

## Empirical Political Inquiry

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Office Hours: TTh 9:00-10:30 and by appointment

Course meets on TTh from 10:40-11:55 in SS 105

**Course Description:** This course provides students with a comprehensive introduction to empirical research in political science. Specifically, the course focuses on research questions, conceptualization and measurement, theory development and testing, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and basic data analysis. By the end of the term you will understand how researchers formulate research questions and use theories, empirical methods, and statistical techniques to generate answers.

### Requirements and Course Weights:

*Attendance, Preparation, and Participation:* Students are expected to complete the weekly readings, attend class, and contribute to classroom discussions. Note that it will be extremely difficult to pass this class if you fail to attend regularly.

*Exams:* There will be three in-class exams based on the assigned readings and the material covered in class. The exams will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The first exam is scheduled for Tuesday February 22, the second for Tuesday April 5, and the third for Tuesday May 3. I will provide study guides for each exam on the preceding Thursday.

*Make up Policy:* There are no make-up exams. If an emergency prevents you from taking either the first or the second 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 is valid, you will not be penalized for missing the exam, and your final course average will be based on your performance on the remaining exams and the paper. If your excuse is invalid, you will receive a 0 for the missed exam. Students may be excused from only one exam. Note finally that all students are required to take the final exam.

*Paper:* You are required to write an 8-10 page paper on the Sears and Cirtrin book (see below) that summarizes their research; describes, assesses, and critiques their research design; and judges the degree to which their empirical evidence supports their arguments. I will provide a detailed set of instructions later in the term. The paper is to be completed without the aid of your classmates. A hard copy of the paper is due in the political science office by noon on Monday May 9 (electronic copies will not be accepted). Late papers will be heavily penalized.

### Assignments, Due Dates, and Grading Weights:

1. First exam	February 22	25 %
2. Second exam	April 5	25 %
3. Third exam	May 3	25 %
4. Paper	May 9	25%

**Textbooks:** Three texts are required for the course. These can be purchased at the campus bookstore.

1. Janet Buttolph Johnson and H.T. Reynolds. 2005. *Political Science Research Methods*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
2. Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen. 1996. *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
3. David O. Sears and Jack Citrin. 1985. *Tax Revolt: Something for Nothing in California*, enlarged ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

**Additional Readings:** You are also expected to read the political science research articles appearing below. These can be accessed directly at [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org). Click on either SEARCH or BROWSE, navigate to the article, and print it. In addition, the articles can be accessed at <http://library.lib.asu.edu/>. Click on Journal Title, enter the title, click on the JSTOR link, click on Search This Journal or Browse This Journal, navigate to the article, and then print it out. Make sure you bring hard copies of these to class.

1. Stephen Ansolabehere, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88:829-838.
2. Rosalee A. Clawson and Rakuya Trice. 2000. "Poverty as We Know It." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64:53-64.
3. Martin Gilens. 1996. "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60:515-41.
4. Paul Goren. 2002. "Character Weakness, Partisan Bias, and Presidential Evaluation." *American Journal of Political Science* 46:627-41.
5. Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77:175-190.

**Cheating:** Anyone caught cheating on the exams or plagiarizing the paper will be sanctioned in accordance with university policies. The minimum penalty will be a 0 grade on the assignment.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### Part I: The Fundamentals of Political Science Research

##### Topics:

- Studying politics scientifically
- Conceptualization and measurement
- Theories and hypotheses
- Case selection and sampling

##### Readings:

- Johnson and Reynolds - Chapters 2, 4-6, 9
- Page and Shapiro article
- Goren article

## Part II: Research Methods

### Topics:

- Experiments
- Surveys
- Content analysis
- Aggregate data analysis

### Readings:

- Johnson and Reynolds - Chapters 3, 8, 10
- Ansolabehere et al. article
- Gilens article
- Clawson and Trice article
- Nisbett and Cohen - entire

## Part III: Political Statistics

### Topics:

- Univariate statistics
- Bivariate statistics
- Inferential statistics

### Readings:

- Johnson and Reynolds - Chapters 11, 12