

## **POL SCI 500: CAPSTONE COURSE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Bolton B95; MW 9:30 – 10:45a

### **PROFESSOR SARA C. BENESH**

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Office Hours: MW 4-5p, class time when we're not meeting, & by appointment.

### **TEACHING ASSISTANT JENNIFER CLEMENS**

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Office Hours: M 11a-1p & by appointment.

Political Science majors – this is your time to shine! In this course, your Major's capstone, you will learn about Political Science as a discipline by considering what types of questions political scientists ask, how they ask and answer those questions, and why, as well as produce your own major piece of political science research. Using all you've learned over your career in Political Science, you will: fashion a reasonable research question (with help from the Professor and TA!); identify and assemble sources (articles, books) that speak to that question; critically analyze those sources, showing why your research is new/different/better, making clear your contribution to the literature; put forward testable hypotheses; find a way to reasonably test those hypotheses via quantitative (data) methods; write up your results in a coherent, well-written, careful and systematic fashion resulting in 20-30 pages of prose and tables/figures; and present that research in poster panel presentations at the end of the semester. You will also critique your colleagues' research in that forum. Sound like a major undertaking? It is! But the design of the course will take you step-by-step through the process, providing feedback at frequent intervals, helping you produce a better paper, and ensuring that you do not procrastinate. We will not meet every week, but there are deadlines throughout the course to keep you on track. We'll start the course discussing **political science research**, looking to your own faculty's research as an example of the kinds of questions political scientists ask and the various approaches they take to answer them. We'll review some **basic methods concepts** via the Pollock text, to help guide you to a reasonable research question, and practice doing the kinds of analyses you'll need to do in your final paper. We'll consider how to best write a **literature review** and how to find sources so that you can situate your question in the political science literature. And we'll discuss methodology and **ways of testing hypotheses** as well as data sources to get you to the testing stage. We'll talk about **writing a paper** as well, as the best ideas are lost if not communicated through clear and concise writing. I know you're excited to begin, but first, some general information.

### **PREREQUISITE**

Note well that this section of POL SCI 500 has a prerequisite: You must have successfully completed either POL SCI 390 or POL SCI 203. Without those courses, you simply will not have the background knowledge necessary to be successful here. Hence, if you have not successfully completed those courses, you should drop this course and sign up for one of those, taking your capstone next year.

## REQUIRED TEXT

Pollock III, Philip H. 2012. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Los Angeles: Sage CQ Press.

## D2L

There is a companion website to the course on UWM's D2L server. You are a senior, so I assume you can access this website, which we'll use to disseminate assigned readings, discuss issues, exchange assignments and comments, keep in touch during the period during which class does not meet regularly, and to supplement what we'll do in class. You may direct all questions regarding the performance of D2L to the University Help Desk (229-4040). I expect you to check the D2L course site often for announcements and other materials, and to be sure to check your UWM email as well. Given that we won't be in class after the first six weeks, we need to stay in touch!

## PROFESSIONALISM

You will be expected to behave professionally in this class. That is to say, you will be expected to arrive on time and to attend all meetings. You will be prepared for each class and actively participate in discussion. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including, but not limited to, reading newspapers, conversing during lectures, insulting classmates or the instructor, leaving early, or eating breakfast. I also will not tolerate students who do not put forth every effort. **Late work will not be accepted for credit** (unless there is a major and substantiated complication which prevents completion of which I am aware **immediately and prior to** the due date, and the determination about whether or it is "major and substantiated" will be made solely at the discretion of the instructor.) I know all the excuses, so please do not test me. Do note that **full documentation** of illness or death in the family is necessary for excused absences and extensions. To repeat, I require notification **BEFORE the missed assignment/exam unless that is impossible due to documented emergency**. Sincerely-held religious beliefs are exempt from the documentation policy, though I still require advance notification of absence/conflict with a religious observance. Finally, you **MUST COMPLETE ALL WORK IN THIS COURSE** to receive a passing grade. In other words, even if you fail to turn in one of the many assignments on time, you still must complete it or you will not pass the course even though it is mathematically possible to do so. The reason for this policy is that all of the assignments are fashioned for two reasons: to give you the skills you need to do the paper, and to provide you with deadlines for portions of the paper so that you can get valuable feedback on those portions as well as remain on track to successfully complete the Capstone.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated in this class. **Anyone found guilty of cheating or plagiarism or of any other violation of academic integrity will be assigned an automatic grade of F IN THE COURSE and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent through University channels.** Notes on plagiarism can be found here <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtm> and here <http://www.uwm.edu/Libraries/guides/style/plagiarism.html>. UWM's policy can be found here: [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm). **Be sure you know the definition and know how to avoid it.** In fact, be sure that you do understand how to avoid plagiarism, your first course assignment is to take and pass the plagiarism quiz at <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html> (linked on D2L). The D2L

course site will not fully open to you until you've submitted a screenshot of your successful quiz completion. As you may have already noticed, **I am absolutely serious about this policy.** It is indeed plagiarism to use another person's ideas as if they were your own, without citation, even if you are not directly quoting their words. It is plagiarism to use sources or quotes used by one scholar in making his or her points without giving that scholar credit for telling you to look at that particular source for that quote or that argument. We will notice the plagiarism and you will fail the course. Consider this your **ONLY** warning.

