Course Objective:

Why do some people decide to run for political office? How do negative campaign ads affect voter turnout? Why are church-goers also more likely to participate in politics? How do race and gender affect political decisions? Why do Supreme Court justices decide cases as they do? Why do people commit acts of genocide? Why do nations go to war with one another?

The objective of this course is to show you how political scientists come up with and find the answers to such questions. This course will introduce you to the purpose and methods of political science research. We will explore how one goes about developing a good research question, creating and testing hypotheses, and selecting a research design. We will grapple with such issues as: What determines the intrinsic and extrinsic value of a research question? What normative and ethical considerations must be considered in developing a research topic? How does one operationalize the concepts of interest? How does one interpret one’s findings? In doing so, throughout the course you will be exposed to a variety of political science research methods including participant observation, experiments, content analysis, elite interviewing, and statistical analysis. We will read a number of different examples of good research in political science and examine how different methods of analysis help us to answer our research questions most effectively.

Required Readings: The following book is required and available for purchase in the bookstore.


Students are also expected to read The New York Times daily and to bring to class examples of political science scholarship and researchers being cited in the press.

In addition, a number of required readings will be made available on Moodle.

Course Expectations: You are expected to do all of the required reading and assignments and to come to every class session. In addition, you are expected to participate actively in the class discussion. You will not do well in this class without consistent attendance, participation and the lecture information. Students who miss more than 3 classes unexcused will be docked one letter grade increment from their FINAL grade (from a B+ to a B, for example) for every day missed after the third. Students will be responsible for material covered in class. Therefore, if you must miss a class, it is very important that you get the notes from another student in the class (not from me). Students are also responsible for any changes in the syllabus announced in class.

There are several major assignments for this course. You are expected to complete each assignment on time. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated in the syllabus. Late assignments will be graded down one letter grade increment (e.g., from a B+ to a B) for each day they are late. Any assignment handed in at the end of class on the scheduled date will be considered one day late. Exceptions will be made only in the case of illness or other University-excused absence. Students
who must miss a class for a University-scheduled event must make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time or have another student turn in the assignment at the scheduled time.

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. **Research Paper** (40% of grade): The research process is typically lengthy and involves a number of different steps. In order to bring to life the concepts and methods we are using in this course, you will be expected to engage in significant scholarly research. In order to facilitate this research and guide you in the process, you are to explore a research question using one of the following datasets:
   a. Pew Data on the Millenial Generation
   b. General Pew Data on public opinion January 2014
   c. World Values Survey Data 2010-2014

   After studying these datasets, you are then to formulate a research question that you can answer with this data. To fully meet the requirements for this project, you are required to complete the following steps:

   1) **Choose a topic, research question and tentative hypotheses.** What is your research question? Why is it interesting or important? What do you hypothesize that you will find? What data will you use to answer your research question? Why is the data appropriate? What variables will be using for your analysis? While your paper should include an analysis of the survey data from one of the datasets using SPSS (a statistical analysis program), you might find that supplementing that data analysis with another research method – such as an elite interview, qualitative interviews, content analysis etc. – will allow you to more fully answer your research question. Your research will build on and contribute in a new way to the already existing knowledge on one of these topics. It is important to note here: knowledge is cumulative – your research should be well-grounded in what others have done and established. Your topic choice, research question (including what dataset you will use to answer that question) and tentative hypotheses will be due to me on: **Tuesday, February 3.** This assignment should be approximately 600-750 words long, double-spaced, typed in 12 point font in Times New Roman with page numbers on each page, double-sided, and stapled. (10% of final research project grade).

   2) **Literature Review:** The review should identify important findings and common themes in terms of the approach to the topic in the scholarly research. You will need to find a way to narrow down the research topic into a focus question(s) or themes. You will want to organize your review of the research into relevant categories. In particular, you might want to consider: Have researchers generally approached the topic with the same broad assumptions about what is of interest? To what degree is the research consistent in terms of approach, method, conceptualization of variables? Have researchers come to similar conclusions about the relationships between the variables of interest? What does the literature say about how or why your independent variables affect your dependent variables? To what degree do the research studies differ from or contradict each other? What may be the reason for these contradictions and inconsistencies - different conceptualizations of the variables? The use of different methodologies to answer the questions? Different data? Be sure to consider/discuss any questions the research has failed to answer. Are there gaping holes in the research relevant to this topic? Have researchers failed to consider what you think to be the really important issue or question? What questions need to be addressed by future research? How does YOUR research update or improve on previous work? Be sure to state precisely your specific research question in your literature review. Your literature review will be due on **Thursday, February 17. It should include at least FOUR academic books or journal articles.** All work should be properly cited. For examples of the proper citation method, see articles in the *American Political Science Review* and the description in the “Research Paper Guidelines” posted on Moodle. Your literature review should be approximately
1100-1400 words (including bibliography). It should be double-spaced, typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, with page numbers, stapled, and double-sided. (10% of final research project grade)

