POLI 300
Political Inquiry and Analysis
Fall 2023
Tuesday, Thursday 9:30-10:45
CAC 237

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This course is a broad introduction to some of the primary methods of research in political science and public policy. The course is designed to develop your critical thinking/reading, research, and communication skills, as well as provide introductory skills in political and policy analysis. Unlike other political science courses, this is primarily a skills-building course rather than a course in which you gain substantive knowledge of specific areas of politics and policy. That is, this course requires you to focus on *how* to think about problems and issues of political and social phenomena from a political science perspective and how to use political science methodologies to define appropriate research strategies to address those problems.

We will learn about various qualitative and quantitative approaches to political science and public policy. The course assumes that you have some very basic math and computer skills, but this is not a statistics course.

Finally, the course also covers types of communication in political science and public policy. We will spend time at the start of the course focusing on public policy writing skills, and then apply those skills to public policy and political issues.

Learning outcomes associated with this course:

Students will learn:
- how to define, frame, and research basic questions in political science and public policy;
- specific methodologies for researching political science and policy questions;
- distinctions and differences between *correlation* and *causation*, and the specific methods and reasoning associated with each;
- different approaches to collecting and analyzing data pursuant to political science methodologies; and
- how to appropriately and professionally communicate their results.

Required Readings

Text Rental: Political Science Research Methods, 9th ed, by Janet Buttolph Johnson, et al.
Purchase: The CQ Press Writing Guide for Public Policy, by Andrew Pennock

Other required readings are in CANVAS.

All readings listed in the syllabus are **required**. Students are expected to do the readings prior to class.

Grading

Participation	10%	Short Paper #2	20%
LinkedIn Learning Modules	20%	Paper #3	30%
Short Paper #1	20%		

Grade distribution:

A	94-100%	A-	90-93%		
B+	87-89%	B	84-86%	B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%	C	74-76%	C-	70-73%
D+	66-69%	D	60-65%	F	<60%

Participation: Your participation grade is based on your active and consistent participation in class discussions.

LinkedIn Learning Modules/Courses: You will complete FOUR LinkedIn Learning Courses as part of this POLI 300. For each course you will receive from LinkedIn Learning a certificate of completion that you will upload to Canvas. You should keep a copy for your own records. Uploading a completion certificate for each course is Pass/Fail. If you upload the certificate you'll receive a P (100 points), otherwise the you'll receive an F (0 points).

The LinkedIn Learning courses are FREE to you as a UWSP student. You'll log into LinkedIn Learning website through the UWSP website: https://www.uwsp.edu/Pages/logins.aspx The specific course links are listed in Canvas and you can access them there.

Why use LinkedIn Learning? First, as your post-UWSP career progresses you will participate in more and more online learning. Getting experience with LinkedIn Learning now will give you vital experience later on in your career. Second, and perhaps more importantly, each LinkedIn course gives you a certificate of completion that you can list on your resume. Potential employers will find that valuable. Third, the LinkedIn courses give you valuable skills that support the objectives of POLI 300.

LinkedIn Learning course deadlines are listed below.

September

5   Introduction to the course

7   What kind of thinker are you? Lecture on Hedgehogs, Foxes, and Thinking about Politics

Section I: Writing about Public Policy and Political Science

Start reading Chapter 1 in the CQ Press Writing Guide

September 12,14, 19, 21

Reading from the <u>CQ Press Writing Guide for Public Policy</u>

This section of the course is an intensive introduction to public policy writing. After this section students should have a basic understanding of some of the mechanics and styles of public policy writing.

For this section we will cover the following chapters from <u>CQ Press Writing Guide for Public Policy</u>: Chapter 1: Audiences and Audience Centered Writing in Public Policy; Chapter 2: Generating and Organizing your Argument; Chapter 3: Improving Your Writing: Sentences and Words; Chapter 4: Writing Well: Paragraphs and Sections; Chapter 7: Putting It All Together-Creating Professional Quality Work; Chapter 8: The Issue Brief; Chapter 11 The Op Ed; Chapter 13: Nontraditional Formats

Political Science Research Methods

September 26,28   Chapter 2 Empirical Approaches

October

October 3,5   Chapter 3 Beginning the Research Process, pages 49-57
    Chapter 4 The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research:
    Hypotheses, Concepts, Variables, and Measurement

October 10   Finish Chapter 4; Chapter 6: Research Design

NO CLASS OCTOBER 12   **Work on LinkedIn Learning Assignments**

October 17   Chapter 6: Research Design

October 19, 24,26, 31   Chapter 9: Quantitative Research Design
    Chapter 10: Quantitative Methods

    Review of UW System Free Speech Survey

November

November 2   Chapter 11: Making Sense of Data

November 7,9   Chapter 11: Making Sense of Data
    Chapter 12: Testing Relationships

November 14,16   Chapter 12: Testing Relationships; Chapter 13: Categorical Data

November 21   Chapter 13: Categorical Data

November 23   **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

December

December 5,7, 12, 14   Chapter 13: Categorical Data

Qualitative Approaches
Chapter 7: Case Studies
Chapter 8: Chapter 8: Empirical Observations: Qualitative Analysis

ASSIGNMENTS

LinkedIn Learning Modules/Courses

You will complete the LinkedIn Learning courses listed below. Each course requires you to watch several short videos and then take a short quiz. The videos and quiz are administered by LinkedIn Leaning. You will receive a certificate of completion for each course. You must upload your certificate to the Canvas assignment dropbox in POLI 300. There will be an assignment page for each of the LinkedIn courses.

