

Scope & Methods

Spring 2010

PSC 315 002, M 3:00-5:50

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Introduction

The purpose of this course is to give you the tools necessary to design, carry out, and present logical, rigorous research. To achieve this goal, this course covers the scope of political science, critical thinking and reasoning, qualitative and quantitative research methods used in the discipline, and presenting research. By the end of this course, you will be able locate and distinguish reliable resources, evaluate others' research, demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills, synthesize information, and present your ideas in a clear, organized, and substantiated manner. The work in this course is largely self-directed. In order to succeed in this course, you must be very self-disciplined, as a bulk of the work is independent.

Student Learning Outcomes

In taking this course, you will:

- Learn important political science methods and concepts, and apply them to current problems.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how political science applies principles and standards to the study of individuals and/or groups.
- Examine the ethical issues relevant to research and applications in political science.
- Examine the impact of diversity issues within political science.
- Communicate an understanding of the social sciences using formats appropriate to political science.

Readings

Required readings are linked to your course webpage.

Course Schedule

See your course webpage for a regularly-updated course schedule, as well as assignments and their respective due dates.

Course Requirements

Assignment	% of overall grade
One Exam	20%
Assignments	20%
Literature review paper	40%
Presentation using PowerPoint	10%
Class participation	10%

Exam: One course exam will be given as a take-home exam, which must be completed and submitted according to the instructions. The exam will be evaluated based on content, structure, clarity in writing, organization, and compliance with exam instructions.

Assignments: Two types of assignments are made for this course:

Preparation & Application Assignments: The purpose of these assignments is for you to prepare for and apply what you have read and/or learned in class.

Literature Review-Related Assignments: Various assignments supporting the successful completion of your literature review are made throughout the semester.

You have sufficient notice as to when assignments are due. On days these assignments are due, if you are late to class, you will automatically lose points (determined by me based on the total points of the assignment) off of your assignment grade. If you fail to submit an assignment by the end of class, you have until the start of the next class to turn in a paper, with a deduction of 50% off of the assignment grade.

No assignments will be accepted except in class. Any assignments left under my door anytime after the start of class-will not be accepted or counted. If you will miss class, you may send your assignment as an email attachment prior to the start of class, along with your reason for missing class. If I feel it is a sufficient reason, I will accept your assignment without penalty.

Literature Review: A literature review is an extensive compilation, synthesis, and consideration of writings on a particular topic. Essentially, it is a review of significant information that provides an organized, coherent picture of what has been written on a particular topic, and the ways in which it needs further investigation. The purpose of this assignment is to help to develop analytical, reasoning, and critical skills by evaluating key issues regarding the topic, evaluate what others have already done related to the problem, identify gaps in the literature, and make recommendations about future research.

To succeed in this course, it is imperative that you quickly identify a topic and start researching it as early on as possible. Once you have had your paper meeting, you are locked into your topic. If you request to change your topic, you will automatically receive a 10 point deduction off of your literature review assignment grade. If you fail to clear your topic change with me, you will automatically receive zeros for both the PowerPoint presentation and literature review assignments.

See *Literature Review Paper Structure & Guidelines* (detailed below) for requirements. It is imperative that you consider and incorporate the rough draft comments given to you by both me and your reviewer. Failure to make changes from the draft to the final will result in a penalty. Hard copies of your paper are due on the date and time indicated on the online course schedule. Late papers will be penalized.

You must submit an electronic copy of your literature review paper via BlackBoard no later than the due date time. If you fail to submit your paper before the cut-off time, you will receive a zero for your paper grade.

Presentations using PowerPoint: At the end of the semester, you will give a presentation on your topic using PowerPoint. You will have 10 minutes to give your PowerPoint presentation and 3 minutes to field questions. See *Presentation Evaluation* (detailed below) for criteria on which you will be evaluated.

You must give me a stapled, hard copy (black & white is fine) of your PowerPoint presentation slides on the day you present prior to the start of your presentation. The due date corresponds with the date you

present. If you fail to give me a hard copy of your PowerPoint presentation at the start of your presentation, you will automatically lose 10 points off of your overall presentation grade.