3) **Univariate and Bivariate Data Analysis:** Present your univariate and bivariate data analysis. You should describe the levels of measurement for your variables. It should be clear how each of your variables is operationalized. Correctly perform and interpret the univariate and bivariate analyses. Provide table or figures that present your results. Most papers will have between 3 and 6 tables. Be sure to restate your research question. **DO NOT COPY AND PASTE THE TABLES CREATED BY SPSS. CREATE YOUR OWN TABLES THAT CLEARLY LABEL THE VARIABLES BEING USED AND THAT HAVE A TITLE EXPLAINING WHAT IS BEING SHOWN.** This writing assignment should be 600-850 words, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 point font, stapled, double-sided. This will be due on **Tuesday, March 17. (10% of your final research project grade)**

4) **Peer Reviews:** Scholarly research always includes peer reviews. For example, before a research paper is published in a scholarly journal, it is typically reviewed by three anonymous peer reviewers who evaluate the research for its thoroughness and methodological soundness. Your review of your peer’s paper should be turned into both me and your peer. Drafts of your paper (see format in #8 below) should be given to your peer reviewer by **Thursday, March 26.** Edits and comments should be returned to the paper writer and to me no later than **Thursday, April 2.** As a peer reviewer, there are two parts of the assignment. First, you will proofread the paper and provide grammatical corrections on the paper. You can use “track changes” or make your edits on a hard copy of the paper. Second, you will provide a peer review in which you provide substantive feedback. Review the guidelines below and highlight areas for improvement. What questions do you have after reading the paper? What is unclear? What is missing? What about alternative explanations? Also comment on the strengths of the paper. **This peer review should be approximately 700-800 words, double-spaced, with page numbers, Times New Roman 12 point font, stapled and double-sided. (10% of your final research project grade)**

5) **Research paper (50% of your final research project grade):** Students are expected to write a 10-15 page research paper putting together all of the steps above. The research paper should include the following components (label the parts of your paper with headings – with the exception of “Title” and “Introduction” which traditionally are not labeled with headers):

   a. **Title:** A title page – with a title for your paper, your name and the class and the date.
   b. **Abstract:** An abstract (on the first page after the title page) – approximately 150 words summarizing the goals of your paper and what you found. It should include your research question, a description of your analysis and results, and a summary of your conclusions.
   c. **Introduction:** An introduction where you clearly set forth the research question and purpose of the paper. Explain why your question is an important one.
   d. **Literature Review:** It should also include a literature review (this will, of course, be based on what you wrote in the preliminary literature review outlined above).
   e. **Hypotheses:** Clearly state your hypotheses.
   f. **Data and Methods:** There should also be a methods section where you describe the dataset you are using, as well as the variables you examine. How are they measured? Describe the statistical techniques you are using.
   g. **Analysis and Results:** Present your analysis in a clear fashion. Provide the appropriate maps, tables, or figures. Explore alternative explanations. Describe how you reached your conclusions.
Conclusion: You will want to write a conclusion where you review what you found, discuss the limitations of your research, suggest future research needed to be done, and consider the implications of what you have found.

Reference Section and Citations: All papers should include a reference page as well as parenthetical citations within the body of the text whenever information is quoted or paraphrased from another source. More information on proper citations as well as further description of each of these components is posted on Moodle. If you have any questions, you should be sure to talk with me. Incomplete or faulty citations will result in a significant lowering of your final grade for the paper.

6) Presentation (10% of your final research project grade): The final research paper is due on Tuesday, April 14. We will then spend the remaining days of class with student paper presentations. The class presentations will follow the format used at academic conferences. Approximately three students will be assigned to a panel. Each student on the panel will present their findings. Each student will have approximately 10 minutes to present their findings. One person from the class will be assigned to be the chair for the panel. The chair’s responsibility is to introduce the papers and monitor the time used by the presenters. Each paper will also be assigned to another student (your peer reviewer) from the class who will serve as the discussant for that paper (you will need to get the paper to your discussant at least 24 hours before the presentation). The discussant’s role is to discuss briefly the significance of the findings of the paper, ask questions of the presenter and to work with the other discussants to lead class discussion.

II. Quizzes (15% of grade): There will be two short quizzes (and possibly some additional homework problems depending on how the class is understanding the material) given in class assessing what you have learned. The quizzes will include some short answer identifications as well as some problems. The first quiz will be on February 19 and the second quiz will be on April 7.

III. Final (35% of grade): The final exam will cover all of the material covered in the course. It will consist of short answer questions and essays. The final exam will be at its university-scheduled time on Friday, May 1 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.. The date for the exam is not negotiable. Please make your travel arrangements accordingly.