### **WORK LOAD**

This is a three-credit course, and as such you should average about nine hours of work per week to achieve the learning goals of this course. Obviously, you will work more in some weeks than in others, but you should average about nine work hours per week.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Any students with special needs due to a physical or learning disability should see me as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs.

### **OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

Other University guidelines (including policies on sexual harassment, grade appeals, incompletes, and military call-ups) can be found here: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf>.

### **GRADING SCALE**

I use the following standard scale for grading, and reserve the right to curve grades should the need present itself. Grades will be kept on D2L so you can ascertain where you stand at any point in the semester.

100 – 93	A
92 – 90	A-
89 – 88	B+
87 – 83	B
82 – 80	B-
79 – 78	C+
77 – 73	C
72 – 70	C-
69 – 68	D+
67 – 63	D
62 – 60	D-
59 – 0	F

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All that said, your requirements for the course include the following. Do note that extensive handouts will be provided for each course requirement. Date given is the due date – assignment must be uploaded to the appropriate folder on D2L by 11:59pm THAT EVENING.

Requirement	Worth	Date Due
Homework Exercises from Pollock	5%	Various – see detailed topic listing. Eight total.
Data Exercises available on D2L	5%	Various – see detailed topic listing. Four total.
<b>Paper Proposal</b>	5%	Wednesday, Feb 5th
Revision to proposal with <b>Annotated Bibliography</b>	5%	Wednesday, Feb 19th
Reaction Paper & Presentation: UWM Faculty Research	5%	Each student reviews and discusses <b>one</b> Professor's work and relates it to course topics <b>Choose ONE:</b> March 3, 5, or 10
Draft of <b>Literature Review</b> and Revised Annotated Bibliography	5%	Monday, March 10th
Draft of <b>Hypotheses, Data Description, and Methodology;</b> Revision of Literature Review; Final Bibliography	5%	Wednesday, March 26th
<b>Poster Draft</b>	5%	Wednesday, April 9th
<b>Full Draft of Paper</b>	10%	Monday, April 14th
Poster <b>Presentation</b>	10%	April 28, 30 or May 5th as assigned
Poster <b>Discussion</b>	5%	April 28, 30 or May 5th as assigned
<b>Final Paper</b>	30%	Wednesday, May 14, <b>10a – Noon</b> (during exam time)
Attendance & Participation	5%	Measured in class and on D2L

## TOPICS, READINGS, DATES

Wednesday, Jan 22	Welcome to the Class; Go over Syllabus; Choose UWM Faculty member for research discussion
Monday, Jan 27	What is Political Science? (D2L CONTENT) Asking good Political Science questions (D2L CONTENT) Read abstracts of UWM Professor's research (D2L CONTENT)
Wednesday, Jan 29	Getting started on research, Pollock Intro & Ch 1 <b>HW 1:</b> Exercise 1 (p 23) and Exercise 5 (p 24) CONCEPTS/MEASUREMENT
Monday, Feb 3	Pollock Ch 2 <b>HW 2:</b> Exercise 2 (p 45) and Exercise 3 (p 45) MEASURING/DESCRIBING
Wednesday, Feb 5	Pollock Ch 3 Writing a Literature Review (D2L CONTENT) <b>HW 3:</b> Exercise 1 (p 71) and Exercise 4 (p72-3) HYPOTHESES/EXPLANATIONS <b>PAPER PROPOSAL DUE</b>
Monday, Feb 10	Pollock Ch 4 <b>HW 4:</b> Exercise 2 (p 97) and Exercise 3 (p 98) CONTROL/SPURIOUS RELATIONSHIPS <i>Paper Proposal Returned with Comments</i>
Wednesday, Feb 12	Pollock Ch 5 <b>HW 5:</b> Exercise 1 (p118 – 119), Sections A and B CONTROL <b>D1:</b> Data Exercise 1 (D2L) COLLECTING DATA
Monday, Feb 17	Pollock Ch 6 <b>HW 6:</b> Exercise 1 (p 152) SAMPLING <i>Discussion of Data Sources</i>
Wednesday, Feb 19	Pollock Ch 7 <b>D2:</b> Data Exercise 2 (D2L) ASSOCIATION/SIGNIFICANCE/CONTROL <b>ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE</b>
Monday, Feb 24	Pollock Ch 8 <b>HW 7:</b> Exercises 4, 5 and 6 (pp 208-9) <b>D3:</b> Data Exercise 3 (D2L) REGRESSION
Wednesday, Feb 26	Pollock Ch 9 <b>HW 8:</b> Exercises 1 and 2 (pp 235 – 236) <b>D4:</b> Data Exercise 4 (D2L) LOGIT <i>Annotated Bib Returned with Comments</i>