Presentation times will be determined on a voluntary basis about two weeks before presentations begin. Once presentation times are established, if you fail to give your presentation on the established date (for either absence or because you cannot get your slideshow to run), you will automatically lose 20 points off of your overall presentation grade. Upon missing your scheduled presentation, you will present at the start of the class to which you return. So, for example, if your presentation is scheduled for Tuesday, you miss that class and return to Thursday's class, you will go first on Thursday.

Class Participation: Class participation is based on the following elements: class attendance, punctuality, participation, attention, and respect. Work is not a legitimate excuse for missing class. The syllabus provides comprehensive, detailed expectations for the course. It is important that you familiarize yourself with these details to participate to the fullest extent possible. Questions asked of me that are already answered in the syllabus will result in a deduction of class participation points.

Standard format for written work: Unless otherwise indicated for the assignment, follow these guidelines. You will be penalized for failing to follow the standard format, with the exception of the last bullet, which will result in a zero grade for exceptionally poor work.

- Typed, in hard copy form
- Stapled (Paper-clipped **IS NOT** stapled, nor is dog-eared)
- Page numbers
- Double-spaced
- Prescribed margins: 1" all around
- Times New Roman 12 pt. font (or Mac comparable)
- Edited and proof-read so that paper is well-written
 - clarity in writing
 - well-organized
 - grammatically sound
 - appropriate length paragraphs

Additional Information

Cell Phone & Laptop Policy : Use of laptops or phones is not allowed during class time. The first time I see you with an open laptop or a phone (and I don't care if the phone is on or not - if it's in your hands, it qualifies as 'in-use' to me) I will deduct 2 percent from your final course grade. The second time, I will deduct an additional 3 percent from your final course grade. For each subsequent infraction, the deductions will continue in this way. So, for example, if you're caught with a cell phone three times, 9 percent (2% + 3% + 4%) will be taken off your final course grade.

If your phone rings and you pick it up to answer it or turn it off, the above penalty applies. So be sure you turn off your phone or set it to silent before class.

If you have what you believe to be a legitimate reason for keeping your cell phone on during a class, you must clear it with me before that class. If you don't get my approval, I will apply the cell phone use deduction - even if I agree that your reason was legitimate.

Regular online access is a course requirement. If you aren't able to regularly access the course schedule, your NKU email account, or the Internet, you need to drop this course.

Extra credit projects are not an option.

Contact Information: My primary objective is to help you learn and succeed. Please visit me during my office hours and/or contact me by email with any questions, clarifications, or concerns you have. If you cannot come to office hours, we can arrange to meet by appointment. If you opt to contact me, you will get a much faster response by emailing me, as I generally check my email at least once a day Monday through Friday.

Occasionally it may be necessary to contact you outside of class. For any correspondence outside of class, I will send messages to your NKU email account. I will post this information as well on your course webpage as soon as possible.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 66-60	
F = 59-0		

All University policies apply, including the honor code. The work you will do in this course is subject to the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code is a commitment to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct, a commitment that, individually and collectively, the students of Northern Kentucky University will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements.

Plagiarism is any instance of attempting to pass off the work of others as your own. This is not limited solely to directly quoting the work of others- it also includes paraphrasing the work of others without giving appropriate credit. Put another way, if you take someone else's work and change, add, or delete some words here and there, you are still plagiarizing if the essential meaning remains the same. This applies to all papers, exams, quizzes, and exercises. Plagiarizing from other students, or even from your own previous work, is not acceptable.

You are expected to do your own work, properly cite the contribution of others, and use only expressly authorized materials on exams, quizzes, or assignments. If you aren't sure about when or how to credit the work of others, let me know and I will be happy to help you out.

The penalty for the first instance of lying, cheating, or plagiarizing is an automatic zero for the assignment in question and a 20 percent deduction in your final course grade. The penalty for a second instance of lying, cheating, or plagiarizing is a grade of 'F' for the class and dismissal from class. All instances of lying, cheating, or plagiarizing will be brought to the attention of the Dean of Students.

Additional information: You are expected to attend all classes. Work is not a legitimate excuse for missing class. If you encounter any problems throughout the semester regarding this class or your ability to attend and participate, please let me know **ASAP**. It is not advisable to wait until the end of the semester to inform me of difficulties you are having; that is after the fact.

Course evaluations are now conducted online. The administration expects you to complete them at the close of the semester.