IV. Participation (10% of grade): Participation includes coming to class prepared (having read and completed the assignment) and participating regularly in the class discussion. Your participation grade will start at a C and will go up or down depending on the quality of your participation in class. If you simply attend every class, but do not participate you will get a C for participation. You will not do well in this class without consistent attendance, participation and the lecture information. Students who miss more than 3 classes unexcused will be docked one letter grade increment from their FINAL grade (from a B+ to a B, for example) for every day missed after the third.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<td>Research Paper (all components)</td>
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93-100 = A  77-79 = C+  60-62 = D-
Students who need special accommodations should see me at the beginning of the term and meet with Gina Parris in the Office of Disability Services.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY and FURMAN’S STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

“Integrity gives the educational enterprise its legitimacy. Honesty, respect, and personal responsibility are principles that guide academic life at Furman, in and out of the classroom. Academic misconduct in any form (plagiarism, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, and other efforts to gain an unfair academic advantage) threatens the values of the campus community and will have severe consequences, such as failure in the course, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university.

If you have any question about what constitutes plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, it is your responsibility to consult with me so that you will fully understand what I expect of you in this course. If you have any doubts, ask! You should also be familiar with the Academic Integrity & Plagiarism and Academic Integrity at Furman materials available at www.furman.edu>academics>academic integrity information. Furman’s policy on academic dishonesty can be found at http://furman_notes.furman.edu/p&P.nsf> Standard>Search>121.5.”

Although it is unlikely, students should be aware that this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of any changes. Please note that the dates are approximations. My primary interest is that you learn the material and learn it well. If we decide to spend more or less time on a topic (because you find it easy, difficult or just particularly interesting), so be it. If you are feeling uncertain about where you should be with the reading, just ask me.

Finally, because of the inherent distraction, no laptop computers, phones, IPads, etc. are permitted to be used during class.

Assignment Outline:

January 13: Introduction: So why are we making you take this course?

January 15: Detective Work; NO Class Professor at Southern Political Science Association Conference
Read: Ball “The Feminist and his Father – A True Detective Story” on Moodle (you can access it at http://courses.furman.edu)

January 20: Political Science Research and the Behavioral Revolution
Read: Almond and Genco (on Moodle); M&S Chapter 1 & 2

January 22: Issues in the Study of Political Questions

January 27: The Research Process: Developing a Research Question and Conducting a literature review; Ethics in Social Science Research
Read: M&S, Chapter 12
Meet in Computer Lab: We will explore the datasets for your research paper

   Read: Sullivan et al., “The Sources of Tolerance”;
   **Due February 3: Research Question and Tentative Hypotheses assignment**

February 5: Library Research Instruction
   Complete and come prepared to discuss: Exercise 3 in Chapter 1 of M&S

February 10: Measurement Issues: Reliability and Validity
   Read: Knight “Liberalism and Conservatism”; Biernat and Crandall “Racial Attitudes”

February 12: Survey Research – Guest Lecture, Dr. Jim Guth
   Read: M&S, Chapter 7

February 17: Statistical Research
   Read: M&S, Chapter 6 and “Maximizing Questionnaire Quality”
   And, Sullivan et al, “Ideological Constraint in the Mass Public”
   **Due: Literature Review Assignment**

February 19: **QUIZ 1** and Univariate Data Analysis
   Read: J&R, Chapter 11 (on Moodle)

February 24: Data Analysis: Crosstabs; tentative Lab meeting
   Read: J&R, pp. 428-463 (on Moodle)

February 26 and March 3: Correlations and Linear Regression Analysis; Tentative Lab Meeting
   Read: J&R, pp. 490-526 (on Moodle)

March 5: Lab – data analysis; Secondary Data Analysis: Tentative Guest Lecture, Dr. David Fleming
   Read, M&S, Chapter 8

March 10-12: Spring Break

March 17: Experimentation in Political Science
   Read: M&S, Chapter 10 and Kinder and Palfrey, “An Experimental Political Science?”;
   **Due: Univariate and Bivariate Data Analysis Assignment**

March 19: No class – Presidential Inauguration

March 24: Content Analysis – Guest Lecture, Dr. Danielle Vinson
   Read: M&S, Chapter 9

March 26: Field Research – Guest Lecture, Dr. Kate Kaup
   Read: M&S, Chapter 4
   **Due: Drafts of paper to your peer reviewers**

March 31: Participant Observation

April 2: Peer Meetings
   **Due: Peer Reviews**
April 7: **QUIZ 2** and Elite Interviewing  
Read: M&S, Chapter 5 and “Interview Methods in Political Science” and “Interviewing Political Elites”

April 9: Case Study and the Comparative Method – Guest Lecturer, Dr. Akan Malici  
Read: M&S, Chapter 3

April 14: Furman Engaged! Attend at least one political science research panel, write one paragraph summary and email to me  
**Due April 14: Final Research Paper**

April 16: NO CLASS- Professor at Midwest Political Science Association Conference

April 21: Research Paper Presentations (will use Lab Time)

April 23: Research Paper Presentations

April 28: Research Paper Presentations (will use Lab Time)

May 1: **Final Exam, 12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**