



SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

MADRID CAMPUS

GVT 120 M1 – RESEARCH METHODS

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Dr. Ana Belén Soage

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Course Information:

Catalog Description: Students will learn how to read and analyze political science research. Focus will be on the use of the scientific method for research on politics and government. Students will learn how to effectively access information for research in political science and learn the steps in writing a research paper, including developing the research question, writing a literature review, selecting a research design, and how to properly cite sources. Students will develop an understanding of approaches to researching and measuring political phenomena.

Instructor's Additional Course Description: What is political research and how is it done? How can I engage in political research? This course offers a nuts and bolts approach to the research process, from the identification of intriguing empirical observations of political phenomena to the creation of a question and design of a research method, to the writing of a literature review and a final research proposal. When you complete this course, you will have a better idea of what political scientists do, be better equipped to read, analyze, and evaluate the research of others, and you will become a producer of knowledge yourself. This will be an intense and rigorous course that will rely on active participation in the form of group activities and workshops and learning to learn from mistakes. It should also be fun: you will discover new things, learn new skills, and most importantly, engage your curiosity. Right here is where you will gain the critical foundational skills to become critical, creative thinkers and thoughtful citizens.

Credit Hours: 4

This course follows the US Federal Government's Credit Hour definition: "An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence that reasonably approximates no less than:

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

For full up-to-date statement:

https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/files/downloads/POLICIES/Pp111_Policy_On_Credits-And-Degrees.pdf

To complete this course, students will need to dedicate, at a minimum, the following amount of time to the listed activities:

Assignments/Activities	Engagement Estimate	Engagement Hours
Readings (course & research proposal articles)	Approx. 500 pp. x 5 min./page	40 approx.
Quizzes, worksheets, assignments	15 hours preparation	15
Research topic development	15 hours preparation	15
Midterm	10 hours review	10
Annotated bibliography & literature review	20 Hours preparation	20
Research design	10 Hours preparation	10
Final exam	10 Hours preparation	10
Final presentation & research proposal	15 Hours preparation	15
Class attendance	3 hours x 15 weeks	45
TOTAL		180 HOURS

Textbook/Course Materials:

Required:

- Baglione, Lisa. 2016. [Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods](#), 3rd ed. CQ Press College.
- Online course "Calling Bullshit: Data Reasoning in a Digital World," at <http://callingbullshit.org/index.html>

Additional readings & resources:

- Malici, Akan & Elizabeth Smith (eds.) 2013. *Political Science Research in Practice*, Abingdon/New York: Routledge.

In addition, this course will use a variety of peer-reviewed academic journal articles, reports, on-line data sets, and other multi-media sources. Where possible, PDFs or hyperlinks will be posted to our class site on BlackBoard. Otherwise, students are responsible for accessing on-line versions through the Library's electronic holdings independently. ****The instructor reserves the right to add readings & assignments****

Course Goals & Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will know/understand:	Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:	How the student will be assessed on these learning outcomes:
Understand how to read academic texts in political science	Develop ability to analyze a theory critically Develop logical thinking Make arguments and counterarguments	Regular reading assignments; in-class quizzes
Understand the different logics and strategies of argument and evidence encountered in political science		Regular reading assignments; in-class quizzes
How scientific reasoning operates in the social sciences	Make a hypothesis Develop a research design Create an empirically based research design proposal	Develop hypotheses
Know how to effectively access information for research in political science	Collect relevant information using online databases, libraries, books, and reference materials	Library work; online work
Develop an understanding of the general process of research in political science		
Understand different types of data	Identify the differences between qualitative data and quantitative data; be able to suggest methods of collecting qualitative and quantitative data	Regular reading assignments; in-class quizzes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will know/understand:	Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:	How the student will be assessed on these learning outcomes:
Understand how to ask research questions in political science	Identify researchable questions using data and political science literature	Question assignment
Understand the role of hypotheses in social scientific inquiry	Elaborate theories using hypotheses	Research proposal
Understand how to effectively present political science data	Present data and research to class	Presentations
Understand the purpose of different sections of a research article (e.g. literature review, analysis)	Identify sections of research articles Apply research methods concepts to a topic of student's choosing to practice writing each section	Literature review
Understand what a research proposal is and how it is structured	Apply research methods concepts to a topic of student's choosing to write a research proposal	Research proposal paper
Understand what an annotated bibliography is	Write an annotated bibliography	Annotated bibliography assignment
Understand the American Political Science Association citation format	Use the APSA format in written work	Citation test

Course requirements:

The elements to be considered during the course are the following:

1. *Exams:* Exams are designed to gauge your mastery of key concepts, theories, and ideas. Questions may take various forms including multiple choice, short answer, and discussion questions. There will be two in-class exams: midterm and final. There will be no make-up exams unless the instructor has been notified ahead of time. If a student cannot attend an examination, s/he must inform the instructor as soon as possible, and prior to the day of the exam. If the student has a valid and documented excuse, s/he will be allowed to take the exam at another date, to be determined by the instructor.
2. *Research paper:* Students will be required to write a formal research paper proposal that designs an empirical study in an area that interests them. Topics and case selection, including level of analysis, are open, but must be approved by the instructor. All projects will be workshopped in class throughout the semester, with a portion of most class meetings devoted to ongoing work. All students are expected to participate thoughtfully. The project is designed to require revision & resubmission and students cannot be successful without keeping up with sequential assignments. Students will also prepare formal presentations for a research conference, which is the culmination of the course. The final written proposal will include a title, abstract, research question, project justification, preliminary case selection, anticipated methods, literature review, discussion, and bibliography, and be approximately 10-15 pages in length.