YOU MUST UPLOAD THE LINKEDIN COURSE CERTIFICATE AS A PDF. SCREENSHOTS OF YOUR COMPLETED CERTIFICATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY CANVAS; ONLY PDF FILES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

The specific LinkedIn Learning courses are listed as assignments in Canvas and there is a link to each course on each assignment page. You'll need to log-in to LinkedIn Learning, and you may need to set up a LinkedIn account if you haven't done so already.

<u>**Once you have completed the course DOWNLOAD your certificate and save it. Then upload it to Canvas. The certificate should be available whenever you log into LinkedIn as well.**</u>

The Data Science of Government and Political Science; 62 minutes
By: Barton Poulson
DEADLINE: September 30; certificate uploaded to Canvas
Everyday Statistics 1: The Basics; 33 minutes
By: Eddie Davlia
DEADLINE: October 20; certificate uploaded to Canvas
Everyday Statistics 3: Using Data Sets; 100 minutes
By: Eddie Davila
DEADLINE: October 20; certificate uploaded to Canvas
Research and Writing Using Generative AI Tools; 75 minutes
By: David Birss
DEADLINE: November 10; certificate uploaded to Canvas

Writing Assignments

Paper Assignment #1: Op-Ed

Due Date: Paper due in Canvas October 1, 11:59pm.
Word count: 700-800 words, firm. This assignment is an Op-Ed in which you advocate for a topic and issue that you are interested in.
For Assignment #1, you will:

-identify your topic and issue
-follow the Op-Ed guidelines in The CQ Press Writing Guide for Public Policy
-ensure that you op-ed uses data and statistics appropriately to support your opinion and advocacy
-at the end of your op-ed you must provide at least 5 sources to support your claims (NOTE that major newspapers will often require *up to* 25 sources before they'll consider your piece)

Paper Assignment #2: Review and Analysis of Research

Due Date: November 19, 11:59pm
Word Count: Approximately 1200 words, exclusive of AI response.
For this paper, you will do the following:
-identify, define a research question based on methodologies and approaches covered in the book;
-identify and read 5 *scholarly articles* that are relevant for your research question;
-use the skills learned from the LinkedIn Learning course on Artificial Intelligence to answer your question;
-limit your AI search to 750 words;
-provide the text of the AI search verbatim, THEN provide your own analysis in a separate section of the same document;
your own analysis is a minimum of 750 words.

NOTE: you are NOT answering your research question on your own; that comes with paper #3. You are using Generative AI to answer your research question. You then provide your own analysis of the AI answer.

Follow this outline explicitly:

A. Research Question (approx. 100-200 words)
   a. Concisely state your research question and why you find it of interest
B. Brief Literature Review (approx.. 100-200 words)
   a. Briefly discuss you 5 scholarly sources
C. AI search term(s)
   a. List your AI search term(s), and briefly describe why you chose them
D. AI response (750 words generated by AI)
   a. Cut/past the AI response into this section of your paper
E. Your independent analysis of the AI response (750 words minimum)
F. Bibliography of your 5 (or more) sources; use correct citation. DO NOT cut/past links

a. Correct Citation: choose a format that you are familiar with, such as MLA, Chicago Manual of Style, etc.

Be aware that the research question that you investigate using AI must also be used for the final paper. For that paper you will try to answer your research question using the online analysis functions of either the American National Election Survey or the General Social Survey. For the final paper you must take your research question and use quantitative methods of analysis to try to answer it. THEREFORE, your research question for paper #2 must be a question that can be answer using quantitative data from ANES or GSS. Keep that in mind.

<p style="text-align:center">Paper Assignment #3</p>

Due Date: Final paper due on Monday December 18 11:59pm
Word Count: At least 2000 words.

In this assignment you will complete a short data analysis project. You will take your research question from paper #2 and try to answer using the online data analysis functions of either the American National Election Survey OR the General Social Survey. NO OTHER DATA SOURCES WILL BE ACCEPTED, SO YOU MUST USE ONE OF THE TWO ONLINE SOURCES.

In your paper:
   -state your research question;
   -explain and justify your choice of data set and variables;
   -provide a brief discussion of variables and measurements;
   -state the statistical test or measurement used, and justification;
   -show your results, and provide a discussion and analysis of the results.

You must include at least 3 or more appropriate graphs, tables, etc, that illustrate the data used in your research. Graphs, tables, etc must be embedded in your paper, and must look professional. Do NOT use screen shots from your phone.

Finally, there are several examples of A level final papers posted in Canvas. You should review some of them as a guide to what your final paper/project should look like.