Literature Review Paper Structure & Guidelines

In addition to content, grading will be based on the *Standard Format for Written Work* (described in your course syllabus), as well as the following structure and criteria. You are limited to 10 pages, not including the title page, appendices, and references.

Each reference must be cited in footnote form giving the author(s) last name(s), year, and, where appropriate, page number. Your footnote would look like this: ¹ Evans and Murdoch 2007, 94. Every reference must appear in full bibliographic form in the bibliography, following APSA formatting.

Title Page (this is a separate page– do not number this page)

- Literature review topic –this is your title
- Name
- PSC 315 & section
- Date

Each of the following sections should have headers:

Introduction (1 - 2 pages)

- First paragraph should give some basic introduction to your topic and your thesis statement
- Include any background information necessary to put your topic into a context
- Explain why the topic is of interest
- Operationalize key terms
- Set up what you're going to do in each section of your paper
 - This section should include a brief statement about each section and what you intend to do
 - For example: This literature review is organized by...It is divided into ___ sections...In these sections I will consider ___ ... I will then conclude with a brief summary followed by a consideration of further research that would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of...

Body of the literature review (4 - 6 pages): There are several things you need to accomplish in this section:

- Indicate how you've organized the materials you're going to review
- Include **sub-headers** throughout this section based on how you organize your review
 - For example, you might organize your paper around a particular debate or by developments over time regarding your topic—do whatever makes the most sense when considering the topic
- Consider both seminal (classic) and current works on the topic
- Synthesize what others have done on your topic based on how you've decided to organize your review
- Consider the methodologies the authors rely on—are these appropriate? Do they sufficiently accomplish their research goal?
- What critiques can be made of the literature?

Conclusion (1 - 2 pages)

- Summarize your entire review
- Determine what gaps there are in the literature—that is, what questions are not answered, what aspects need more research
- Make a case for what future research is necessary and how it would contribute to better understanding the topic and field

Appendices (not included in word count)

- If you have any, they go here, including:
 - Supporting charts, documents, etc.
- If you don't have any, then don't include this section

Works Cited (AKA Bibliography) (not included in word count)

- Minimum of **15 references** academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles, with a minimum of 5 of each kind
- All references must be cited through footnotes in your paper using the style formatting laid out in the Literature Review Sources LR-RA assignment.
- A complete list of all references must be alphabetically listed on your works cited page. Do **not** separate books and journals.
- In the event that you reference materials that are not academic books or peer-reviewed journal articles, include them under a separate heading of **Other**. Note: these do not count toward your 15 references.

Notes:

- Dictionaries, encyclopedias, and textbooks **do not** count toward your book requirement. You should **not** be referencing or quoting a dictionary or encyclopedia in your paper. Wikipedia and any other online reference should **not** be listed as references, nor should they be quoted in your papers-EVER!
- If you access an academic journal or book online, they count as books and articles, not as web sources.

Rough draft attachment and LR-RA 5 paper clipped to paper

Presentation Evaluation

Presenter: _____

Start time: _____

End time: _____

General

- Stapled, hard copy (black & white is fine) of PowerPoint presentation slides
 - 4 slides to a page
 - First slide should be a title page including: topic as the title, name, presentation date, and course section
- Preparedness
- Present v. Read slides
- Clear conveyance of ideas
- Clear speaking
- Eye contact
- Distracting motions and mannerisms (fidgeting, rocking back-and-forth, lots of 'ums,' etc.)

In terms of content

- Organization
- Mastery of the topic
- Clear flow of ideas from slide to slide
- Clear and coherent presentation of information
- Explained any charts, graphs, tables, pictures, etc.

Use of PPT

- Consistent background/colors/font/etc.
- Visible font
- Appearance of slides
 - Consistency of font, background, colors, etc.
 - Use of titles, headers
 - Use of bullet points and sub-points
 - Sentences v. keywords, phrases
 - Punctuation
 - Use of graphics, animation, sound effects
- Presentation-enhancing features
 - Graphs or charts where useful
 - Numbers, dollar amounts, etc., to reinforce points
 - Relevant pictures
- Content self-evident
- Covered all information on slides
- Boring, plain v. interesting, visually appealing slides

Ability to field questions

- Mastery of the topic
- Ability to respond to questions posed

The following policies apply to all courses taught by faculty in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice. Please note that individual faculty may have specific applications of these policies in their syllabi.