- Monday, March 3 UWM Faculty Discussion #1 AMERICAN POLITICS  
Benesh, Kaheny, Holbrook, Dolan, Shah  
**Choose: Review Paper Due**
- Wednesday, March 5 UWM Faculty Discussion #2 COMPARATIVE POLITICS  
Armstrong, Reuter, Sugiyama  
**Choose: Review Paper Due**
- Monday, March 10 UWM Faculty Discussion #3 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
Heo, Redd, Horowitz  
**Choose: Review Paper Due**
- Last regular class meeting – Notice the **lab dates** in green on the schedule below!  
Meet Prof Benesh and TA Jennifer in office hours or during class time!*
- DRAFT OF LIT REVIEW DUE**
- Wednesday, March 12 **No Class, but Prof & TA in Computer Lab (LAPHAM 271)** during class time  
Work on Hypotheses, Data, Methodology; Start Analysis
- Monday, March 17 **SPRING BREAK**
- Wednesday, March 19 **SPRING BREAK**
- Monday, March 24 **No Class** – Work on Hypotheses, Data, Methodology; Analysis  
*Lit Review Returned with Comments*
- Wednesday, March 26 **No Class – DRAFT OF HYPOTHESES, DATA DESCRIPTION, METHODOLOGY DUE** – Work  
on Lit Review Revision, Analysis
- Monday, March 31 **No Class** – Work on Lit Review Revision, Analysis  
*Hypotheses/Data/Method Returned with Comments*
- Wednesday, April 2 **No Class, but Prof & TA in Computer Lab (LAPHAM 271)** during class time – Work on  
Analysis, Poster
- Monday, April 7 **No Class** – Work on Revisions and Analysis, Start Poster
- Wednesday, April 9 **No Class – POSTER DRAFT DUE**  
Work on WRITING  
*Discussants Assigned and Schedule for Posters Released*
- Monday, April 14 **No Class** – Work on final draft of paper: finalize analyses, revise discussion of results,  
write conclusion/directions for future research

- Wednesday, April 16 **No Class, but Prof & TA in Computer Lab (LAPHAM 271)** during class time – Work on paper revisions  
*Comments on Poster Draft Given*
- Monday, April 21 **No Class** – Revise Poster and prepare presentation; Get poster printed (see <https://www4.uwm.edu/universityrelations/printandcopy/forstudents.cfm>); Final touches on paper  
**FULL DRAFT DUE (UPLOAD TO D2L & EMAIL TO DISCUSSANTS)**
- Wednesday, April 23 **No Class** – Work on Discussant Comments, Revise Poster, Prepare for Presentation
- Monday, April 28 **POSTER PRESENTATIONS PANEL 1**  
Location: TBD  
**Discussant Comments for Panel 1 Papers Due**
- Wednesday, April 30 **POSTER PRESENTATIONS PANEL 2**  
Location: TBD  
**Discussant Comments for Panel 2 Papers Due**
- Monday, May 5 **POSTER PRESENTATIONS PANEL 3**  
Location: TBD  
**Discussant Comments for Panel 3 Papers Due**  
*Full Drafts Returned with Comments*
- Wednesday, May 7 **No Class** – Work in Discussant Comments, Professor/TA Comments, Audience Comments; Revise entire paper  
**Finish and submit any missing work for chance to pass the course!**
- Wednesday, May 14 **FINAL PAPER DUE DURING FINAL EXAM PERIOD, 10 – Noon**

Department/School: Political Science. General Education and other Course Attributes: International Dimension, Social & Behavioral Sciences. POLS 2213 Fundamentals of Political Science. Description: This course provides an overview of Political Science as a field of study, and it provides students with basic research literacy and other skills essential to success as a Political Science major. Credit hours: 3. Contact hours: Lecture: 3 Contact: 3. POL: Political Science. POL 501: Introductory Statistics. This course acquaints student with statistics.Â This course will cover a variety of research methods that can be used to study attitudes and opinions: Experimental methods (in laboratory and field settings), quasi-experimental designs, surveys and questionnaires, and methods for studying various psychological characteristics of attitudes such as reaction time and lexical decision tasks. Prerequisites: one pol sci course. Course Rules: Research methods course. Last Taught: Fall 2020, Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Fall 2017.Â Historical background. Communism and its reform: leadership and political change; economic policy; corruption; human rights; population; environment; Tibet and Xinjiang; foreign policy. Prerequisites: jr st or one pol sci course. Course Rules: Comparative politics course. Last Taught: Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2018.