Grading/Evaluation:

Assignments:	40%
Quizzes:	10%
Midterm exam:	20%
Final exam:	20%
Participation:	10%

Grading scale:

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

Course and Classroom Policies:

We shall seek to make this class open, respectful and engaged. Please come prepared to participate in each class session, and help create an environment of respect for all religions, ideologies, ethnic groups and gender identities. Courtesy towards each other is expected. No food or drink (except water) should be brought into class. Cell phones should be turned off. It is expected that students will remain in the classroom throughout the class meeting (except for emergencies).

Please be on time to class; those arriving once teaching has begun will have it counted as half an absence. **The Madrid Campus requires regular attendance. Absences will affect your grade**, and 10% of your final grade will depend on your participation in class. All required assignments are to be submitted on time. In deference to your punctual peers, final papers that are handed in late will be marked down. If a problem arises regarding attending a class session or delivering work on time, please speak to the instructor beforehand. Minor allowances for justified absences can be made if enough advance notice has been given.

Participation/Attendance Policy:

The SUMC Student Handbook states the following:

Once a student is registered for a course, attendance at every meeting of every class is expected, including those held in the first week of the semester. A maximum of two unjustified absences is permitted. Each additional absence will cause the final course grade to be lowered by one-third of a letter grade, i.e., from A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.

Excessive absences in a course will have a negative effect on the final grade. When a student is absent, the quality of his or her work in a course will deteriorate since material missed in class sessions can rarely be made up satisfactorily, even though the student remains responsible for that work.

Please note that even when a student has a justified reason for missing class, such as illness, the negative academic impact on learning will be the same as if the absence were for spurious reasons.

In this course, any absence due to illness should be justified by a note from the student's physician or other health professional confirming the day(s) on which the student was unable to attend class. A written excuse from a student's host parent or residence supervisor is also acceptable.

In the event that a class meeting is unexpectedly cancelled, students will be expected to continue with readings or other assignments as originally scheduled. Any assignments due or class activities (e.g., a quiz, exam or presentation) planned for such a cancelled class are due at the next class meeting unless other instructions are communicated.

Disability Statement:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in my classroom.

If formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at the main Campus in Boston so that I am notified of your eligibility

for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. Check the ODS web site at www.suffolk.edu/disability for information on accommodations.

Student Resources:

SUMC provides a range of student services, both academic and personal. To learn more about course-related tutorials and academic workshops, refer to the SUMC Student Handbook, Section 2 “Academic Policies and Services”. Section 5, “Living in Madrid”, contains information on the medical and mental health resources, including an English-speaking therapist, available to you.

Midterm Review:

At midterm, on week 6, you will be given a midterm grade based on your progress to date and performance on assignments, Quizzes and midterm exam. Midterm grades of C- or below will be reported to the Madrid Campus Academic Standing Committee, with an explanation of what I believe has contributed to that grade: excessive absences, poor time management or study skills, lack of effort, difficulty with the course material or with writing or language skills, etc. The Academic Standing Committee or I may contact you to suggest strategies for addressing these difficulties. I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours so we may discuss how you can be successful in this class.

Academic Misconduct:

www.suffolk.edu/about/mission-history/policies-procedures/academic-misconduct-policy

Suffolk University expects all students to be responsible individuals with high standards of conduct. Students are expected to practice ethical behavior in all learning environments and scenarios, including classrooms and laboratories, internships and practica, and study groups and academic teams. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, use of unauthorized electronic devices, self-plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, and other types of academic misconduct are treated as serious offenses that initiate a formal process of inquiry, one that may lead to disciplinary sanctions.

Student work will be thoroughly examined for academic integrity and may be scanned using plagiarism detection software. A faculty member suspecting academic misconduct will contact the student using the Suffolk email address to schedule a meeting and will make all effort to do so within five business days of detecting the incident. During the meeting, the faculty member will present the documentation that led to suspected academic misconduct. Resolution of the incident will be according to the procedures outlined in the SUMC Student Handbook.

Academic Grievances Policy:

www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-student-cas-sbs/grievances-academics

Course Schedule:

The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.

Week	General Topic of Lesson	Readings and assignments
1	Introduction What is research? What is its value?	Discussion of course requirements. - Baglione, ch. 1. - Edwards, Paul. “How to Read a Book.”
2	Asking Research Questions	- Baglione, ch. 2. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 1. - Blythe, Stuart. “On Asking Productive Research Questions.”
3	Finding, managing & navigating information: The Annotated Bibliography	- Baglione, ch. 3. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 2. - King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. <i>Designing Social Inquiry</i> (ch. 1).

Week	General Topic of Lesson	Readings and assignments
4	The Literature Review Citing & quoting	- Baglione, ch. 4. - Use JSTOR, SSCI, etc. to find articles relevant to your RQ. - Citation software: Zotero (watch YouTube video; install). - Calling Bullshit, ch. 3.
5	Thesis, model, and Hypothesis	- Baglione, ch. 5. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 4. - APSA Style Manual.
6	Review for midterm	- Calling Bullshit, ch. 5.
6	Midterm exam	
7	The Research Design	- "APSA-CP Symposium: Universal vs. Middle-Range Theory" - Baglione, ch. 7. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 6.
8	Analysis & Assessment	- Baglione, ch. 8. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 7.
9	Revising & Editing	- Baglione, ch. 6. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 8.
10	Introduction, Conclusion & Title	- Baglione, ch. 9. - Calling Bullshit, ch. 9.
11	How do we do peer review?	- Calling Bullshit, ch. 10. - Miller, Beth <i>et al.</i> 2013. "How To Be a Peer Reviewer" <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i> 46(01): 120–123.
12	Normative & ethical considerations	TBD - Calling Bullshit, ch. 11.
13	Presentations & Peer review of presentations	- Calling Bullshit, ch. 12. - Final Paper due.
14	Revision for final exam	
15	FINAL EXAM	