1. Classroom and Electronic Participation:

Classroom participation is essential to the educational process. It is vital to your understanding of the course material, and to your overall performance. It is also a student responsibility. Class participation is generally defined as regular class attendance, proper class preparation, completing assignments and activities in a timely manner, completing assignments in the format requested, and participating in discussions both during and outside of class (e.g. Black Board discussions). Participation also refers to regular monitoring of and responding to electronic contact by professors via email, Black Board or other means. Participation may have a specific grade percentage in your class; see your course syllabi for specifics.

2. Class Professionalism:

- A. Out of respect to your fellow learners, **electronic devices should be turned off** during class time unless you are required to be on-call by your employer. In that case, please set your beeper / phone to a non-audible signal. If you are required to leave a beeper or cell phone on during class, inform the professor of this prior to class.
- B. **Disruptive behavior or conduct** (whether in-class or electronic) that demeans fellow class members or the instructor will not be tolerated. Please see the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities Section 4.3 for "What the Professor May Expect of the Student." Instructors reserve the right to dismiss or remove a disruptive student from a classroom in accordance with the appropriate College of Arts and Science Policy.
http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/disruption_guidelines.html
- C. It is important that work with your name attached is, in fact, **solely your work** unless properly referenced or cited. In these days of increased access to information, it is critical that you understand the meaning, seriousness and consequences of plagiarism. If you ever have a question about giving proper credit for academic work, please consult your instructor **well in advance of an assignment due date**.
- D. The work you will do in this course and your behavior in this course are subject to the **Student Honor Code**. The Honor Code is a commitment to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct. By being a student at NKU you make a commitment that individually and collectively, you will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements. You also make a commitment to behavior in a professional manner, especially when involved in academic activities off campus such as travel courses or CCSA Study Abroad. For specifics concerning the honor code, see the Dean of Students website: <http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/policies.htm>.

3. Right to Revise a Syllabus:

A syllabus is required for every class and will be distributed at the beginning of each semester. Faculty reserve the right to **revise the course syllabus** as needed. Changes in the specific course schedule may happen frequently, so you need to keep abreast of these changes regularly. Should a major change occur in the syllabus (e.g. moving a specified test date, changing the grading percentages, changing the assignment types, etc.) the specific change will be announced at least a week in advance of any activity due date (e.g. paper, test). Major revisions in a course grading scheme or mechanism will also be in writing, which may include paper distribution, email, or posting to Blackboard or an appropriate online forum.

4. Student Responsibilities to Meet Course Obligations:

You are responsible for all course assignments including class preparation, class attendance, class activities, tests, papers, labs, projects, group work or other course assignments. By reviewing the syllabus at the beginning of a course, you are responsible for meeting all specific course obligations. Additionally, some faculty may even require that each student initial a document to recognize their course obligations. Failure to attend classes, or meet course obligations is a serious matter and it is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor should you have difficulty with meeting any course obligation. Faculty may, at their discretion, reduce grades or even fail you for not meeting specified course obligations, including but not limited to, class attendance, taking tests at a specified time, turning in papers on time and in the format required and other assignments. It is the faculty's discretion to determine the consequences of not meeting a course obligation, and many times the specific provisions and penalties are specified in the syllabus. Faculty may also require written documentation verifying your inability to meet a course obligation.

5. Final Examination:

With rare exception, all classes will meet at the time prescribed, will meet until the last scheduled day of classes, and will **meet during the final exam period** printed in the *Schedule of Classes*. This is an Arts and Science College policy.

Your syllabus should include the date and time of the final exam period scheduled for the course. There is also a final exam schedule posted on the NKU website. Faculty will provide an indication of the final exam's nature (cumulative final, regular test, return of take-home exam, presentation of final project, etc.) well in advance of the final exam.

There may be courses for which a cumulative final exam is not appropriate. However, these courses will still meet as scheduled during their final exam period. The final exam period will used, as appropriate for the course, including, but not limited to, a non-cumulative exam, project presentation, return of take-home exam, or paper presentation.

6. Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services) for this course must register with the Office of Disability Services. Please contact the Disability Service Office immediately in the University Center, Suite 320, or call (859) 572-6373 for more information. Verification of your disability is required in the Office of Disability Services for you to receive reasonable academic accommodations.