University of West Georgia  
Spring 2018  
Political Science Methods  
POLS 2601 – 01  
Meets: TR 11:00 am–12:15 pm in Library Main Floor Classroom

FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. J. Salvador Peralta
Office: Pafford 323  
Office Hours: Mon-Thu 1-3pm  
Office Phone: 678-839-4993  
Email: jperalta@westga.edu

Craig Schroer
Office: Library Admin Suite (2nd fl)  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Office Phone: 678-839-6355  
Email: craig@westga.edu

Anne Barnhart
Office: Library IS Suite (3rd fl)  
Office Hrs: T 2-4:30, Lib Info Desk  
Office Phone: 678-839-6364  
Email: barnhart@westga.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students are introduced to various quantitative and qualitative research methods used in the social sciences, especially Political Science. They learn how to find, evaluate, and ethically use appropriate information to conduct political science research. They construct research questions and write research papers using case studies, comparative methods, and statistics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed to conduct research by developing a clear and appropriately narrow research focus that is in accordance with the requirements of the assignments.
- Students will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.
- Students will create and carry out a formal research design that is: consistent with generally recognized standards in political science, and effectively integrate specific information from the materials they have located.
- Students will cite sources correctly using the APSA format.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: Common Language for Course Syllabi

https://www.westga.edu/UWGSyllabusPolicies/

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Texts
The following books are available for purchase at the UWG Bookstore:
- Other required readings will be available online through the library’s databases (JSTOR, etc.), or the course website in CourseDen.

Exams
There will be no exams for this class, but there will be other assessments.

Attendance
You cannot participate, contribute, and learn if you are not in class. Therefore, attendance is a requirement of this course. Students are allowed 4 absences. **Students who miss more than 4 lectures will incur a penalty worth 10% of their Final Grade.** Please be aware that I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

**Participation**
The structure of weekly class sessions will include a mixture of lectures, discussions, individual and small group activities, and library research labs. So please come to class prepared and ready to participate in whatever activities are planned for the session. Participation entails attending class, joining in-class debates, being prepared with questions and comments about the readings, and completing in-class activities.

**Research Project**
You are required to develop a research project for this course, and it will be **worth 60% of the Final Grade.** To ease anxiety over completion of this requirement, it is divided into 5 steps: (1) Research Question Proposal, (2) Annotated Bibliography; (3) Literature Review; (4) First draft; and (5) Final Draft with all components integrated and organized coherently into a whole. That is, you will ask a relevant question; summarize, evaluate, and synthesize the scholarly literature on that question; define concepts and how they are to be measured; discuss and justify your case selection; discuss data or evidence needed and how to gather it; and justify the most appropriate methodology to analyze the evidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Page Count</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>% Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 1. Grade Calculation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>See schedule</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st half of class (before Spring Break)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon., Feb. 13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Draft</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon., Feb. 20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon., Feb. 27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation 1 &amp; Script</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wed., Mar. 06</td>
<td>8 (4 each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd half of class (after Spring Break)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon., Apr. 10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Draft 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mon., Apr. 17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wed., Apr. 26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wed., Apr. 26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation 2 &amp; Script</td>
<td></td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>10 (5 each)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that **NO curves** or adjustment of scores will be made. Extra credit will be awarded for attendance to special events such as lectures, films, or extra writing assignments. Additional information about the assignments will be discussed as the semester progresses.

**CLASSROOM POLICIES**
1. Please arrive on time.
2. Please turn off all electronic devices (cell phone, iPods, etc.) prior to entering class.
3. Please do not text or work on material for other courses during class.
4. Since we will deal with controversial issues, and since it is vital to the success of this class to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect, personal attacks will not be tolerated.
COMMUNICATION

Email
All e-mail communication will proceed through official UWG channels (i.e. CourseDen, official UWG Gmail accounts). I prefer that you contact me directly at: jperalta@westga.edu

Discussion board
There is a discussion board called “Ask the Instructor a General Question.” Please ask general information or assignment questions there so that everyone may see the answers. If you need to contact me on a different matter, please contact me through the e-mail tab of the course website. For this class to work effectively, and for you to remain informed of course developments and latest updates, please login to the course website approximately every 48 hours.

Response Time and Netiquette
We will adhere to the following protocols: (1) If you ask me direct questions in CourseDen via e-mail or the discussion areas, I will generally reply within two working days or 24-48 hours (weekend and holidays are not working days).

(2) Communicating in an online environment takes special consideration and care, so please abide by basic Internet etiquette or netiquette when communicating online. For example, e-mails must be properly addressed and use appropriate language, tone, and grammar; avoid using acronyms (text message abbreviations); please do not shout (i.e. write using ALL CAPS or large fonts); and keep in mind that your posts are public and cannot be retracted or deleted.

DISCLAIMERS
No student can claim any rights based upon any omission, ambiguity, vagueness, or incompleteness contained in this syllabus. The instructor retains the right to amend this syllabus without prior notice.

Fair Use:
All “Website” content and “Course Materials” for this course are intended for the sole use of the enrolled members only; for the purposes associated with it; and may not be retained, altered, shared, or further disseminated without explicit authorization from the copyright holder.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:

Module 1 – Introduction
The central objective of this module is to introduce students to the class and each other, and to begin exploring the historical and intellectual roots of the Political Science discipline. More detailed information about daily in-class activities are outlined in CourseDen under Discussions, and we will discuss them as the semester progresses.

Recommended Readings:
Weber, Max. “Politics as a Vocation.”

Jan. 08 – 12: Introduction to the class and each other.
In-class exercise
Module 2 – Reading and Rhetoric Workshop
- Student will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.

Jan. 15 – 19:
In-class exercise

Jan. 22 – 26:
In-class exercise

Module 3 – Research Design 1
- Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed to conduct research by developing a clear and appropriately narrow research focus that is in accordance with the requirements of the assignments.
- Student will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.
- Student will cite sources correctly using the APSA format.


Jan. 29 – Feb. 02:
In-class exercise

Feb. 05 – 09:
In-class exercise

Feb. 12 – 16:
In-class exercise

Annotated Bibliography 1 due Tuesday, 13 February 2018

Feb. 19 – 23:
In-class exercise

Literature Review 1 Draft due Tuesday, 20 February 2018

Feb. 26 – Mar. 02:
In-class exercise

Literature Review 1 due Tuesday, 27 February 2018

Mar. 05 – 09:
In-class exercise

Presentation 1 due Tuesday, 06 March 2018

Mar. 12 – 16:
In-class exercise

Mar. 19 – 23: Spring recess (no classes)
Module 4 – Research Design 2

- Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed to conduct research by developing a clear and appropriately narrow research focus that is in accordance with the requirements of the assignments.
- Students will identify, distinguish among, and locate a variety of types of sources relevant to political science research; and will accurately identify the main ideas and arguments in the texts they have selected for use in their research projects, evaluating them for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias, and restate them in their own words.
- Students will create and carry out a formal research design that is: consistent with generally recognized standards in political science, and effectively integrate specific information from the materials they have located.
- Students will cite sources correctly using the APSA format.

Required Reading:

Mar. 26 – 30:
In-class exercise

Apr. 02 – 06:
In-class exercise

Apr. 09 – 13:
**Annotated Bibliography 2 due Tuesday, 11 April 2018**

Apr. 16 – 20:
In-class exercise
**Literature Review 2 Draft due Tuesday, 17 April 2018**

Apr. 23 – 27:
In-class exercise
**Literature Review 2 & Research Design due Thursday, 26 April 2018**

Apr. 30 – May. 08: Final **Exams Week**
**Presentation 2 (& Script) due TBD, 11:00 am-1:00 pm**