Empirical Political Inquiry

Dr. Paul Goren  
Office: Coor Hall 6768  
Phone: 480-727-6241  
Email: paul.goren@asu.edu  
Office Hours: TTh 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

Course meets on TTh from 9:15-10:30 in COOR 174

Course Description: This course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the research process in the discipline of political science. During the term you will learn how political scientists (1) formulate research questions; (2) define concepts; (3) formulate theories about how and why concepts are related; (4) use variables to measure concepts; (5) derive hypotheses about the relationships between variables; (6) collect data; and (7) utilize research methods in order to learn something interesting and useful about the world of government and politics.

Requirements:
Attendance, Preparation, and Participation: Students are expected to complete and understand the readings, attend class on a regular basis, and contribute to classroom discussions.

Exams: There will be four in-class exams based on the readings and class materials. The exams will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The schedule is as follows:

1. 1st exam  
   Thursday, September 22nd
2. 2nd exam  
   Thursday, October 27th
3. 3rd exam  
   Thursday, December 1st
4. 4th exam (final)  
   Thursday, December 8th, 7:40-9:30 AM

Make up Policy: If an emergency prevents you from taking the first, second, or third exam, you must contact me prior to the exam, explain the nature of the emergency, and subsequently present documentation verifying the explanation. If the emergency proves valid you will not be penalized, and your course grade will reflect your performance on the other exams. Invalid excuses will result in a 0 score for the missed exam. Everyone is required to take the final exam.

Grading: Your final course grade will be based on the following exam weights:

1. 1st exam  
   25 %
2. 2nd exam  
   25 %
3. 3rd exam  
   25 %
4. 4th exam (final)  
   25%

Textbooks: The textbooks can be purchased at the campus bookstore or from your favorite internet retailer.

Research Articles: These can be accessed at http://catalog.lib.asu.edu/ as follows: (1) click on Journal Title (2) enter the journal title and click on search (3) click on the links under Connect to and (4) navigate among the various electronic archives until you find the article. If you cannot access an article, contact my teaching assistant, Karen Shafer, at Karen.Shafer@asu.edu and she will send you a pdf copy. You should bring copies of the articles to class and be prepared to answer the article questions listed on the next page of this syllabus.


Cheating: Anyone caught cheating on the exams will be sanctioned in accordance with university policies. The minimum penalty will be a 0 grade on the exam.

Course Schedule:
Part I: The Fundamentals of Political Science Research

- Political science and empirical analysis
- Research questions
- Concepts
- Variables and measurement
- Theories
- Hypotheses

Part II: Data Collection and Research Methods

- Sampling
- Experiments
- Quasi experiments
- Standard surveys
- Survey experiments
- Document analysis
Article questions: When you read each research article and the chapters in the *Culture of Honor* book, you should be prepared to answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. What is the research question? Specifically, what is the basic information the researchers are seeking in their project?

2. What are the key concepts - the phenomena implicitly or explicitly referenced in the research question?

3. What are the key variables? That is, what do the numerical scales that measure the concepts look like?

4. What is the theory - the logical explanation of how and why the concepts are related?

5. What are the hypotheses - the statements predicting a relationship between two or more variables?

6. How is the data collected? That is, how are cases identified and selected to be included in the study?

7. What research method or methods do the researchers use to test their hypotheses?

8. What are the key empirical findings? That is, do the authors present convincing evidence that supports their hypotheses? If not, why not?