Scope and Methods of Political Science

(POLS 558:001)
Monday and Wednesday, 12:00 – 1:15pm (Fall 2015)
314 Morgan Hall, Western Illinois University

Professor:  Jonathan Day
Office:  424 Morgan Hall
Office Hours:  Monday and Wednesday, 1:15pm – 3:00pm
Tuesday, 3:00pm – 3:30pm
Please make an appointment if these times do not work for you

Email:  jp-day@wiu.edu
Website:  http://www.westernonline.wiu.edu


Course Description and Objective

Over the course of this semester, we are going to learn how to ask research questions, develop theories, find empirical evidence, analyze whether the evidence supports or discredits those theories, and communicate our findings.  After taking this course, we will be more prepared to work as researchers, consultants, analysts, and experts in whatever topic we choose.

Expectations

We should attend all scheduled classes, so that we can use that time to help each other understand the material and practice our critical thinking skills.  We should read the assigned material, so that we have the same information available for our discussions in class.  We should participate as much as we feel comfortable in class so that we can all gain an understanding of different perspectives.  We will emphasize analyzing and evaluating theories and the methods used to support those theories.  Finally, we should do all the homework assignments so that we can ensure that we understand how to apply the concepts we learn.
Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Final Grade Determination

- 90 – 100: A
- 80 – 90: B
- 70 – 80: C
- 60 – 70: D
- 0 – 60: F

Attendance / Participation

Our attendance is important for others to gain a different perspective and for us to understand the material and practice our critical thinking skills.

Points will be given for attendance. Excused absences will be treated as attendance for the purposes of awarding points. For excused absences, you must email me the excuse. Just let me know if it was for sickness, a personal or family emergency, or university event.

One unexcused absence will be treated as attendance for the purposes of awarding points (invariably something will keep us from class one day).

For each day, signing into the attendance sheet will be the record that you were present for that day.

Homework

There will be ten homework assignments given throughout the semester. These homework assignments will help us to evaluate whether we understand the concepts. We will be asked to apply the concepts we learn in class in completing the homework. Each homework assignment is worth 30 points (3% of your final grade; total 30% of your final grade).

Final Paper

The final paper will be between 20 and 25 pages in length. (Double spaced; Times New Roman; 1 inch margins; APSA Style Manual). The research question will be approved by the professor. More detailed instructions will be given later. This paper will be developed over the course of the semester and due at 11:59pm on Wednesday, December 9, 2015.

Final Exam

It will be a short assessment of what you learned in the semester.
Classroom Procedures / Student Rights and Responsibilities

Please submit all excused absences to me in writing as soon as possible. Let me know before class starts if you need to leave class early for an excused absence. Each class session may be recorded via audio and/or video and made public so that anyone can access them. The purpose of this is to provide a universal accommodation to enhance the learning experience. The following website provides information on a student’s rights and responsibilities at WIU: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php. We also need to maintain our academic integrity: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php

Accommodations

If you have a physical and/or financial difficulty, please feel welcome to come and talk to me during office hours or set up an appointment through email or phone so that we can discuss the best accommodation to ensure that you can do your best in the classroom.

“In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services” (WIU)

Contacting Me

Please feel free to contact me at any time by email, phone, or in person. My email, phone number, and office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. If you would like to visit with me and my office hours are not convenient, we will schedule a time that works for both of us.