and Concepts

- Pollock pp. 6-12.

February 2: Hypotheses

- Pollock pp. 48-58.
Section II: Data Analysis

February 7 and 9: Operationalization of Concepts

- Pollock pp. 12-27.
- STATA Chapter One.

February 14: Levels of Measurement

- Pollock pp. 28-32.
- STATA Chapter Three.
- Take Home Test Number 1 due (14th)

February 16: Graphical Presentation

- Pollock pp. 63-77.

February 21 and 23: Descriptive Statistics

- Pollock pp. 32-47.
- STATA Chapter 2.
February 28 and March 1: Inferential Statistics and Hypothesis Testing

- Pollock Chapter 6 and pp. 155-162.
- STATA Chapter Six.

March 6: Review

- Study Guide One.

March 8: Exam 2

- Exam 2

March 13 and 15: Spring Break

- No class

March 20 & 22: Research Design and Control

- Pollock Chapter Four

March 27 and 29: Cross Tabulations

April 3: Instructor Out of Town

- No class

April 5: Easter Break

- No class

April 10 and 12: Difference of Means & ANOVA

- Pollock pp. 61-63, 157-164, & 113-121.

- STATA pp. 61-62 & 100-103.

April 17, 19, and 24: Regression and Correlational Analysis

- Pollock Chapter Eight.

- STATA Chapters Eight & Nine.

April 26 & May 1: Logistic Analysis

- Pollock Chapter 9.
• STATA Chapter 10.

May 3: Review

• Pollock Chapter Ten.

• Study Guide II

May 10 (Thursday): 8:00-10:00 a.m.

• Final Exam